

**AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY: A TIME FOR A SHIFT IN
PRIORITIES AND INSTRUMENTS**

A Senior Scholars Thesis

by

PATRICK ISSA

Submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Research
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLAR

April 2011

Major: International Studies

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

American Foreign Policy: A Time for a Shift in Priorities and Instruments. (April 2011)

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In the post 9/11 world of American Foreign Policy, where interdependence and globalization are variables that influence every aspect of world affairs, what should the priorities of the United States be and what instruments of foreign policy are the most effective? This question is one that the United States can no longer avoid. My hypothesis is that the United States needs to reevaluate its priorities and more importantly reevaluate its instruments of statecraft if it desires to retain what power it has left. I support this hypothesis by using various articles from the *Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Andrew Bacevich's *American Empire* and Chalmers Johnson's *Blowback*. My paper focuses on comparing old priorities with new priorities, and it explains how the old instruments of foreign policy are no longer suitable for what the new priorities of a successful foreign policy seek to establish. I suggest what a new foreign policy should consist of and how to establish one. Politics have always been a tricky endeavor to understand and master, and there are numerous challenges to establishing a cohesive foreign policy. I outline what the greatest challenge to establishing a foreign policy is

and how to overcome it. My points and supporting evidence are not original; however, the manner in which they are expressed will bring new light to the subject, and for the first time, several important points will be evaluated and compiled together. The paper has been laid out as a comparison between the Cold War Era policies and the post 9/11 policies. The reader will be able to distinguish the differences in the political climate and realize that the current policies are unsuitable.

DEDICATION

Max: thank you for encouraging me to pursue this program. It has been a valuable experience. I would like to thank Leighann for giving me the support throughout the entire project. Bilal, for being my go to editor. Mom, dad, and Pascale: I am able to do this because of the support I have from home.

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NOMENCLATURE

C.I.A

Central Intelligence Agency

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, marked by the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the United States has been foraging for a cohesive foreign policy. Prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, containment drove US foreign policy. This task was accomplished by establishing a global network of U.S military bases and friendly nations that collectively fall under the umbrella term known as “The American Empire”. In the Cold War era, “empire” was justified in order to protect the interests of the United States and her allies from the threats posed by the Soviet Union and her allies. However, the past ten years has witnessed this short lived post-Cold War American hegemonic world order morph into a complex multi-polar global order characterized by what many see as three or more competing political-economic global hegemonies, vastly compounding the complexity, threats and challenges to America’s foreign policy.

When the mission was completed and the Soviet empire dissolved the traditional non-communist west, led by the United States, struggled to replace the simple but successful formula of containment. It is the working consensus of the academic literature that this structure has yet to take root (Falk 2009, Resnick 2009, Hadar 2009). It is within this context that military operations such as two Gulf wars, Somalia, the Balkans, and of

This thesis follows the style of the *American Political Science Review*.

course, Afghanistan and the global war on terror might fruitfully be measured.

September 11, 2001 delivered to the door-step of US foreign policy a sense of purpose, clarity and motivation that commonly follows crises and unifying moments constructed from the remnants of shock and trauma in the world of violence and war. On September 20th President George W. Bush declared an international War on Terrorism.

For the next decade the United States would engage in war with first the Taliban and then Iraq. Juxtaposing the second half of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, policy makers must ask the question: In the post 9/11 world of globalization and interdependence, are the traditional foreign policies of the American empire still effective?

After conducting research, it is concluded that, the traditional foreign policies of the American empire are no longer effective and there needs to be a shift in priorities in American foreign policy. Furthermore there is likely to be a significant reassessment of the tools of Foreign Policy.

In answering the question, it is important to first define the parameters of effective foreign policy, and second to assess the tools and objectives of US foreign policy during the Cold War (1945-1990) and after the 9/11 attacks that efficiently serve the task of formulating and executing effective foreign policy. An effective foreign policy is one that would allow for open markets, global military allies, international cooperation and most importantly efficiently using resources. With this strategy the United States will be

able to obtain key global resources such as loans, market access, raw materials nurturing a scenario that allows U.S economic growth through stability. The objective of U.S foreign policy during the Cold War was to effectively contain the spread of communism while preserving U.S supremacy in the international arena. Among other actions the tools of U.S foreign policy during the Cold War years were heavily focused on military spending and the ability of the United States to out produce Soviet Union in terms of military stock piles. Despite the complications of nuclear weapons and the several proxy wars across the globe, this strategy proved to be an effective means; given the nature of the Cold War and the tensions between the two nations. However, in the era of multipolarity and balanced hegemony, globalization, interdependence and international terrorist networks, the objectives are much different. The objectives of U.S foreign policy are no longer to contain communism but to initially protect the United States from terrorist attacks and then transition to democratizing and fostering economic development to suffocate terrorism and hostile intentions. Combating the War on Terrorism is a mid-range military strategy to the broader goal of democratization and economic development. The challenge is not only protecting the homeland, but preserving the supremacy of U.S democracy, economic superiority and interests in the world arena. With the increase in interdependence and globalization of the world since the end of the Cold War, it has become more complicated for the United States to pursue her interests. Although it still may be a dominant power for the foreseeable future, the rise in other economic powers will soon diminish the role of the United States in international affairs.

In addition, it is more difficult now to execute the objectives because of the blowback and risk of potential blowback to former U.S strategies. Blowback is a term invented by the C.I.A “to describe the likelihood that our cover operations in other people’s countries would result in retaliations against Americans, civilian and military, at home and abroad” (Johnson 2004). It is important to realize blowback as an obstacle in accomplishing U.S objectives in the post 9/11 world because they are events that will write the narrative of the United States in the 21st century. Although blowback is by definition unexpected, it would be wise to account for potential blowback occurrences while establishing a foreign policy and instruments to execute the foreign policy as an attempt to mitigate blowback situations. In foreign policy the decision taken is decided upon because it was the best possible decision weighing the costs and gains of the decision. Although the gain that led to Blowback may offset the cost of potential blowback, blowback is still an obstacle in making future decisions. The tool of foreign policy that the U.S needs to focus less on is military expenditures, and more on diplomacy and economic stability. The resiliency and stability of the U.S economy, both domestically and internationally speaking, is the single most important weapon that policy makers need to focus on. If the economy is not merely stable but strong, it will at the least be reputable in the international arena. With a proven successful U.S/western model, rising nations will have little choice but to accept the conditions and norms that the U.S has established. If the rising powers still try to revolt against the successful U.S, then diplomatic efforts will be able to curb their appeal to do so by mobilizing the international body to put pressure on the belligerent party. Negatively, if the United

States does not have a successful system, then the rising nations will be more likely to revolt and change the rules in their favor, which will not be in the best possible interest of the United States.

The Cold War era and the post 9/11 era are different and unique, and attempting to solve the new conflict of terrorism using the solution of the Cold War will simply not work. Has the time come for the U.S to receive a contemporary equivalent of Kennan's "The Long Telegram" and layout the architecture of a foreign policy that will secure the national interests of the United States, as it did with the Cold War, but also taking into account the new variables of globalization, interdependence and the propensity for blowback?

Importance

Unfortunately, U.S foreign policy is currently in a state of trial and error – there is an unease regarding how to tackle the issues at hand, but the issues are known. The current state of the union, as a result of trial and error, is far worse now than when it started the century. There has been arguably irreparable damage to the reputation of Americans abroad, the current budget has weakened our political leverage abroad and decreased the value of both the dollar and the American model of liberal economy. The un-established foreign policy has also exposed the U.S. to costly blowback and the prospect of limited and ineffectual responses to these challenges.

Context in world politics

In analyzing and predicting U.S foreign policy it is important to understand the context in which world politics is viewed. There are two popular schools of thought in dealing with international relations; realism and liberalism. Realism is derived from philosophers such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes and believes that states are the principal actors in an anarchical world, they are unitary actors, rational actors, and they are primarily concerned with security. Liberalism on the other hand, made popular by John Locke and the Stoics, offers that non-state actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have an influence in world affairs not just the state. The logic of liberalism also holds that interdependence between nations can moderate behavior. Liberalists are optimistic about the prospects for lasting cooperation among states. This goes hand in hand with the notion that war is not always the option and that compromise should always come first. It is the position of this study that U.S foreign policy is motivated by a combination of realist and liberal views. There is a balance and combination between the two, characterized by the ebb and flow of one relative to the other.

The challenge

It is extremely difficult to accomplish a foreign policy goal because democracy constrains coherency. The political polarization in Washington D.C. has severely inhibited action. Unfortunately, this climate is accompanied with robust partisan attitudes regarding particular issues that may or may not have relevance to foreign

policy. In establishing a coherent foreign policy a clear and concise objective must be developed, an objective that can be accomplished so that the next objective can be outlined and accomplished. This objective must be of importance to the majority of policy makers so that the democracy does not inhibit success.

Literature review

The costs of realist foreign policy are brought into vivid focus by Chalmers Johnson (2004) in his study dealing with U.S foreign policy. *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* draws attention to the blowback effect of U.S foreign policy, Johnson highlights the unintended consequences that the United States incurred due to its decision making and foreign policy during the Cold War years. He also brings to attention the potential unintended consequences that the U.S might incur because of the current policies in a post-Cold War world. He emphasizes that attacks against America are not attacks against Americans, but are attacks against American Foreign Policy. Johnson begins the book by outlining his ideas of U.S foreign policy and how it resembles the evils of the Soviet Union. He does this so that the reader can be warmed up to the idea of an American Empire. To most Americans the idea of empire is a negative one that is generally associated with hegemony, racism and exploitation, for example the British and Roman empires. However, Johnson supports his beliefs of an American Empire by defining empire. He clarifies that the empire that he is referring to is one of ideology. Johnson's Empire is an empire that is rooted, not on exploitation or dependent territories, but on the beliefs that the U.S imposes onto other

countries. Johnson compares the United States and the Soviet Union. He gives the example of the satellite states that both the Soviet Union had and the United States had during the Cold War. The characteristics of the empire that both powers created were not exclusively based on trade or military, it was ideological influence. If the power could win the minds of the occupied then it was part of its empire. The U.S is now faced with the same underlying issue, convincing the world of American Democracy. The difference however, is that the international political climate is more volatile and dynamic than it once was.

Similarly Andrew Bacevich offers yet another dimension to our understanding of the costs of the reality of U.S foreign policy. Bacevich argues that America has become an empire not from Cold War policies, but from the fuel of U.S foreign policy – the idea of economic growth and expansion. Bacevich argues that the interconnectedness of these two ideas has led to a U.S supremacy and American Empire. He believes that America is a “reluctant super power”; a super power that wants peace and democracy in its own image, but unfortunately has to deal with those that oppose it. The empirical theme of U.S capitalism is leaving entire nations and their people starving and thirsty. It has left them trapped within war torn borders that the U.S created. This desire to expand economically has left the United States with a corrupted reputation; however it is not the ideologies of the United States that are at fault, it is that its policies are ineffective and counter progressive. Unfortunately for the U.S these policies have created, and will continue to create animosity towards the United States; which will eventually lead to the

demise of the “American Empire”. The U.S grand Strategy is committed to “global openness - removing barriers that inhibit the movement of goods, capital, ideas, and people” (Bacevich 2002). With the U.S as its controller, it hopes to create an open and integrated international order based on the principles of democratic capitalism. The strategy that the U.S has adopted is a strategy that if not managed correctly, or outline limits to this policy then it will do just the opposite of what it intends to do and create a situation where it is more threatened then it was before. For example, in certain situations the United States was able to employ this grand strategy in parts of the world, however in the parts that it was unable to do so the United States “employed its dominant military power to thwart any conceivable challenge to it's preeminence” (Bacevich 2002).

William Plaff’s article in Foreign Affairs Magazine, *Manufacturing Insecurity* describes the American Empire in similar light as Johnson does. He poses the question “Has it been a terrible error for the United States to have built an all-but-irreversible world system of more than 1,000 military bases, stations, and outposts? This system was created to enhance U.S national security, but what if it has actually done the opposite, provoking conflict and creating the very insecurity it was intended to prevent?” Plaff describes the tangible costs and effects of American empire. He discusses the United States as “displaying certain characteristics of a classical militarist state...a society in which military and internal security demands are paramount and whose political imagination is dominated by vast threats yet to be realized”. The fear of the United

States will be the cause of its demise. Plaff gives a perspective as to the effects of a misguided foreign policy.

Johnson, Bacevich and Plaff do an adequate job of describing the effects of misguided foreign policy and Haas and Altman in their co-authored article *American Profligacy and American Power* outline what the objectives of U.S strategy should be. The main focus of their article is to reveal the consequences of fiscal irresponsibility. They advocate first and foremost the importance of a balanced budget and the reduction of American debt. Debt is becoming more and more of an issue in world affairs. Ten years since the U.S began its nation building endeavors the Congressional Budget Office projects “that within ten years, federal debt could reach 90% of GDP, and even this estimate is probably too optimistic given the low rates of economic growth that the U.S is experiencing and likely to see for years to come.” The theme that can be revealed from the paper is that the priorities of the United States are not in order. With the amount of debt reaching levels of those immediately after WWII there is risk that there will be a sharp adjustment in fiscal policy, “no category of federal spending will be spared, including entitlements and defense, taxes will be raised and economic growth will suffer everywhere”. For the first time America will take a dose of its own medicine, as there will be “profound consequences, not just for Americans’ standard of living but also for U.S foreign policy and the coming era of international relations.”

At the other end Leslie Gelb in his article *GDP Now Matters More Than Force* outlines effective tools of U.S foreign policy. He highlights that the current U.S policy is not focused enough on the economy and the economy is struggling as a result. He advocates that “a new way of thinking about U.S interests and power must aim for a foreign policy fitted to a world in which economic concerns typically -- but not always -- outweigh traditional military imperatives”. The conceived national security threats need to be reevaluated and tools of foreign policy need to become more effective and thought out. Gelb’s article describes objectives of U.S foreign policy, but more importantly he provides the U.S with instruments. He does an exceptional job of explaining foreign affairs, but he does an even better job of explaining that the best way to handle foreign affairs is not with military power, but with domestic economic expenditures; schools, infrastructure, reducing public debt, creating alternative energy resources which create jobs and reduce dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

Stewart Patrick describes the status of the United States in an increasingly interdependent and globalized world. In his article, published in *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, *Irresponsible Stakeholders?*, he proposes how the United States should adjust to the rising powers that threaten the current international system; tools of foreign policy. It is given that an international system without the U.S is improbable; however the U.S no longer has an absolute monopoly on power. He describes how the U.S can incorporate other nations, while retaining as much power and respect in the international

arena as possible. His article gives insight as to the tools of foreign policy that the U.S should adopt to adjust to its shift in priorities.

CHAPTER II

A SHIFT IN PRIORITIES

In understanding why there needs to be a shift in priorities it is important to know a brief history of U.S – Soviet relations during the Cold war. At the end of World War II, Europe was in ruins and the only opposition in the world was the Soviet Union; which threatened the fundamental values of the United States. From the 1950's to the early 1990's it was the policy of the United States to stop the spread of communism and prevent the expansion of Soviet influence. The theme of this policy, prevention and prohibition, put the United States in a position where military spending was necessary if it wanted to deter the Soviet Union from gaining power and maintain supremacy. This created a vicious cycle of competition between the Soviet Union and the United States. The hysteria of fear and insecurity between the two nations fueled an arms race. The hysteria can be seen in McCarthyism. McCarthyism was coined as the term used to describe the red scare in the United States during the Cold War. Senator Joseph McCarthy made false claims that he knew of people in the U.S government that were spying for the Soviet Union. With an atmosphere of McCarthyism it was easy to be convinced of the hysteria and fuel the cycle. Although national security and protection of U.S values are still a priority in U.S foreign policy, communism is not. The current priorities include balancing the federal budget and adapting to the threat of terrorism through international integration.

Balancing the budget

Balancing the federal budget has become an increasingly important issue in recent years as the current trajectory is not optimistic for the United States. It is estimated that the “level of federal debt will reach 90 percent by 2020” (Haass 2010). In the past decade the United States government has pursued a fiscal policy that “is incurring debt at a historically unprecedented and ultimately unsustainable rate” (Haass 2010). The spending deficit of the United States is a result of the dated policies of national security coupled with “the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts” (Haass 2010). In ten years the U.S deficit “nearly tripled from 3.5 Trillion in 2000 to 9 trillion in 2010” (Haass 2010). Leslie Gelb writes “most nations have adjusted their national security strategies to focus on economic security, but less so the United States” (2010). The economic security of the United States is the most powerful weapon in its stock pile and currently the Treasury Department is not doing very well in keeping it secure.

One of the many elementary laws of economics is that as the debt increases the interest rates will increase as well. Because an interest rate is the cost of money, as U.S. interest rates increase, so will the cost of borrowing money an estimated 3 percent- from one percent of GDP to four percent or more. This is problematic because the expense of the interest will “rival defense expenditures. It will exceed all domestic discretionary spending, a category that includes spending on infrastructure, research, education, energy, and agriculture” (Haass 2010). Budget cuts coupled with raising taxes to curb the deficit, would “shrink the base of productive capital and flatten GDP and family

incomes. As more and more debt piled up, growth would slow and Americans' standard of living would fall" (Haass 2010). The interest expense will eventually increase to levels that crowd out entire categories of federal spending, further undermining the families' income.

Although it is a combination of policies that have led the United States down the path of excessive borrowing and an extreme budget deficit, the initial spending spree that the government took is tied to the War on Terrorism and the pursuit of 'national security'. Balancing the budget is going to prove to be a problematic dilemma because national security has become an overwhelming concern for the United States. On September 11th, 2001 the United States embarked on a mission to ensure national security which involved historical spending habits. Although national security is worth every dollar that is spent, a shift from the traditional ways of protection is necessary if the United States wants to ensure maximum levels of national security while protecting its most valuable weapon; economic security. The traditional ways of protection are the ways of the Cold War, military build up and weapons manufacturing. The past decade shows that the old policies are no longer suitable for the current time. It should be the priority of the United States to reorganize its budget to incorporate an updated strategy of national security rather than the traditional policies.

Aside from the financial resources and government programs, the United States' global influence will suffer. Washington will no longer be able to "lead global economic

matters, such as its 2010 urgings in the Seoul G-20 summit for more stimulus spending” (Haass 2010). As mentioned earlier, a strong economy is the United States’ biggest weapon. This is because a weak U.S economy will “diminish the appeal of the American model of market-based capitalism” (Haass 2010). With statecraft a foreign policy is carried out as much by a country’s image as it is by its deeds; and an example of a thriving economy and high living standards based on Bacevich’s American system is real power.

Terrorism and integration

Some may argue that terrorism and communism are very similar threats however when they are looked at closer they reveal that they are more different than what meets the eye. Although the successful execution of communism and terrorism against the United States are threatening, they are fundamentally different threats. Communism, outlined by Karl Marx a German political theorist in his *Communist Manifesto*, is a “solution to the social injustices of capitalism”. Communism emphasizes on the common ownership among the people, and the abolishment of private property. Just as the United States has a free capitalistic society, Communism adopts a society that is for the collective good. Terrorism on the other had is a much different beast. Terrorism as defined by the U.S Department of Defense is “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological” (2010). Although America is still threatened, the policies of the past tailored to defeating

communism are no longer suitable for dealing for the priorities of the present, fighting terrorism.

In addition to terrorism and balancing the budget, it must become the priority of the United States to incorporate other nations into U.S strategy rather than focusing efforts on balancing the power of nations, in an increasingly global world. Today the objective of statecraft is to manage global interdependence. Stewart Patrick outlines the stake holder model in his article “Irresponsible Stakeholder?” published in Foreign Affairs Magazine. The Stake Holder model champions a foreign policy that has a greater sense of global interdependence and global responsibility and accountability. A responsible stake holder in the international system “embraces established standards of behavior and accepts new regional and global obligations”. The grand vision envisions integrating emerging powers into the world order, “new and emerging powers who seek greater voice and representation will need to accept greater responsibilities for meeting global challenges” (White House 2010). None of the global issues can be solved by western powers alone, non-western actors need to be present to ensure a lasting, meaningful agreement. Integrating the world powers by giving emerging nations a greater stake in today’s order will increase legitimacy of existing arrangements and discourage assaults on prevailing liberal norms. The core value of this policy was once expressed by Lyndon Johnson “it is better to bring difficult players inside the tent than leave them outside where they can make mischief.”

Although an integration of nations is a practical and needed shift in U.S foreign policy, historically speaking “power transitions have been fraught with danger” (Patrick 2010), fundamental interests will still collide and strategic rivalries persist. In the spring of 2010 Brazil and Turkey “suddenly injected themselves into the long-running negotiations over Iran’s nuclear ambitions, seeing to broker an agreement on Iranian enrichment activities that would have allowed Iran to reprocess its low-enriched uranium abroad” (Patrick 2010). Although they failed to halt sanctions against Iran they defied the United States and other permanent members of the Security Council by voting against the sanctions. This episode shows that the integration of other powers will be trickier than anticipated for the United States and its strategy. This topic is of dyer importance to the safety of the world - if the emerging powers are not cooperating with little power, then the consequences can be detrimental for global development if they are given legitimate power in the international arena. The question is then brought up, how does the United States manage a relationship with rising powers if it contains elements of both partnership and rivalry?

In the current international climate it is not uncommon for a developing country to voice their opinions and ask for more power; however these rising powers often enjoy the privileges of power without assuming the obligations of power. The effect of free riding on established nations is often the outcome. The instinct to free ride is “reinforced by the anxiety that accepting international commitments could jeopardize their domestic development” (Patrick 2010).

As discussed, the United States needs to rely on rising powers to help address today's global challenges, but it must do so in a way that it preserves the core values of the postwar order; an American Democracy. The bargain that the United States is making is that it will cede power to rising nations, and in return the nations that it cedes power to will support an international order based on the Western model. In incorporating the stake holder model there are two approaches 1) "integrate a rising power quickly on the assumption that giving them a stake soon will make them responsible faster, or 2) adopt an incremental approach, one that conditioned the rising powers' entry into the club on their demonstrated willingness to play by global rules and shoulder new burdens" (Patrick 2010).

With both options it is important to remember that rising nations have domestic constituencies that observe their governments and there is no guarantee that in either option the rising powers will become the United States' strategic partner. The most probable solution would be a combination of the two; a balance of rapid integration and demonstrated willingness to play by global rules. Although there is no common opinion on how the integration should be handled, integration will continue to affect the United States' ability to project its influence in world politics. The rising powers will "seek to test, dilute, or revise existing institutions to suit their purposes and the United States will need to decide when to stand firm, when to engage, and when simply to agree to disagree" (Patrick 2010).

In an increasingly volatile world it is in the best interest of the United States to reassess its monopoly of power. Furthermore it is important to accurately represent the world powers on the international scene because the rising powers, if not given the power they legitimately deserve, will take the power they deserve at the expense of the liberal American system. Assuming the United States continues down the path of a post war monopolization of the world's power, the narrative will go down the course of the traditional rising power; it will seek and secure markets for its rapid developing and expanding economy. If the traditional narrative takes course then the United States will find itself in a position where it is the rule taker rather than the rule maker.

CHAPTER III

A SHIFT IN INSTRUMENTS IN FOREIGN POLICY

Traditionally U.S foreign policy was executed with, or with the threat of, American armed forces. However in a world of integration and balancing power, foreign policy should be executed with diplomacy, economic security and stability. The issue becomes how does the United States formulate a foreign policy that is agreed upon across the nation? To make a legitimate effort to elevate economics to a top priority in U.S strategy, Washington must first make it clear that “economics will not weaken national security and, second, that it is constantly developing new ways to fight new threats” (Gelb 2010). The U.S military is by far “un-challengeable” (Gelb 2010) by China and Russia the largest official military threats, therefore the largest threats to the United States are rogue states such as Iran and North Korea, or by failing or failed states that can breed and house terrorists.

Dealing with the threat of rouge states is tricky because the American people are exposed only to the “psychedelic rhetoric of the leaders of Tehran and Pyongyang, however their actions are largely careful and fall short of provoking a military response” (Gelb 2010). There is no doubt that the rouge states are dangerous, however the governments of Tehran and Pyongyang are in the business of running countries and “they have everything to loose if they attack the United States” (Gelb 2010).

As for suicidal terrorist being harbored in failing or failed states, deterrence is very unlikely and “improving police and intelligence operations at home and abroad, hunting terrorists in rogue states with air and missile strikes and commando raids, helping friendly states battle terrorists, and greatly upgrading homeland security” is a much better spending campaign than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which only breed more terrorists.

Although Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower did not have rogue states to worry about, as they could be controlled by Moscow and Beijing, “the best U.S strategy for this new era is to update the approach taken by Presidents Truman and Eisenhower during the early Cold War” (Gelb 2010). Granted the times are different and the dynamics of the international arena are *staggeringly* different, there are three strategies that have proven successful in the past that can be translated to the current times: 1) make the American economy the top priority, 2) leverage foreign threats by investing in the economy at home, and 3) strengthen the economies of key allies abroad. These strategies, will allow policy makers to focus on the lengthy list of important issues facing the United States including:

improving public schools to sustain democracy and restore global competitiveness; upgrading the physical infrastructure critical to economic efficiency and homeland security; reducing public debt, the interest on which is devouring revenue; stimulating the economy to create jobs; and promoting new sources of energy and freer trade to increase

jobs, lower foreign debt, and reducing dependence on Middle Eastern oil (Gleb 2010).

The American economy and investing at home

Making the American economy the top priority is the most important strategy because it will give the United States the most significant leverage in the international arena.

China is a perfect example of a world power that derives its power from the prospect of a powerful economy in the future. China has gained its power by staying out of “wars and political confrontations” (Gelb 2010) and more importantly “zeroed in on business - - its global influence far exceeds its existing economic strength” (Gelb 2010). Nations fear the U.S because of their military strength, however “nations fear China because of their ability to give or withhold trade and investments” (Gelb 2010).

In the early days of the Cold War, Truman and Eisenhower strengthened the economy by initiating economic projects at home. Eisenhower was able to use the Soviet launching of Sputnik to “advocate crash programs in math and science...to fend off communism” He also convinced “congress to build the national highway system in order to strengthen the country against the Soviet military threat” (Gelb 2010). Although these expenditures may have been costly for the United States, it was an investment that yielded high returns over the course of second half of the 20th century. The connection to the current times is that “leaders today could press for more math and science education to restore U.S trade competitiveness” (Gelb 2010). Some may be blinded by the idea that the

United States will always be the best at everything, however according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, in 2009, the United States ranked 33rd in the world for reading, 27th for Math, and 22nd for Science. The question policy makers should pose is why does the U.S rank so poorly when it “spends the most per child behind Switzerland” (Lagorio 2005). The inefficiency of the educational system in the United States is affecting the future of the nation.

In terms of tangible investments, policy makers could also push for spending money on physical infrastructure “leveraging the threat of terrorism, but would also increase U.S resiliency against terrorist attacks and enhance the country’s overall economic efficiency” (Gelb 2010). It is the infrastructure of a country that allows it to grow and develop into a powerful country. The first return on investment that the United States will indulge in is the creation of jobs, leading to a natural stimulus of the economy. By spending on domestic expenditures, the money is not being wasted, but will instead generate more returns. Some may argue that it is important to ensure national security, which justifies the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the Truman and Eisenhower approach would “elevate Mexico far above Afghanistan as a national priority” (Gelb 2010). Sharing a nearly 2,000 mile border with Mexico the U.S is exposed to illegal immigration, drug and human trafficking and could damage the United States profoundly and inescapably. Afghanistan on the other hand will have little lasting affect other than the loss of life and money. The fact is that terrorist will continue to threaten

the United States from every corner of the world, yet attention is still neglected from tangible issues such as Mexico and given to Afghanistan.

Strengthening key allies

The third strategy is strengthening key allies so that they may work with the U.S to solve issues that are in everybody's best interest, i.e. terrorist threats, the global recession, and nuclear proliferation. Truman and Eisenhower bolstered their allies to strengthen their own position. For example, the Marshall Plan allowed for the reconstruction of a war torn Europe through the 1950's. The Marshall Plan, devised by Truman's Secretary of State George Marshall and State Department officials, was an economic reconstruction plan for Europe. Government officials understood that after World War II the threat of communism from the Soviet Union would be an issue that could not be ignored and they acted accordingly. By bolstering their allies the United States "constructed an impregnable wall against communist encroachment while nurturing mutual trade and investment" (Gelb 2010); Truman and Eisenhower opted out of land wars and pursued a policy of containment, deterrence and aid.

Another example is the United States' involvement during the Greek civil war from 1946-1949. Greece being a strong and strategic ally to the United States during World War II Truman could not let Greece fall to communism. Truman, believing that war was not the best option, did not intervene with "U.S troops to implement his new containment doctrine; he gave them military and economic aid and strong, but never

open-ended, rhetorical promises” (Gelb 2010). By supporting Greece the United States was able to prevent communist infiltration into a weak liberal democracy.

In the Southeast Asian arena, Truman embraced the Korean War and did not stand by his policy of containment and aid because there were unique and justifiable reasons for intervening the way he did; “North Korea blatantly attacked South Korea across a generally accepted international border, and a failure to respond with force could have invited Soviet and Chinese attacks elsewhere” (Gelb 2010). The outcome of the Korean War, although ending in a stalemate in terms of territory, was an ideological victory for the United States; communism had successfully been contained from South Korea and Japan.

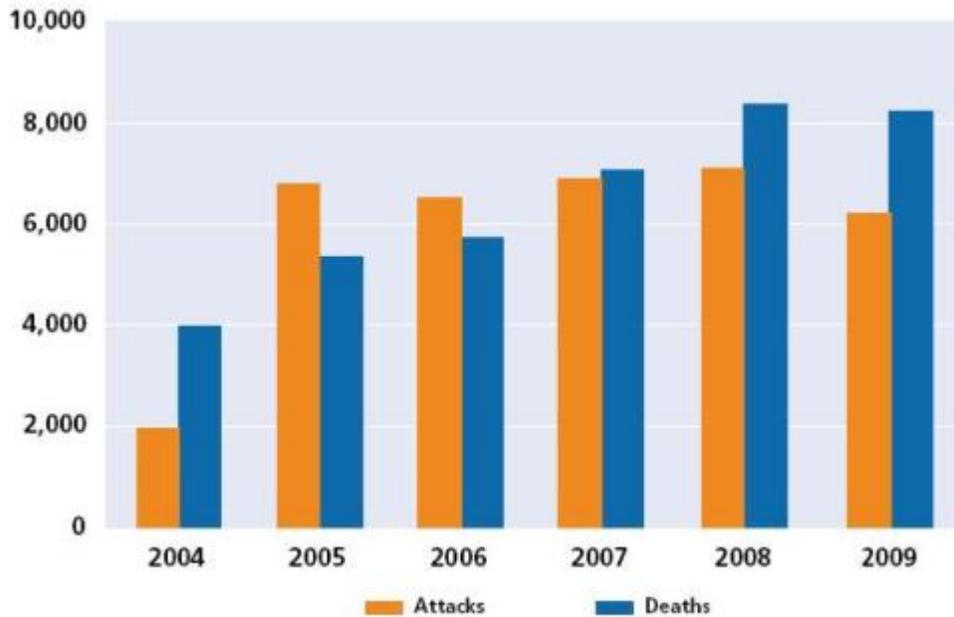
Although hindsight is always 20/20 an ideal response to 9/11 would have been to ally with:

Afghan neighbors to contain the Taliban, deterring the Taliban by threatening to punish them if they provided safe haven for al Qaeda, dividing the Taliban with diplomatic offers, encouraging the formation of a new government in Kabul and bolstering this new government and tribal leaders with military and economic aid (Gelb 2010).

This approach would have spared the United States the horrors of a ground war and the “\$3 Trillion” (Gelb 2010) cost of one as well. Although al Qaeda is no longer a strong

terrorist network in Afghanistan, as shown in figure 1 (National Counterterrorism Center 2010), it has generated countless more terrorist activity across the world.

Figure 1: Global Terrorist Attacks 2004-2009 (Excluding Afghanistan and Iraq)



“Suicide bombers conducted 685 attacks around the world last year; including 542 in U.S. occupied Afghanistan and Iraq” (Wright 2008). The utilities of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will be debated for years to come, however it would be naïve to ignore the consequences and potential consequences of the conflict. For example, in 2005 an al Qaeda sympathizer was able to advance the efforts of al Qaeda on the internet as a hacker. Known as “Irhabi 007” (meaning terrorist in Arabic), Younes Tsouli, arrested at 22 by Scotland Yard in England, was sentenced to 16 years in prison for cyber-terrorism. He “propagandized for the Iraq insurgents led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and taught other online Jihadists how to wield their computers for the cause” (Katz and Kern 2006). He applied himself to “both defeating and enhancing online security, and was also useful

in the exchange of media and distribution of large scale al Qaeda productions” (Katz and Kern 2006). Although he was eventually captured and convicted, the influence he had in spreading radical Islam over the internet has yielded and will continue to yield consequences for the War on Terrorism.

For Truman and Eisenhower pentagon budgets came last. Although their approach would be impossible to mimic today, their themes of governing are efficient, effective and, fortunately for the future of the United States timeless. In their era, they were chartering into un-chartered waters, just as the world is now. In this time of uncertainty the direction of U.S foreign policy needs to shift away from the approach of the past decade and more towards the United States’ strategic strength of leadership in the world and away from its obvious ones.

Foreign policy goals

A shift in the instruments of foreign policy will also constitute a shift in the foreign policy goals. In any agenda there are goals that have primacy over others and the foreign policy of the United States is no exception. As a first tier foreign policy goal the U.S should be a “strong economy and have the ability to deploy effective counters to threats at the lowest possible cost” (Gelb 2010). Second tier goals of the United States should be to retain military power so that it may maximize its influence and balance the world’s power. With this capability, the United States should promote freer trade, and

pioneer various environmental and health challenges, research and develop alternative energy supplies, all while advancing U.S values such as democracy and human rights.

Although these goals are organized in terms of importance, they have an intricate relationship. The first tier goal can not be accomplished without the second tier goal, and the second tier goal would not have a purpose if there was no first tier goal.

Therefore, the second tier goal needs to always be executed so that it supports the first tier goal. For example, encouraging freer trade will help the U.S economy grow and investing in alternative energy research and development will pull the United States away from the oil of the extremely unstable Middle East. With a strong U.S economy being the focus and over arching goal of U.S foreign policy, policy makers have a clearer vision of how to guide foreign policy.

Foreign policy is designed so that it may solve common problems, therefore a successful foreign policy can be measured by the ability of that foreign policy to solve common problems. In a pre 9/11 world, U.S foreign policy was often characterized by “commanding others by making military or economic threats” (Gelb 2010). However in the post 9/11 world “U.S power derives mainly from others’ knowing that they cannot solve their problems without the United States and that they will have to heed U.S interests to achieve common goals” (Gelb 2010). The sooner policy makers understand that the United States’ real power in today’s world lies in problem solving rather than military threats, the sooner foreign policy will again become effective.

CHAPTER IV

EFFECTIVENESS OF U.S FOREIGN POLICY

In establishing a foreign policy it is important to understand that in the international arena every action will have a particularly unpredictable reaction, simply because there are too many variables that can not be accounted for. Policy makers only have the effects of previous decisions and the perceived costs and benefits of the various options. An effective foreign policy is characterized by the ability to execute the objectives outlined. In the Cold War era an effective foreign policy was one that successfully displayed the power of the United States. This policy was adopted after George Kennan wrote his “Long Telegram” which was the basis of U.S foreign policy during the Cold War. His telegram said that if the “United States can contain the Soviet Union from using military power then we can stop communism without bankrupting the United States” (Kennan 1946). As a result the United States displayed its might, eventually outliving the Soviet Union. The display of military might have won the United States the Cold War; however this tactic is becoming increasingly more ineffective for today’s dynamic political arena.

The issue with displaying military might in today’s world is that the U.S military is unmatched and no country would dare to engage in official warfare with the United States, however its ability to execute its objectives effectively and efficiently is declining. During the Cold War the United States did not hesitate to display its military

might all across the world. However after the end of the Cold War the United States decided that it was in its best interest to maintain its “worldwide system of more than 1,000 military bases, stations and outposts” (Plaff 2010). Although the exposure of U.S military was necessary to protect U.S democracy and American liberalism from the Soviet Union and its communistic ideals, are they still necessary today?

An accidental empire

The effect of the worldwide system is an “accidental empire, neither a product of conscious design, nor a product assembled absent-mindedly. It is the natural result of bureaucracy left unchecked” (Plaff 2010). After World War II the dismantling of the United States’ wartime deployment was interrupted by the Cold War. Although there was some expansion in Southeast Asia after being defeated during the Vietnam War, the military complex decided it did not want to pursue expansion in that region. A visible expansion of the military can be seen during the Clinton years after the war in the former Yugoslavia. After a successful “U.S-NATO operation, the Pentagon took advantage of the opportunity to expand its role and seize unoccupied bureaucratic territory—as well as a major new base in Kosovo” (Plaff 2010). Chartering into unoccupied bureaucratic territory gave the military the power to direct and execute U.S foreign policy. Systems of regional commands equipped “with individual commanders, planning staffs, and operational capabilities” (Plaff 2010) were established; essentially creating “regional commanders in chief” (Plaff 2010). The regional entities soon “became more influential than U.S ambassadors and were treated by the regional governments as the authentic

representatives of the United States” (Plaff 2010); military personnel found themselves tied up in administrative duties rather than a troop commanding role, and “The State Department and diplomacy lost influence” (Plaff 2010). Geographically and functionally speaking, the military is always available to the president “when the underfunded diplomatic agencies and the CIA offer unimaginative or unsuitable responses in moments of seeming international emergency” (Plaff 2010), the armed forces have established a reputation that “convey to both domestic and international audiences an image of American power and world leadership” (Plaff 2010).

Blowback

As mentioned, every decision made has a consequence and the United States is not exempt. The empire that the U.S has built is becoming a burden rather than a security measure. The security measures currently in place fuel hostility by the occupied populations which in turn requires more security – it is a vicious cycle. The vicious cycle that the United States has gotten caught up in is blowback of the “accidental empire” that it has allowed itself to become; it was an un-intended consequence of foreign policy decisions previously taken.

A prime example of blowback on a grand scale is the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Centers in New York. The attacks, planned and executed by Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, were “provoked by the ‘blasphemy’ of the existence of U.S military bases in the sacred territories of Saudi Arabia” (Plaff 2010). During Gulf War I “King

Fahd agreed to American military intervention and asked the grand mufti of the kingdom to give the U.S. military presence his religious blessing” (Menoret 2005). Osama bin Laden lost faith in the Saudi government as a government of Islam. He believed that the Saudi government had “made a mistake and revealed their deception. They had given their support to nations that were fighting against Muslims; the Saudi regime lost its legitimacy” (Menoret 2005). This betrayal began a movement that will change the course of history and will ultimately lead to the September 11th attacks. In the decade to come after the September 11th attacks the United States dived head first into the vicious cycle that will generate blowback for generations to come.

In Afghanistan U.S occupation has transformed the country from an oppressed nation that harbors terrorists, to a nation of ‘insurgents’. Before U.S occupation the people of the country “had little to do with the war” (Plaff 2010), however “the U.S presence immediately turned them into insurgents, not necessarily because they welcomed the Taliban but because they rejected foreign occupation” (Plaff 2010). The Korengal Valley occupation in Eastern Afghanistan is another example where blowback has altered the objectives of U.S foreign policy. In April of 2010, “U.S forces withdrew from the Korengal Valley, abandoning their main base and its five satellite outposts” (Plaff 2010). When General Stanley McChrystal, was asked why he ordered the evacuation, he told the New York Times “that holding these valley outposts did more to create insurgents than defeat them” (Plaff 2010).

After 9/11

The United States has been sitting in a cross road for the first decade of the twenty-first century. Unfortunately the United States, in this first decade, decided that the old world policies would be effective in a new world; however this is not the case. An effective foreign policy in the new world “will not be about maximizing power or preserving hegemony, but it will be about finding ways to combine resources with successful strategies in the new context of power diffusion” (Nye 2010). Because of the globalized world the United States will face opposition from the world making “U.S culture and the U.S economy less globally dominant” (Nye 2010). A powerful foreign policy is by definition the “ability to attain the outcomes one wants” (Nye 2010), so an effective foreign policy for the United States needs to exercise “smart power strategies” (Nye 2010).

The international arena can be viewed as a “three dimensional chess game” (Nye 2010). In the game of chess there is the top of the chess board, the middle of the chess board and the bottom of the chess board. In terms of foreign affairs the top game is “military power, which is largely uni-polar and is in control by the United States; and likely will be for quite some time” (Nye 2010). The middle chess board can be related to “economic power; which has been multi-polar for more than a decade, with the United States, Europe, Japan, and China as the major players” (Nye 2010). The bottom chessboard is the “realm of transnational relations. It includes non-state actors as diverse as bankers, terrorists, hackers and challenges such as pandemics and climate

change” (Nye 2010). The ability for the United States to manage the bottom board is where its power will be derived from. The top and middle board will be used to support the bottom board; just as in the game of chess. With effective management, the United States will be able to efficiently utilize its resources and attain a successful foreign policy.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the past ten years the United States has witnessed the consequences of an ineffective foreign policy that has crippled its ability to execute its objectives in the international arena. In assessing the political climate around the world, there needs to be a detachment from Cold War policies and a new post 9/11 policy; a shift in priorities and instruments in foreign policy is necessary for a successful United States.

If the United States does not alter its priorities and instruments, then the path of U.S hegemony will continue to decline. In shifting priorities and instruments, economic stability needs to be the primary concern for the United States. If the economy is stable then national security and cooperation from other nations will improve. The Cold War policy of military security was effective forty years ago, however in the twenty-first century “GDP matters more than force” (Gelb 2010).

National security has always been a concern and will only continue to become more important, however a shift from the Cold War policies to more efficient methods is necessary if the United States wants to maintain supremacy and respect in the international arena.

Another priority the United States needs to focus on is incorporating other nations into its grander strategy. The reality is that the United States is no longer the hegemonic power it once was during the Cold War, and because of this reality the United States needs to take advantage of its allies and utilize their political relationships to work towards common goals. Incorporating nations as a stake holder in international affairs will force developing nations to embrace established standards of behavior and accept regional and global obligations. The consequences of the United States continuing to cling to the idea of absolute hegemony will expose the United States to conflict and tension with other nations which may in turn be counter productive for U.S interests and, as the past decade shows, weaken the United States ability to lead negotiations.

Instrumentally speaking, the United States needs to become less dependent on military action, as it was during the Cold War, and utilize the power of diplomacy and strategic economic investments. With over “\$6 trillion dollars spent in Iraq and Afghanistan” (Haass 2010) the United States has little to show except over “4,000 dead U.S soldiers” (White 2011) and debt. However, if the United States had spent even a fraction of that on the U.S economy, the global situation could have been a lot different.

Finally, the consequences of a poor foreign policy are detrimental to every aspect of the United States; the economy suffers, negative tension develops between nations and not to mention the potential for blowback. The Cold War policies were successful for the United States, however in a post 9/11 world it is critical to the future of the United States

that the Cold War policies remain in the Cold War and the United States develops a foreign policy that is tailored to economic stability, strategic investments, gradual integration between emerging world powers and the United States, and efficient and effective use of time and money.

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