



ARGUMENT SUMMARY: PRIMACY DISADVANTAGE

In the status quo, America stands alone with the position of a very powerful, credible superpower. This status is often referred to as “primacy” or “hegemony.” America uses its unique standing to build up its influence throughout the world. Presumably, the result is stability, peace and prosperity in the world.

Primacy has traditionally been closely connected with military policies, as the deployment of armed forces is one of the main ways a nation exercises “hard power.” Hard power stands in contrast to “soft power” which refers to the ability of nations to influence others with cultural or moral standing. Both hard power and soft power have roles in establishing leadership.

Primacy is not easy to maintain. Several nations around the world, such as China, Russia and India hope to challenge American worldwide hegemony. There are also smaller nations, such as Iran, Venezuela and North that confront the United States in regional affairs. President Obama is struggling to preserve America’s leadership in a very difficult time, and so far he has achieved this goal.

A nation’s credibility in the world is evaluated several ways. Do they stand up when they are challenged, or do they run from a fight? Do they keep their promises with their allies? Do they stay consistent and predictable, or do their policies lurch from one to another? Nations, including the United States, are constantly being watched. This is particularly the case when a nation has a relatively new leader.

SUMMARY OF THE PRIMACY DISADVANTAGE: In the status quo, America will maintain its primacy in world affairs. President Obama has upheld American commitments, stayed true to our allies, and not radically shifted policies from the end of the Bush Administration.

The affirmative plan undermines America’s standing in the world by suddenly reversing its military troop deployment policy.

In the case of the Afghanistan affirmative, we would be seen as running from a fight. The Obama Administration, upon assuming office, undertook an extremely long period of review for its Afghanistan policy. At the end of that review, we announced a specific policy to escalate the number of troops we would send, as well as a date for the beginning of withdrawal. If the United States now were to suddenly change course, it would be seen as a sign of weakness and having no follow-through.

In the case of the Japan affirmative, the United States would be seen as suddenly bailing out on an ally. Our reliability would be seriously questioned especially because only a few months ago, President Obama pressured the Japanese government into upholding our 2006 agreement on

Okinawa, forcing the resignation of a newly elected Prime Minister. The affirmative plan essentially abrogates the 2006 agreement, calling into question America's other negotiated commitments.

The consequences of the loss of American primacy would be dire. The United States plays an important role in preventing conflicts around the world, and also stopping the conflicts that do exist from escalating to large-scale war. We do this through the credibility of our use of force. Without that credibility, immense conflicts in several global hot spots would become much more likely.

AFFIRMATIVE STRATEGIES: The affirmative can argue that economic decline will make loss of American primacy inevitable. Securing the cooperation of Russia and China is vital for America to accomplish its foreign policy objectives, and that cooperation is more likely to occur if we adopt conciliatory policies. Military power has been exposed in places like Iraq as not being the most effective way to exert American influence. Soft power may be the only path to primacy in the future. American influence may not be able to prevent wars, after all.

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1NC SHELL

A. UNIQUENESS -- AMERICAN HEGEMONY IS VULNERABLE AND SO FAR OBAMA HAS MAINTAINED OUR PURSUIT OF PRIMACY

Allan Watson, Dept. of Geography, Staffordshire Univ., 2010

[Antipode, Volume 42, No. 2 pp. 242-247]

Currently, US hegemony looks extremely vulnerable, and it is less in command of a world that looks entirely more closed and hostile to American values. This condition is in part due to a legacy of isolation from the international community and European allies, relationships which Obama must rebuild if he truly wishes to build a new American age. Obama has spoken openly about the task of relationship rebuilding, but while his words may suggest a multilateral approach, his focus has been very much on US global “leadership.”

B. LINK -- AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IS SEEN AS THE CRUCIAL DETERMINER OF AMERICAN PRIMACY

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

The world’s failure to balance against the superpower is the more striking because the United States, notwithstanding its difficult interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, continues to expand its power and military reach and shows no sign of slowing this expansion even after the 2008 elections. The American defense budget has surpassed \$500 billion per year, not including supplemental spending totaling over \$100 billion on Iraq and Afghanistan. This level of spending is sustainable, moreover, both economically and politically. As the American military budget rises, so does the number of overseas American military bases. Since September 11, 2001, the United States has built or expanded bases in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in Central Asia; in Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania in Europe; and in the Philippines, Djibouti, Oman, and Qatar. Two decades ago, hostility to the American military presence began forcing the United States out of the Philippines and seemed to be undermining support for American bases in Japan. Today, the Philippines is rethinking that decision, and the furor in Japan has subsided. In places like South Korea and Germany, it is American plans to reduce the U.S. military presence that stir controversy, not what one would expect if there was a widespread fear or hatred of overweening American power. Overall, there is no shortage of other countries willing to host U.S. forces, a good indication that much of the world continues to tolerate and even lend support to American geopolitical primacy if only as a protection against more worrying foes.

1NC SHELL

C. IMPACT -- AMERICAN RETRENCHMENT WOULD INCREASE THE RISK OF WAR

Bradley Thayer, Assoc Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

Those arguing for a grand strategy of retrenchment are a diverse lot. They include isolationists, who want no foreign military commitments; selective engagers, who want U.S. military commitments to centers of economic might; and offshore balancers, who want a modified form of selective engagement that would have the United States abandon its landpower presence abroad in favor of relying on airpower and seapower to defend its interests. But retrenchment, in any of its guises, must be avoided. If the United States adopted such a strategy, it would be a profound strategic mistake that would lead to far greater instability and war in the world, imperil American security and deny the United States and its allies the benefits of primacy.

LINKS – GENERAL

WITHDRAWAL IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS

Bradley Thayer, Assoc Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

In contrast, a strategy based on retrenchment will not be able to achieve these fundamental objectives of the United States. Indeed, retrenchment will make the United States less secure than the present grand strategy of primacy. This is because threats will exist no matter what role America chooses to play in international politics. Washington cannot call a "time out", and it cannot hide from threats. Whether they are terrorists, rogue states or rising powers, history shows that threats must be confronted. Simply by declaring that the United States is "going home", thus abandoning its commitments or making unconvincing half-pledges to defend its interests and allies, does not mean that others will respect American wishes to retreat. To make such a declaration implies weakness and emboldens aggression. In the anarchic world of the animal kingdom, predators prefer to eat the weak rather than confront the strong. The same is true of the anarchic world of international politics. If there is no diplomatic solution to the threats that confront the United States, then the conventional and strategic military power of the United States is what protects the country from such threats.

REDUCED MILITARY PRESENCE WILL INCREASE THREATS FROM COMPETITORS

Michael Auslin, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute, April 2, 2010

[<http://www.aei.org/article/101869>]

The upshot of these three trends will likely be a series of decisions to slowly, but irrevocably reduce America's overseas global military presence and limit our capacity to uphold peace and intervene around the globe. And, as we hollow out our capabilities, China will be fielding ever more accurate anti-ship ballistic missiles, advanced fighter aircraft, and stealthy submarines; Russia will continue to expand its influence over its "near abroad" while modernizing its nuclear arsenal; and Iran will develop nuclear weapons, leading to an arms race or preemptive attacks in the Middle East. Under such conditions, global trade flows will be stressed, the free flow of capital will be constrained, and foreign governments will expand their regulatory and confiscatory powers against their domestic economies in order to fund their own military expansions. For the past six decades, global stability was assured in large part by an expensive US commitment to maintain credible forces abroad, forge tight alliances with key strategic countries, and devote a significant, though not onerous, part of national treasure to sustaining a military second to none. Rarely in history has a country shouldered such burdens for so long, but the succeeding decades of growth and avoidance of systemic war proved the wisdom of the course.

LINKS – GENERAL

TROOP PRESENCE IS LINKED TO THE PERCEPTION OF HEGEMONY

Chalmers Johnson, author on American military bases, July 30, 2009

[<http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175101>]

These massive concentrations of American military power outside the United States are not needed for our defense. They are, if anything, a prime contributor to our numerous conflicts with other countries. They are also unimaginably expensive. According to Anita Dancs, an analyst for the website Foreign Policy in Focus, the United States spends approximately \$250 billion each year maintaining its global military presence. The sole purpose of this is to give us hegemony -- that is, control or dominance -- over as many nations on the planet as possible.

TROOP PRESENCE IS KEY TO POWER PROJECTION

Bradley Thayer, Assoc Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

And when enemies must be confronted, a strategy based on primacy focuses on engaging enemies overseas, away from American soil. Indeed, a key tenet of the Bush Doctrine is to attack terrorists far from America's shores and not to wait while they use bases in other countries to plan and train for attacks against the United States itself. This requires a physical, on-the-ground presence that cannot be achieved by offshore balancing.

BROKEN COMMITMENTS UNDERMINE OUR CREDIBILITY AS AN ALLY

Thomas Skyypek, Defense Policy Analyst, February 2, 2010

[<http://www.hopeisnotaforeignpolicy.org/2010/02/02/how-the-obama-administrations-lack-of-credibility-is-weakening-u-s-national-security/>]

Unfortunately, U.S. national security is more dependent on the credibility of American power—and the words and policies of its commander-in-chief—than international popularity. In foreign affairs, credibility matters. Hollow threats and naïve policies embolden our adversaries while broken commitments lead our friends and allies to question our resolve.

LINKS – GENERAL

MILITARY PRESENCE IS POWER EVEN WITHOUT BEING USED

Joseph Nye, Prof. International Relations, Harvard, January 11, 2010

[<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/nye78/English>]

This leads to a larger point about the role of military force in world politics. Military power remains important because it structures world politics. It is true that in many relationships and issues, military force is increasingly difficult or costly for states to use. But the fact that military power is not always sufficient in particular situations does not mean that it has lost the ability to structure expectations and shape political calculations. Markets and economic power rest upon political frameworks: in chaotic conditions of great political uncertainty, markets fail. Political frameworks, in turn, rest upon norms and institutions, but also upon the management of coercive power. A well-ordered modern state is defined by a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, which allows domestic markets to operate. Internationally, where order is more tenuous, residual concerns about the coercive use of force, even if a low probability, can have important effects. Military force, along with norms and institutions, helps to provide a minimal degree of order.

MILITARY POWER IS STILL RELEVANT IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Joseph Nye, Prof. International Relations, Harvard, January 11, 2010

[<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/nye78/English>]

Metaphorically, military power provides a degree of security that is to political and economic order as oxygen is to breathing: little noticed until it begins to become scarce. Once that occurs, its absence dominates all else. In this sense, the role of military power in structuring world politics is likely to persist well into the twenty-first century. Military power will not have the utility for states that it had in the nineteenth century, but it will remain a crucial component of power in world politics.

LINKS – GENERAL

POWER PROJECTION GIVES AMERICA INFLUENCE

Bradley Thayer, Assoc Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

U.S. primacy--and the bandwagoning effect--has also given us extensive influence in international politics, allowing the United States to shape the behavior of states and international institutions. Such influence comes in many forms, one of which is America's ability to create coalitions of like-minded states to free Kosovo, stabilize Afghanistan, invade Iraq or to stop proliferation through the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Doing so allows the United States to operate with allies outside of the UN, where it can be stymied by opponents. American-led wars in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq stand in contrast to the UN's inability to save the people of Darfur or even to conduct any military campaign to realize the goals of its charter. The quiet effectiveness of the PSI in dismantling Libya's WMD programs and unraveling the A. Q. Khan proliferation network are in sharp relief to the typically toothless attempts by the UN to halt proliferation.

LINKS – SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

JAPAN WITHDRAWAL LINK

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

Such conflicts may be unavoidable no matter what policies the United States pursues. But they are more likely to erupt if the United States weakens or withdraws from its positions of regional dominance. This is especially true in East Asia, where most nations agree that a reliable American power has a stabilizing and pacific effect on the region. That is certainly the view of most of China's neighbors. But even China, which seeks gradually to supplant the United States as the dominant power in the region, faces the dilemma that an American withdrawal could unleash an ambitious, independent, nationalist Japan.

ANY INDICATION OF REDUCED MILITARY PRESENCE IN ASIA WOULD CAUSE OUR COMMITMENT TO BE QUESTIONED

Michael Auslin, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute, April 15, 2010

[<http://www.aei.org/speech/100137>]

It is clear, however, that the presence of U.S. military forces is welcomed by nearly all nations in the Asia-Pacific and sends a signal of American commitment to the region. From a historical standpoint, the post-war American presence in the Asia-Pacific has been one of the key enablers of growth and development in that maritime realm. And today, for all its dynamism, the Asia-Pacific remains peppered with territorial disputes and long-standing grievances, with few effective multilateral mechanisms such as exist in Europe for solving interstate conflicts. Our friends and allies in the area are keenly attuned to our continued forward-based posture, and any indication that the United States was reducing its presence might be interpreted by both friends and competitors as a weakening of our long-standing commitment to maintain stability in the Pacific.

LINKS – SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

TURKEY LINK

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

In Europe, too, the departure of the United States from the scene — even if it remained the world’s most powerful nation — could be destabilizing. It could tempt Russia to an even more overbearing and potentially forceful approach to unruly nations on its periphery. Although some realist theorists seem to imagine that the disappearance of the Soviet Union put an end to the possibility of confrontation between Russia and the West, and therefore to the need for a permanent American role in Europe, history suggests that conflicts in Europe involving Russia are possible even without Soviet communism. If the United States withdrew from Europe — if it adopted what some call a strategy of “offshore balancing” — this could in time increase the likelihood of conflict involving Russia and its near neighbors, which could in turn draw the United States back in under unfavorable circumstances.

LINKS – SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, KUWAIT LINK

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

It is also optimistic to imagine that a retrenchment of the American position in the Middle East and the assumption of a more passive, “offshore” role would lead to greater stability there. The vital interest the United States has in access to oil and the role it plays in keeping access open to other nations in Europe and Asia make it unlikely that American leaders could or would stand back and hope for the best while the powers in the region battle it out. Nor would a more “even-handed” policy toward Israel, which some see as the magic key to unlocking peace, stability, and comity in the Middle East, obviate the need to come to Israel’s aid if its security became threatened. That commitment, paired with the American commitment to protect strategic oil supplies for most of the world, practically ensures a heavy American military presence in the region, both on the seas and on the ground.

IRAQ LINK

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

The subtraction of American power from any region would not end conflict but would simply change the equation. In the Middle East, competition for influence among powers both inside and outside the region has raged for at least two centuries. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism doesn’t change this. It only adds a new and more threatening dimension to the competition, which neither a sudden end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians nor an immediate American withdrawal from Iraq would change. The alternative to American predominance in the region is not balance and peace. It is further competition. The region and the states within it remain relatively weak. A diminution of American influence would not be followed by a diminution of other external influences. One could expect deeper involvement by both China and Russia, if only to secure their interests. And one could also expect the more powerful states of the region, particularly Iran, to expand and fill the vacuum. It is doubtful that any American administration would voluntarily take actions that could shift the balance of power in the Middle East further toward Russia, China, or Iran. The world hasn’t changed that much. An American withdrawal from Iraq will not return things to “normal” or to a new kind of stability in the region. It will produce a new instability, one likely to draw the United States back in again.

UNIQUENESS – BRINK

THIS IS A CRUCIAL MOMENT FOR AMERICAN HEGEMONY

Allan Watson, Department of Geography, Staffordshire Univ., 2010

[Antipode, Volume 42, No. 2 pp. 242-247]

We appear to have reached a turning point in American hegemony. The election of a new American president, Barack Obama, combined with global financial crisis, have left us in uncertain times. While the 9/11 attacks were a defining moment for the USA and its relationship with the rest of the world, as the pretext for a more aggressive and contradictory hegemony (Anderson 2003), the events of late 2008 could arguably prove to have more fundamental and far-reaching consequences.

THE UNITED STATES IS STILL THE GLOBAL LEADER BUT OTHER NATIONS ARE TRYING TO CHALLENGE US

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

The world has not been transformed, however. Nations remain as strong as ever, and so too the nationalist ambitions, the passions, and the competition among nations that have shaped history. The world is still “unipolar,” with the United States remaining the only superpower. But international competition among great powers has returned, with the United States, Russia, China, Europe, Japan, India, Iran, and others vying for regional predominance. Struggles for honor and status and influence in the world have once again become key features of the international scene. Ideologically, it is a time not of convergence but of divergence. The competition between liberalism and absolutism has reemerged, with the nations of the world increasingly lining up, as in the past, along ideological lines. Finally, there is the fault line between modernity and tradition, the violent struggle of Islamic fundamentalists against the modern powers and the secular cultures that, in their view, have penetrated and polluted their Islamic world.

UNIQUENESS – DECLINE NOT INEVITABLE

RETRENCHMENT IS NOT INEVITABLE

Bradley Thayer, Assoc Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

There are two critical issues in any discussion of America's grand strategy: Can America remain the dominant state? Should it strive to do this? America can remain dominant due to its prodigious military, economic and soft power capabilities. The totality of that equation of power answers the first issue. The United States has overwhelming military capabilities and wealth in comparison to other states or likely potential alliances. Barring some disaster or tremendous folly, that will remain the case for the foreseeable future. With few exceptions, even those who advocate retrenchment acknowledge this.

FINANCIAL SHORTAGES WON'T MAKE WITHDRAWAL INEVITABLE

Gary Schmitt, Director, Program on Advanced Strategic Studies, AEI, 2007

[<http://www.aei.org/article/25706>, March 12, 2007]

And speaking of money: Layne's argument about looming imperial overstretch is itself a stretch. Even with all the problems in Iraq, a war in Afghanistan, and an emerging hedging strategy vis-a-vis China, the defense burden is still barely over 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product. The United States has certainly had far higher defense burdens in the past, while still retaining its status as the world's economic juggernaut. There may be plenty of reasons to worry about the country's economy, but "guns over butter" is hardly one of them.

UNIQUENESS – DECLINE NOT INEVITABLE

THE INEVITABLE DECLINE OF AMERICAN HEGEMONY HAS BEEN OVERSTATED – THE U.S. REMAINS TOP DOG

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

These American traditions, together with historical events beyond Americans' control, have catapulted the United States to a position of pre-eminence in the world. Since the end of the Cold War and the emergence of this "unipolar" world, there has been much anticipation of the end of unipolarity and the rise of a multipolar world in which the United States is no longer the predominant power. Not only realist theorists but others both inside and outside the United States have long argued the theoretical and practical unsustainability, not to mention undesirability, of a world with only one superpower. Mainstream realist theory has assumed that other powers must inevitably band together to balance against the superpower. Others expected the post-Cold War era to be characterized by the primacy of geoeconomics over geopolitics and foresaw a multipolar world with the economic giants of Europe, India, Japan, and China rivaling the United States. Finally, in the wake of the Iraq War and with hostility to the United States, as measured in public opinion polls, apparently at an all-time high, there has been a widespread assumption that the American position in the world must finally be eroding. Yet American predominance in the main categories of power persists as a key feature of the international system. The enormous and productive American economy remains at the center of the international economic system. American democratic principles are shared by over a hundred nations. The American military is not only the largest but the only one capable of projecting force into distant theaters. Chinese strategists, who spend a great deal of time thinking about these things, see the world not as multipolar but as characterized by "one superpower, many great powers," and this configuration seems likely to persist into the future absent either a catastrophic blow to American power or a decision by the United States to diminish its power and international influence voluntarily.

UNIQUENESS – AT: RUSSIA/CHINA BALANCING NOW

CHINA AND RUSSIA HAVE NOT STARTED GLOBAL BALANCING YET

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

The anticipated global balancing has for the most part not occurred. Russia and China certainly share a common and openly expressed goal of checking American hegemony. They have created at least one institution, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, aimed at resisting American influence in Central Asia, and China is the only power in the world, other than the United States, engaged in a long-term military buildup. But Sino-Russian hostility to American predominance has not yet produced a concerted and cooperative effort at balancing. China's buildup is driven at least as much by its own long-term ambitions as by a desire to balance the United States. Russia has been using its vast reserves of oil and natural gas as a lever to compensate for the lack of military power, but it either cannot or does not want to increase its military capability sufficiently to begin counterbalancing the United States. Overall, Russian military power remains in decline. In addition, the two powers do not trust one another. They are traditional rivals, and the rise of China inspires at least as much nervousness in Russia as it does in the United States. At the moment, moreover, China is less abrasively confrontational with the United States. Its dependence on the American market and foreign investment and its perception that the United States remains a potentially formidable adversary mitigate against an openly confrontational approach.

AMERICA'S ALLIANCE SYSTEM IS BALANCING RUSSIA AND CHINESE GAINS

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

If anything, the most notable balancing over the past decade has been aimed not at the American superpower but at the two large powers: China and Russia. In Asia and the Pacific, Japan, Australia, and even South Korea and the nations of Southeast Asia have all engaged in "hedging" against a rising China. This has led them to seek closer relations with Washington, especially in the case of Japan and Australia. India has also drawn closer to the United States and is clearly engaged in balancing against China. Russia's efforts to increase its influence over what it regards as its "near abroad," meanwhile, have produced tensions and negative reactions in the Baltics and other parts of Eastern Europe. Because these nations are now members of the European Union, this has also complicated eu-Russian relations. On balance, traditional allies of the United States in East Asia and in Europe, while their publics may be more anti-American than in the past, nevertheless pursue policies that reflect more concern about the powerful states in their midst than about the United States.¹² This has provided a cushion against hostile public opinion and offers a foundation on which to strengthen American relations with these countries after the departure of Bush.

UNIQUENESS – AT: IRAQ WAR

THE IRAQ WAR HAS NOT UNDERMINED AMERICA'S STANDING

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

The Iraq War has not had the effect expected by many. Although there are reasonable-sounding theories as to why America's position should be eroding as a result of global opposition to the war and the unpopularity of the current administration, there has been little measurable change in the actual policies of nations, other than their reluctance to assist the United States in Iraq. In 2003 those who claimed the U.S. global position was eroding pointed to electoral results in some friendly countries: the election of Schröder in Germany, the defeat of Aznar's party in Spain, and the election of Lula in Brazil. But if elections are the test, other more recent votes around the world have put relatively pro-American leaders in power in Berlin, Paris, Tokyo, Canberra, and Ottawa. As for Russia and China, their hostility to the United States predates the Iraq War and, indeed, the Bush administration. Russia turned most sharply anti-American in the late 1990s partly as a consequence of nato enlargement. Both were far more upset and angered by the American intervention in Kosovo than by the invasion of Iraq. Both began complaining about American hegemonism and unilateralism and calling for a multipolar order during the Clinton years.

UNIQUENESS – PUBLIC OPINION SUPPORTS PRIMACY

AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION SUPPORTS SUSTAINED PRIMACY

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

Finally, there is the United States itself. As a matter of national policy stretching back across numerous administrations, Democratic and Republican, liberal and conservative, Americans have insisted on preserving regional predominance in East Asia; the Middle East; the Western Hemisphere; until recently, Europe; and now, increasingly, Central Asia. This was its goal after the Second World War, and since the end of the Cold War, beginning with the first Bush administration and continuing through the Clinton years, the United States did not retract but expanded its influence eastward across Europe and into the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Even as it maintains its position as the predominant global power, it is also engaged in hegemonic competitions in these regions with China in East and Central Asia, with Iran in the Middle East and Central Asia, and with Russia in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. The United States, too, is more of a traditional than a postmodern power, and though Americans are loath to acknowledge it, they generally prefer their global place as “No. 1” and are equally loath to relinquish it. Once having entered a region, whether for practical or idealistic reasons, they are remarkably slow to withdraw from it until they believe they have substantially transformed it in their own image. They profess indifference to the world and claim they just want to be left alone even as they seek daily to shape the behavior of billions of people around the globe.

THE U.S. HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO AN UNCOMPROMISING VIEW OF POWER PROJECTION

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

Since 1945 Americans have insisted on acquiring and maintaining military supremacy, a “preponderance of power” in the world rather than a balance of power with other nations. They have operated on the ideological conviction that liberal democracy is the only legitimate form of government and that other forms of government are not only illegitimate but transitory. They have declared their readiness to “support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation” by forces of oppression, to “pay any price, bear any burden” to defend freedom, to seek “democratic enlargement” in the world, and to work for the “end of tyranny.”⁴ They have been impatient with the status quo. They have seen America as a catalyst for change in human affairs, and they have employed the strategies and tactics of “maximalism,” seeking revolutionary rather than gradual solutions to problems. Therefore, they have often been at odds with the more cautious approaches of their allies.

UNIQUENESS – AT: OBAMA HAS DESTROYED PRIMACY

OBAMA IS CLEARLY TRYING TO MAINTAIN AMERICAN PRIMACY

Greg Scoblete, The Compass, Real Clear World January 23, 2010

[http://www.realclearworld.com/blog/2010/01/obama_hearts_hegemony.html]

You know they're wrong because President Obama - despite what his neoconservative critics assert and his progressive boosters hope - is not interested in dismantling this definition of American primacy. Sure, his rhetoric might pay greater lip service to a multi-polar world, but his actions to date are not indicative of someone about to seriously roll back America's dominant position in the world. Consider: he will not pull U.S. troops from their forward deployments in Europe, South Korea or Japan (indeed his administration is locking horns with Japan to keep a basing arrangement in place). He is not vowing to pull the U.S. out of its mutual defense treaties with partners such as Taiwan or Japan, or withdraw the U.S. from NATO, which entrenches U.S. power in Europe. He is strengthening America's military presence in the Gulf to contain Iran. He increased the Pentagon's budget. These are the engines of American primacy, in the military realm at least, and none of them are on the chopping block.

OBAMA'S PROMISE OF MULTILATERALISM IS EXAGGERATED – HE WILL BASICALLY REPEAT BUSH'S FOREIGN POLICY

Allan Watson, Department of Geography, Staffordshire Univ., 2010

[Antipode, Volume 42, No. 2 pp. 242-247]

With the election of Obama have come hopes that the USA will now enter a bright new age of multilateralism. These hopes will arguably prove to be misguided. While it is widely recognised that under the Bush administration there was a distinct unilateralism and prioritisation of US interests bound up in an aggressive geopolitics, the main themes of US foreign policy and its relations with “allies” and “enemies” were well established before the Bush administration was in place (Anderson 2003; see also Agnew 2003; Andreani 2004; Kelly 2003). For Toal (2003) US geopolitical culture is triangulated between universalism, regionalism, and ignorance, and for Slater (2004a) it is only the lack of attempts to conceal such a strategy that made the Bush administration distinctive. While the banner of multilateralism may well be waved by the new administration, it is likely to be in their interests to simply return to a more concealed form of unilateralism.

UNIQUENESS – AT: OBAMA HAS DESTROYED PRIMACY

PRESIDENT OBAMA IS COMMITTED TO AMERICAN MILITARY DOMINANCE

Chalmers Johnson, Author on American military bases, July 30, 2009

[<http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175101>]

Shortly after his election as president, Barack Obama, in a speech announcing several members of his new cabinet, stated as fact that "[w]e have to maintain the strongest military on the planet." A few weeks later, on March 12, 2009, in a speech at the National Defense University in Washington DC, the president again insisted, "Now make no mistake, this nation will maintain our military dominance. We will have the strongest armed forces in the history of the world." And in a commencement address to the cadets of the U.S. Naval Academy on May 22nd, Obama stressed that "[w]e will maintain America's military dominance and keep you the finest fighting force the world has ever seen."

UNIQUENESS – POLITICAL SUPPORT

THE UNITED STATES HAS A BIPARTISAN COMMITMENT TO PRIMACY

David McDonough, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie Univ., 2009

[ORBIS, Winter 2009, Volume 53, Issue 1, pp.6-22]

Yet the two costly interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have stretched the country's resources and raised the specter of "imperial overstretch." Many critics expect that the growing quagmire in Iraq has made the current approach unsustainable. "Primacy" appears destined to be remembered as a temporary grand strategy aberration. However, these critics will be disappointed. The 9/11 attacks reinforced the long-standing American concern over its societal vulnerability and created a political support base for essentially "primacist" grand strategies. A bi-partisan consensus has emerged on the overall direction, if not the particular modalities, of grand strategy. The unpopularity of the current administration and recent expenditures in blood and treasure are unlikely to lead to American retrenchment or strategic restraint.

THE U.S. WILL REMAIN ENGAGED NOW, THEY WON'T WITHDRAW

Michael Horowitz, Asst. Prof., Political Science, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 2009

[ORBIS, Spring 2009, p307]

It is important to recognize at the outset two key points about United States strategy and the potential costs and benefits for the United States in a changing security environment. First, the United States is very likely to remain fully engaged in global affairs. Advocates of restraint or global withdrawal, while popular in some segments of academia, remain on the margins of policy debates in Washington D.C. This could always change, of course. However, at present, it is a given that the United States will define its interests globally and pursue a strategy that requires capable military forces able to project power around the world. Because "indirect" counter-strategies are the rational choice for actors facing a strong state's power projection, irregular/asymmetric threats are inevitable given America's role in the global order.

UNIQUENESS – MIDDLE EAST

OBAMA ISN'T ABANDONING U.S. HEGEMONY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Allan Watson, Department of Geography, Staffordshire Univ., 2010

[Antipode, Volume 42, No. 2 pp. 242-247]

We will also learn in coming years whether the US politics of invasiveness, expressed through the appropriation of resources and raw materials, will continue. While Obama is committed to removing troops from Iraq, it is certain that continued access to Middle East oil reserves is crucial to the maintenance of US hegemony. As such, US military power in the Gulf should be viewed as a guarantee of world order, rather than as a tool for conquest. The USA emerged from the Iraq war as the pre-eminent global power in the Gulf region, and it would be in the economic and geopolitical interests of the new administration to maintain this position. The US position in the Gulf has sent an unmistakable message to potential global rivals to its hegemony, particularly China, increasingly reliant on oil supplies from the Middle East, that it will not tolerate any challenge to its hegemony. As Anderson argues, keeping rivals subordinate at the same time as dealing with enemies has been a major objective of US foreign policy. It is unlikely that an Obama administration would deviate from this policy.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS -- WAR

AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL MAKES WAR WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS MORE LIKELY

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

The jostling for status and influence among these ambitious nations and would-be nations is a second defining feature of the new post-Cold War international system. Nationalism in all its forms is back, if it ever went away, and so is international competition for power, influence, honor, and status. American predominance prevents these rivalries from intensifying — its regional as well as its global predominance. Were the United States to diminish its influence in the regions where it is currently the strongest power, the other nations would settle disputes as great and lesser powers have done in the past: sometimes through diplomacy and accommodation but often through confrontation and wars of varying scope, intensity, and destructiveness. One novel aspect of such a multipolar world is that most of these powers would possess nuclear weapons. That could make wars between them less likely, or it could simply make them more catastrophic.

U.S. WITHDRAWAL INCREASES THE RISK OF REGIONAL WARS THAT ESCALATE INTO GREAT WARS

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

The current order, of course, is not only far from perfect but also offers no guarantee against major conflict among the world's great powers. Even under the umbrella of unipolarity, regional conflicts involving the large powers may erupt. War could erupt between China and Taiwan and draw in both the United States and Japan. War could erupt between Russia and Georgia, forcing the United States and its European allies to decide whether to intervene or suffer the consequences of a Russian victory. Conflict between India and Pakistan remains possible, as does conflict between Iran and Israel or other Middle Eastern states. These, too, could draw in other great powers, including the United States. Such conflicts may be unavoidable no matter what policies the United States pursues. But they are more likely to erupt if the United States weakens or withdraws from its positions of regional dominance.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS -- WAR

AMERICAN PRIMACY REDUCES THE RISK OF WAR

Bradley Thayer, Assoc. Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

In addition to ensuring the security of the United States and its allies, American primacy within the international system causes many positive outcomes for Washington and the world. The first has been a more peaceful world. During the Cold War, U.S. leadership reduced friction among many states that were historical antagonists, most notably France and West Germany. Today, American primacy helps keep a number of complicated relationships aligned--between Greece and Turkey, Israel and Egypt, South Korea and Japan, India and Pakistan, Indonesia and Australia. This is not to say it fulfills Woodrow Wilson's vision of ending all war. Wars still occur where Washington's interests are not seriously threatened, such as in Darfur, but a Pax Americana does reduce war's likelihood, particularly war's worst form: great power wars.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEMOCRACY

HEGEMONY CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FREEDOM

Bradley Thayer, Assoc. Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

Everything we think of when we consider the current international order--free trade, a robust monetary regime, increasing respect for human rights, growing democratization--is directly linked to U.S. power. Retrenchment proponents seem to think that the current system can be maintained without the current amount of U.S. power behind it. In that they are dead wrong and need to be reminded of one of history's most significant lessons: Appalling things happen when international orders collapse. The Dark Ages followed Rome's collapse. Hitler succeeded the order established at Versailles. Without U.S. power, the liberal order created by the United States will end just as assuredly. As country and western great Ral Donner sang: "You don't know what you've got (until you lose it)."

AMERICAN POWER SPREADS LIBERALISM

Bradley Thayer, Assoc. Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

American power gives the United States the ability to spread democracy and other elements of its ideology of liberalism: Doing so is a source of much good for the countries concerned as well as the United States because, as John Owen noted on these pages in the Spring 2006 issue, liberal democracies are more likely to align with the United States and be sympathetic to the American worldview. So, spreading democracy helps maintain U.S. primacy. In addition, once states are governed democratically, the likelihood of any type of conflict is significantly reduced. This is not because democracies do not have clashing interests. Indeed they do. Rather, it is because they are more open, more transparent and more likely to want to resolve things amicably in concurrence with U.S. leadership. And so, in general, democratic states are good for their citizens as well as for advancing the interests of the United States.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – GLOBAL POVERTY

AMERICAN POWER PROMOTES ECONOMIC GROWTH

Bradley Thayer, Assoc. Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

Third, along with the growth in the number of democratic states around the world has been the growth of the global economy. With its allies, the United States has labored to create an economically liberal worldwide network characterized by free trade and commerce, respect for international property rights, and mobility of capital and labor markets. The economic stability and prosperity that stems from this economic order is a global public good from which all states benefit, particularly the poorest states in the Third World. The United States created this network not out of altruism but for the benefit and the economic well-being of America. This economic order forces American industries to be competitive, maximizes efficiencies and growth, and benefits defense as well because the size of the economy makes the defense burden manageable. Economic spin-offs foster the development of military technology, helping to ensure military prowess.

AMERICAN HEGEMONY IS THE KEY TO REDUCING GLOBAL POVERTY

Bradley Thayer, Assoc. Prof., Missouri State Univ., The National Interest 2006

[In Defense of Primacy, National Interest, Nov/Dec 2006 Issue 86]

Perhaps the greatest testament to the benefits of the economic network comes from Deepak Lal, a former Indian foreign service diplomat and researcher at the World Bank, who started his career confident in the socialist ideology of post-independence India. Abandoning the positions of his youth, Lal now recognizes that the only way to bring relief to desperately poor countries of the Third World is through the adoption of free market economic policies and globalization, which are facilitated through American primacy. As a witness to the failed alternative economic systems, Lal is one of the strongest academic proponents of American primacy due to the economic prosperity it provides.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – AT: PRIMACY BAD

OFF-SHORE BALANCING INCREASES INSTABILITY

Gary Schmitt, Director, Program on Advanced Strategic Studies, American Enterprise Inst., 2007

[<http://www.aei.org/article/25706>, March 12, 2007]

If the latter, the passive "off-shore balancing" approach leads to the question of whether such a strategy results in the United States addressing a security problem at a time when it may be far more difficult to deal with. Layne's bet, at least in the case of Iran and China today, is that if the United States would only get out of the way, other powers would naturally begin to meet their challenge. Possibly. But doing so might create an even more destabilizing competition among neighbors, or lead those same neighbors to accept China or Iran's new hegemony, fueling their ambitions rather than lessening them. The history of international relations suggests that most great crises are the result of not addressing more minor ones initially. As Thayer argues, it is probably less costly to deal with these issues when one is in a better position to do so than to wait for them to become full-blown security problems.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – AT: PRIMACY BAD

AMERICAN PRIMACY HAS ITS FLAWS, BUT THOSE ARE VASTLY OUTWEIGHED BY ITS BENEFITS

Robert Kagan, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007

[Policy Review No. 144, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>]

This is a good thing, and it should continue to be a primary goal of American foreign policy to perpetuate this relatively benign international configuration of power. The unipolar order with the United States as the predominant power is unavoidably riddled with flaws and contradictions. It inspires fears and jealousies. The United States is not immune to error, like all other nations, and because of its size and importance in the international system those errors are magnified and take on greater significance than the errors of less powerful nations. Compared to the ideal Kantian international order, in which all the world's powers would be peace-loving equals, conducting themselves wisely, prudently, and in strict obeisance to international law, the unipolar system is both dangerous and unjust. Compared to any plausible alternative in the real world, however, it is relatively stable and less likely to produce a major war between great powers. It is also comparatively benevolent, from a liberal perspective, for it is more conducive to the principles of economic and political liberalism that Americans and many others value.

U.S. POWER IS STILL AN INDISPENSABLE FORCE FOR GOOD

Thomas Henricksen, Senior Fellow, Stanford's Hoover Institution, November 3, 2009

[<http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/30/berlin-wall-09-anniversary-cold-war-nato-opinions-contributors-thomas-h-henricksen.html>]

Instead of a diminished U.S. role, the post-Wall stretch has witnessed the expanded indispensability of American power and diplomacy. Without the prodigious U.S. economic capacity and military might, regional troublemakers and local conflicts would have gotten out of hand. An American-led coalition turned back Iraq's conquest of Kuwait. Washington's intervention stopped the turmoil in Haiti and the horrific atrocities in Bosnia and Kosovo during the 1990s, while Western Europe dithered. When Bill Clinton failed to lift a finger to staunch Rwanda's genocide, hundreds of thousands died in the Central African country, testifying to the need for U.S. engagement.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – AT: SOFT POWER

HARD POWER KEY TO SOFT POWER

James Traub, NYT Syndicated Columnist, NYT MAGAZINE, January 30, 2005

[<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/30/magazine>]

The problem with the hard-soft dichotomy itself is that it fails to take account of the soft-power potential of military helicopters and aircraft carriers. We live in an era not only of globalized information but also of the nearly \$450 billion defense budget. The United States military is now an instrument of absolutely everything -- warfare, diplomacy, social policy, humanitarianism. It just depends how we deploy it. The critical attributes that make the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln an instrument of persuasion rather than of coercion are, first, that it is being put to nonlethal use and, second and no less important, that it is advancing humanitarian ends -- that it is not directly serving American self-interest. "This was an act of God," the Jakarta Post reporter quotes an American serviceman. "We are here and happy to help."

SOFT POWER IS NOT REALLY SEPARABLE FROM HARD POWER

Kazuo Ogoura, Pres. Japan Foundation, Center for Global Partnership, October 2006

[<http://www.cgp.org/index.php?option=article&task=default&articleid=341>]

If all of the above points are considered together, it is clear that soft power as an actual political theory is loaded with ideology and riddled with contradictions and hypocrisy. Religion and ideology, for example, are seen by some as potent examples of soft power. Looking back through history, however, one cannot fail to notice that whenever religion and ideology have spread around the world, they have invariably been accompanied by military might. History teaches us that soft power needs to be backed by hard power, and this is something that many soft power theorists are now recognizing. It is possible, therefore, to see soft power as no more than a means of rationalizing the exercise of hard power. Describing the use of military force as a "war on terror" is a deft use of soft power. Labeling the use of force with the ideology of a righteous struggle against terrorism is a means of legitimizing military action undertaken without the consent of the international community. To put it another way, we need to be aware that soft power can be a subtle way of rationalizing military action that lacks international legitimacy by bringing into play the concept of good and evil. In this light, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the concept of soft power is a kind of hypocrisy.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – AT: SOFT POWER

SOFT POWER THEORY HAS BEEN INVALIDATED BY HISTORY

Ilhan, Niaz, Faculty - History, Quaid-i-Azam Univ., Islamabad, January 10, 2010

[<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/in-paper-magazine/encounter/the-mirage-of-soft-power-in-a-globalised-world-010>]

One thing that soft power is a testament to is the ability of the human race to delude itself. It is remarkable that a hypothesis as intellectually bogus and empirically fragile should be projected as a legitimate new way of looking at old problems. The soft power world view is substantially invalidated by historical experience, events and trends of the contemporary era (1990-present) and future possibilities arising from historical experience and the dynamics of contemporary issues.

HARD POWER IS A PRECONDITION FOR SOFT POWER

Ilhan, Niaz, Faculty - History, Quaid-i-Azam Univ., Islamabad, January 10, 2010

[<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/in-paper-magazine/encounter/the-mirage-of-soft-power-in-a-globalised-world-010>]

Historically, therefore, power is power. A vast empire that possesses a sound economy, a powerful military, a competent administrative elite and a pragmatic leadership with enough political will to deal effectively with challenges, can also enjoy cultural prestige and charisma. Depending on the duration and success of that empire, its intellectual and cultural legacy may well outlast its physical dominion. This, however, does not alter the terms of causation for the imperial legacy is an effect of hard power control.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – AT: SOFT POWER

SOFT POWER DOESN'T MATTER UNLESS IT IS BACKED BY HARD POWER

Ilhan, Niaz, Faculty - History, Quaid-i-Azam Univ., Islamabad, January 10, 2010

[<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/in-paper-magazine/encounter/the-mirage-of-soft-power-in-a-globalised-world-010>]

Just because kung fu movies are popular in the West and McDonalds in the East does not mean that the US and China will agree on military procurement and investment, energy policy or the environment. It is the Chinese accumulation of hard power, particularly in the military and economic spheres — ICBMs, submarines, massive foreign exchange reserves that incidentally help the US finance its over-consumption and trade surpluses — that worries western governments and some of China's neighbours. The 2008 Beijing Olympics was the soft power fruit of hard power seeds carefully nurtured over decades of market socialism. The popularity of American fast food or pop music or political theories does not translate into agreement with its strategic policies. During the Shah's rule in Iran perhaps half a million Iranians were sent to study in the US and many of these American-educated men and women became the spearhead of the 1979 revolution. In Pakistan, democratic governments have traditionally been more hostile to US policies in the region than non-democratic dispensations due to the overwhelming public antipathy towards the American government. With US hard power in decline following a decade of imperial misadventures, flawed domestic policies and strategic overextension, there is little doubt that Washington's ability to influence the global village is also going to decrease. But that doesn't mean that people will stop wearing jeans or listening to rap music or eating at Pizza Hut. Soft power just doesn't matter strategically or diplomatically unless backed by hard power.

SOFT POWER IS MEANINGLESS

Ilhan, Niaz, Faculty - History, Quaid-i-Azam Univ., Islamabad, January 10, 2010

[<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/in-paper-magazine/encounter/the-mirage-of-soft-power-in-a-globalised-world-010>]

On an overpopulated, resource-starved, economically imbalanced, and environmentally degraded planet, soft power will be utterly meaningless. Those powers that possess the requisite ruthlessness, military capability, material superiority, effective administration and political will, are likely to prevail. Those powers that are deficient on these and other indices of hard power are likely to perish or be marginalised.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – AT: SOFT POWER

PROTECTING ALLIES WITH MILITARY PRESENCE IS A FORM OF SOFT POWER

Joseph Nye, Prof. International Relations, Harvard, January 11, 2010

[<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/nye78/English>]

When people speak of military power, they tend to think in terms of the resources that underlie the hard-power behavior of fighting and threatening to fight – soldiers, tanks, planes, ships, and so forth. In the end, if push comes to shove, such military resources matter. Napoleon famously said that “God is on the side of the big battalions,” and Mao Zedong argued that power comes from the barrel of a gun. In today’s world, however, there is much more to military resources than guns and battalions, and more to hard-power behavior than fighting or threatening to fight. Military power is also used to provide protection for allies and assistance to friends. Such non-coercive use of military resources can be an important source of the soft-power behavior of framing agendas, persuading other governments, and attracting support in world politics.

IMPACT EXTENSIONS – AT: SOFT POWER

SELECTIVE ENGAGEMENT IS TOO HARD TO DEFINE

David McDonough, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie Univ., 2009

[ORBIS, Winter 2009, Volume 53, Issue 1, pp.6-22]

In contrast, selective engagement envisions a more restrained strategy that forgoes significant humanitarian or policing duties, and instead focuses on prudential application of American power to maintain regional balances and great power peace. The United States should therefore be concerned with maintaining military commitments in Europe and Asia, as well as a presence in the Persian Gulf to forestall competition for its energy resources. Yet it can be criticized for being an explicitly “realist” strategy that remains ill-suited for a Republic that has historically been concerned with “liberal” principles as much as power. One can also question whether this approach can ever be selective in its implementation. There is little agreed-upon criteria for what constitutes “national interests,” and current commitments will ensure a significant U.S. global presence for the foreseeable future. Some prominent advocates have even adopted a “realpolitik plus” strategy that, by including humanitarianism and environmental activism, illustrates the potential temptation of an expansive definition of selectivity.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS

THE U.S. CANNOT SOLVE PROBLEMS BY ITSELF

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, Prof. Political Science/Lecturer Political Science, UCLA, 2010

[“Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy” International Security, Spring 2010, Volume 34, Number 4 pp. 63-95]

But since the 2003 Iraq War, a new consideration has emerged—how to persuade other states to cooperate with U.S. global governance. States that do not oppose efforts by the United States to maintain stability may nonetheless decline to follow its leadership. This is a matter for concern because although the United States can act alone, it cannot succeed on such issues as controlling terrorism, curbing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), rebuilding failed states, or maintaining economic stability without help from other states.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS

OBTAINING CHINA AND RUSSIA'S COOPERATION IS CRUCIAL

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, Prof. Political Science/Lecturer Political Science, UCLA, 2010

["Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy" International Security, Spring 2010, Volume 34, Number 4 pp. 63-95]

China's ascendance creates expectations of an uncertain power transition in the Asia-Pacific region and potentially in world politics, one that could be accompanied by dangerous competition. Then there is Russia, a former superpower and (after a decade of post-Soviet retrenchment complicated by gross internal mismanagement) most recently a resurgent power because of a rise in energy prices, a power that has not yet found a place in world politics. Obtaining cooperation from China and Russia is more complex and difficult because they are outsiders from the liberal Western community, with differing values and interests. In contrast, as a long-standing democracy, rising power India is more susceptible to appeals to common values, especially since the 2006 nuclear agreement with the United States recognized India's status as a nuclear power. With China and Russia, the problem is how to obtain their cooperation with U.S. global governance if they cannot be integrated into the West.

THE U.S. NEEDS CHINA AND RUSSIA TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF PROLIFERATION, TERRORISM, ENERGY AND CONFLICT

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, Prof. Political Science/Lecturer Political Science, UCLA, 2010

["Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy" International Security, Spring 2010, Volume 34, Number 4 pp. 63-95]

The United States needs Chinese and Russian assistance to curb proliferation of WMD, control terrorism, maintain stable energy supplies, and stabilize Eurasia. China and Russia have permanent seats on the United Nations (UN) Security Council, allowing them to veto resolutions authorizing intervention or sanctions against would-be proliferators or aggressors. China and Russia also have political ties with Iran and North Korea that could make them useful intermediaries. Because of its economic aid and geographic proximity, China is an essential interlocutor with North Korea; Russia is a major arms supplier and economic partner with Iran. Russia has thousands of nuclear weapons and tons of nuclear materials, both coveted by rogue states and terrorist groups. As the second-largest oil exporter and the holder of the world's largest gas reserves, Russia can affect global energy supplies and prices. Russia could provide help as a transit route for U.S. military supplies and source of intelligence for the U.S. effort to stabilize Afghanistan. As the dominant power in Central Asia, Russia can assist in maintaining stability in this energy-rich region, an area that is increasingly important to China as well. The United States needs to work with China to stabilize security relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, head off regional rivalries, and prevent dangerous conflict resulting from a North Korean implosion.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS

ACCOMMODATING RUSSIA AND CHINA'S GREAT POWER STATUS WILL HELP WIN THEIR COOPERATION

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, Prof. Political Science/Lecturer Political Science, UCLA, 2010

["Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy" International Security, Spring 2010, Volume 34, Number 4 pp. 63-95]

Securing Chinese and Russian cooperation requires understanding the objectives and logic of their grand strategies and devising effective policies to achieve that goal. In what follows, we demonstrate that despite apparent shifts and turns, Chinese and Russian foreign policies since the end of the Cold War have been motivated by a consistent objective—to restore both countries' great power status. We argue that China and Russia will be more likely to participate in global governance if the United States can and ways to recognize their distinctive status and identities.

STATUS CONCERNS ARE KEY FACTORS IN ENCOURAGING CHINESE COOPERATION

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, Prof. Political Science/Lecturer Political Science, UCLA, 2010

["Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy" International Security, Spring 2010, Volume 34, Number 4 pp. 63-95]

In sum, China has increasingly taken on a more activist, constructive world role that includes increased support for multilateralism, a policy that has reassured other states, enhanced China's global role, and increased its relative status. Nevertheless, the United States must remain attentive to China's status concerns, because Beijing is increasingly sensitive about its relative position and role in international gatherings such as the newly important G-20 and to the U.S. naval presence in Chinese coastal waters, claiming the area as part of its sphere of influence.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS

U.S. CONTAINMENT AND RIVALRY STRATEGIES WILL FAIL TO ACHIEVE RUSSIA AND CHINA COOPERATION

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, Prof. Political Science/Lecturer Political Science, UCLA, 2010

[“Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy” *International Security*, Spring 2010, Volume 34, Number 4 pp. 63-95]

The policy implications of SIT include greater emphasis on status-enhancing actions—for example, formal summits, strategic dialogues, and strategic partnerships—than on conventional prescriptions for containment, integration, or engagement. Because of their need for distinctive identities, rising states should be admitted to international institutions and informal coalitions without being subjected to ideological criteria. As the U.S. ability to achieve its goals unilaterally declines, the United States must learn how to treat China and Russia in ways other than as rivals or junior partners if it is to obtain their cooperation.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – DECLINE INEVITABLE

AMERICAN RELATIVE DECLINE IS INEVITABLE

Nina Hachigian, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, 2010

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/01/american_primacy.html, Jan 21, 2010]

The truth is that America's *relative* decline is, in fact, unavoidable in the short term. That's just a matter of definition when China's economy is growing at 8 percent or 10 percent, India's at 6 percent, and ours not at all. It won't always be this way, but it is now. Rather than pretending otherwise, the administration is facing and addressing this uncomfortable fact. Because while it is true that our toughest global challenges require cooperation, American power is a vital ingredient to securing the best possible future for Americans.

AMERICA IS ALREADY IN RAPID DECLINE DUE TO THE ECONOMY

Peter Goodspeed, The National Post, December 23, 2009

[<http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=2379362#ixzz0ajFLkxVK>]

Robert Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, estimates between 2000 and 2008 the US share of the world's GDP fell by 32%, while that of China rose by 144%. 'America is in unprecedented decline,' he says. 'The self-inflicted wounds of the Iraq War, growing government debt, increasingly negative current-account balances and other internal economic weaknesses have cost the United States real power in today's world of rapidly spreading knowledge and technology. If present trends continue, we will look back at the Bush administration years as the death knell of American hegemony.' The United States has experienced the most significant decline of any state, except the Soviet Union, since the mid-19th century, says Prof. Pape, adding: "Something fundamental has changed."

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – MILITARY POWER IRRELEVANT

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DOES NOT DEPEND ON MILITARY POWER

Nina Hachigian, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, 2010

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/01/american_primacy.html, Jan 21, 2010]

America will bounce back. And it will continue to be an indispensable nation, not because of our unassailable power, but because of our ideas, our flexibility, and our leadership – the strengths that in fact enabled our still vast military superiority. Fortunately, Barack Obama has proven to be a leader that reads America's virtues broadly, and enlists others in their promise. Perhaps it is simply too inclusive a world-view for those that miss the clarity of a bipolar ideological contest. But as Obama has pointed out, such clarity is a luxury we can no longer afford.

PRIMACY FAILED

Nina Hachigian, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, 2010

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/01/american_primacy.html, Jan 21, 2010]

And in the end, the primacy strategy didn't deliver. Primacy tempted our leaders into a reckless war in Iraq; it did not prevent North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons; it did nothing to slow China's influence, as was its implicit goal; and it wrecked, with Moscow's help, our relationship with Russia. A fixation on primacy paradoxically managed to undermine the influence and authority America did have. Nevertheless, the fact that the Bush administration embraced the notion of primacy was a comfort to the remaining Cold Warriors.

AMERICAN DOMINANCE IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE

Chalmers Johnson, Author on American military bases, July 30, 2009

[<http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175101>]

What he (President Obama) failed to note is that the United States no longer has the capability to remain a global hegemon, and to pretend otherwise is to invite disaster. According to a growing consensus of economists and political scientists around the world, it is impossible for the United States to continue in that role while emerging into full view as a crippled economic power. No such configuration has ever persisted in the history of imperialism. The University of Chicago's Robert Pape, author of the important study *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (Random House, 2005), typically writes: "America is in unprecedented decline. The self-inflicted wounds of the Iraq war, growing government debt, increasingly negative current-account balances and other internal economic weaknesses have cost the United States real power in today's world of rapidly spreading knowledge and technology. If present trends continue, we will look back on the Bush years as the death knell of American hegemony."

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – MILITARY POWER IRRELEVANT

KAGAN MISANALYZES THE SOURCE OF INTERNATIONAL POWER

Nina Hachigian, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, 2010

[http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/01/american_primacy.html, Jan 21, 2010]

Kagan's analyses fail to discuss two major developments that demand a new approach—the increased potency of transnational threats and the new salience of domestic policy in America's world standing. Kagan writes as if the Obama administration is engaging with re-emerging powers to prove an ideological point that great power strife is a relic of history. Yet no staffer that I have ever spoken with would suggest that these relationships are beyond rivalry. More importantly, Kagan does not reveal the Obama administration's reasons for pursuing strategic collaborations with China, Russia, India, and other pivotal powers. In fact, these partnerships are necessary to protect Americans from common threats in terrorists, global warming, economic crises, nuclear proliferation, and pandemics such as swine flu—the forces of disorder that can and do affect Americans right here at home. Kagan barely mentions these threats, but to keep its own people safe, America needs Russia to secure its loose nuclear materials so terrorists can't get it, China—the world's largest emitter—to cut down on its carbon, India to help track extremists, and all of them to contain pandemics. How can we get these big, proud countries to take these steps? Aggressive diplomacy.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – MILITARY POWER IRRELEVANT

OTHER NATIONS WOULD STEP IN AND REPLACE THE U.S. ROLE

David Gordon, Senior Fellow, Ludwig von Mises Institute, May 22, 2010

[<http://www.lewrockwell.com/gordon/gordon78.1.html>]

It is unquestionably true that disorder constantly threatens various areas of the world; but why must a single power act to restore order? If America does not act, will not those nations in the vicinity of a crisis have a strong incentive to cope with it? In fact, there is little reason to believe the world will descend down this path [to chaos] if the United States hews to a restrained foreign policy focused on preserving its national security and advancing its vital interests. This is because there are other governments in other countries, pursuing similar policies aimed at preserving their security, and regional – much less global – chaos is hardly in their interests. On the contrary, the primary obligation of government is to defend the citizens from threats, both foreign and domestic.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – AT: HUMANITARIANISM IMPACTS

HEGEMONY DOESN'T SERVE HUMANITARIAN INTERESTS

David Gordon, Senior Fellow, Ludwig von Mises Institute, May 22, 2010

[<http://www.lewrockwell.com/gordon/gordon78.1.html>]

Even those who reject American hegemony sometimes call for American action to meet "humanitarian catastrophes." Are we to stand idly by when mass murder, e.g., in Rwanda and Darfur, is taking place? Preble has a twofold response to this unfortunately influential doctrine of the "responsibility to protect." First, military interventions often fail to achieve their ostensible humanitarian purpose and [e]ven the best-intended military interventions, those specifically aimed at advancing the cause of peace and justice, can have horrific side-effects, [the] most important of these being the real possibility that innocent bystanders and those the operation seeks to protect may be inadvertently killed or injured.... Those killed leave behind a legacy of bitterness; parents, spouses, children, friends, few of whom may have actively supported the former regime, but all of whom may forget the noble intentions of the invading force and later direct their wrath at those responsible for their misfortune.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – PRIMACY IRRELEVANT

WARS ARE INEVITABLE WITH OR WITHOUT AMERICAN HEGEMONY – AND HEGEMONY ENTAILS STARTING SOME WARS

Daniel Larison, PhD., Univ. of Chicago, The American Conservative April 5, 2010

[<http://www.amconmag.com/larison/2010/04/05/a-bright-post-hegemonic-future/>]

In other words, unsustainable U.S. hegemony will not be as great as it was, and that will mean that other major and rising powers will be able to exert something more like the normal influence in their regions that such powers have exerted throughout most of modern history. Will there be conflicts in such a world? Of course, there will be, but we already have a number of conflicts in the world that have either been deemed irrelevant to the maintenance of Pax Americana or they are the products of policies designed to perpetuate Pax Americana. In practice, securing this “peace” has involved starting several wars, the largest and most destructive of which has been the war in Iraq, as well as supporting proxies and allies as they escalated conflicts with their neighbors.

CHALLENGES TO THE U.S. ARE INEVITABLE AND MAY EVEN BE CAUSED BY OUR HEGEMONIC POLICIES

Daniel Larison, PhD., University of Chicago, The American Conservative April 5, 2010

[<http://www.amconmag.com/larison/2010/04/05/a-bright-post-hegemonic-future/>]

China will build up its military, as it is already doing, and Russia will continue to extend its influence into its “near-abroad,” and Iran will develop nuclear weapons. What is important to stress here is that all of these things already are or soon will be happening anyway. These things are happening despite, and perhaps in some cases because of, American military presence in their respective regions. The reality of multipolarity makes these first two more or less unavoidable, and as we have been seeing over the last few years there is nothing short of full-scale war with Iran that could realistically interrupt the development of its nuclear program. If Iran definitely decides to acquire nuclear weapons, there is remarkably little that any outside government can do to prevent this from happening. One sure way to guarantee that Iran pursues this route is to continue to act punitively towards Iran. If Western powers actively resist Russian efforts to exercise influence along its own borders as the U.S. and some European states have been doing, all that will result is the use of Russia’s smaller neighbors as Western proxies. This will have very unfortunate consequences for the proxies, which the Russians will intimidate and/or attack and which Western powers will not aid in direct conflicts with Russia.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – LIBERALISM TAKEOUT

SPREADING GLOBALIZATION AND DEMOCRACY IS SELF-DEFEATING FOR AMERICAN HEGEMONY

Daniel Larison, PhD., University of Chicago, The American Conservative April 5, 2010

[<http://www.amconmag.com/larison/2010/04/05/a-bright-post-hegemonic-future/>]

As for the so-called “romantic belief in global fraternity,” which very few people actually hold, there have been no greater romantics than the idealists who have deluded themselves and many of us that the interests of the rest of the world and the interests of the United States frequently converge. American hegemonists have been fairly certain that democratization and globalization advance American power, and so they have tried to encourage both on the unfounded assumptions that economic interdependence and democracy will tend to prevent conflict and will lead other governments to align with Washington. As both emerging-market democracies and long-established industrialized democratic powers have been showing us in recent years, neither democratization nor globalization magnifies American power, but instead has tended to create more increasingly powerful centers of resistance to Washington’s policies.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – OVERSTRETCH TURN

SCALING BACK OUR MILITARY PRESENCE IS THE KEY TO AVOIDING IMPERIAL OVERSTRETCH AND COLLAPSE

Chalmers Johnson, Author on American military bases, July 30, 2009

[<http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175101>]

However ambitious President Barack Obama's domestic plans, one unacknowledged issue has the potential to destroy any reform efforts he might launch. Think of it as the 800-pound gorilla in the American living room: our longstanding reliance on imperialism and militarism in our relations with other countries and the vast, potentially ruinous global empire of bases that goes with it. The failure to begin to deal with our bloated military establishment and the profligate use of it in missions for which it is hopelessly inappropriate will, sooner rather than later, condemn the United States to a devastating trio of consequences: imperial overstretch, perpetual war, and insolvency, leading to a likely collapse similar to that of the former Soviet Union.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – SOFT POWER

IRAQ WAR PROVES THE NEED FOR SOFT POWER – HARD POWER FAILS

Stephen Coulthart, Whitehead School of Diplomacy, Seton Hall, June 26, 2008

[<http://dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=14663>]

Five years ago in May, President Bush, standing on the deck of an aircraft carrier, proudly declared "mission accomplished" in Iraq and stated that major combat operations were over. The event comes as a reminder of the limits of American military might, or "hard power". Indeed, the US easily toppled the Iraqi regime in days but it failed to win the peace after the conventional conflict ended. As a result, it is clear that the US must place greater emphasis on soft power than ever before.

EVEN MILITARY SUPPORTS IMPORTANCE OF SOFT POWER NOW

Stephen Coulthart, Whitehead School of Diplomacy, Seton Hall, June 26, 2008

[<http://dailystaregypt.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=14663>]

The US needs to look outside of the "military might" box when it comes to foreign engagement. Warfare is no longer the straightforward task of prior ages but a delicate affair that should only be used in the direst circumstances. Interestingly, some of the backers of this idea are coming from the most unlikely of places: the military. Former NATO general Rupert Smith has stated the war has moved from the battlefields to amongst the people. Indeed civilians now suffer more than ever before in war: in World War I approximately 10% of all deaths were civilian while in modern conflicts, such as in Iraq, civilian casualties account for 90% of all fatalities. Now that the battle is moving amongst the people, the US government must take an active lead in developing soft power approaches to mitigate conflict.

AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS – SOFT POWER

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING EFFECTIVE USE OF OUR MILITARY STRENGTH, WILL INCREASINGLY DEPEND ON “SOFT POWER” MECHANISMS.

Joseph Nye, Professor of International Relations, Harvard, March 18, 2008

[http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/18173/america_must_learn_the_hard_facts_of_soft_power.html]

The American presidential race commands attention around the world. The fact that the final three contenders include a woman, an African American, and an older man who often challenged his own party suggests that the United States, after a decline in popularity during the Bush years, retains a capacity to reinvent itself. But the next president must recognise that the nature of leadership is also changing. The information revolution is transforming politics and organisations. People today have become less deferential to authority in organisations and in politics. Soft power — the ability to get what you want by attraction rather than coercion or payment — is becoming more important. Even the military faces these changes. The Pentagon reports that American army drillmasters do "less shouting at everyone", because today's generation responds better to instructors who play "a more counseling-type role". Of course, the hard power of command remains important. Hard and soft power are related, because they are both approaches to achieving one's objectives by affecting the behavior of others. Hard and soft power can reinforce or undermine each other. In response to al-Qaeda's terrorist attacks on the US, Vice-President Dick Cheney argued that strong military action would deter further attacks. But the indiscriminate use of hard power — illustrated by the invasion of Iraq, the Abu Ghraib prison photos, and detentions without trial — served to increase the number of terrorist recruits. The absence of an effective soft power component undercut the strategic response to terrorism.