

Chapter 2

Political Flux in a Nonpolar World

A Nonpolar World?

The gradual emergence of a multipolar world is likely to continue in the decade ahead. The age of Cold War bipolarity has ended even though serious tensions among the major powers remain. The myth of unipolarity was derived through a process of subtraction while the world succumbed to the sway of multiplication, which gave rise to aspiring and new centers of power. But the advent of a functioning multipolar world in all probability will take years to realize.

Today, the world is more nonpolar than multipolar, with no one power capable of mobilizing others around its agenda. The world also remains nonpolar in that most powers are reluctant to assume the role of global leader or security guarantor outside their borders. Even internationalist Europe is constrained by its lack of political consensus and its limited capacity to act decisively. Within these centers of power the general predilection, at least by default, is assigning the global security role to the United States, albeit in a

fashion that suits their common norms and interests. While political power has fragmented, emerging or re-surgent powers—China, Russia, India, and Brazil—do not possess the determination or capacity to take on the mantle of global leadership. Even though America is the strongest military power in the world, military power alone cannot be used outside of a political context. When considering the global, regional, and local political environment, military strength can become as much a liability as an asset. Moreover, the Nation does not have the capabilities to act as the principal security guarantor, at least on the level seen in past decades. Among other realities, the post-World War II security system is on its last legs, unable to keep astride of traditional threats as well as emerging threats of the 21st century.

While America will remain the single most important actor, especially militarily, its relative power has declined together with its political and moral influence. Thus, even though the Nation is



NATO foreign ministers meet to discuss enlargement and operations prior to Bucharest Summit, March 2008

unmatched in terms of military power projection, it has had difficulty translating its power into influence. The perception that the United States may contribute more to instability than to efforts to resolve it has eroded its claim on legitimacy and raised the transactional cost of action.

Some may regard U.S. military preponderance as inhibiting, but the fact is that America spends about 50 percent more on defense than China, Japan, India, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom combined. The global economic slowdown and looming world recession, however, may well start to reduce this asymmetry, but it is unlikely to change rapidly. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine any other nation or group of nations providing nearly the number of boots on the ground that the United States can mobilize in conflict and peacekeeping zones. No other country has provided even 10 percent of the deployed forces that America has in recent years. The next most significant troop contributor, the United Kingdom, labors under severe pressures and is hard pressed to honor its commitment in Afghanistan. Even if Europe contributes larger expeditionary forces, their impact will be qualitative and not quantitative. While China and other Asian powers maintain large armed forces, they are unlikely to commit large numbers of them far afield.

Europe is the obvious alternative center of power, with leaders in Paris, London, and Berlin proposing new ideas and in some cases making bold statements on the role that their nations, individually and as part of the European Union, can play in addressing traditional and nontraditional security challenges. France appears to be working in concert with rather than competing against U.S. power, and Britain remains focused on the long haul in Afghanistan even while it pursues a vital role in a global agenda centered on economics, energy, the environment, trade, and development. For all the concern expressed in recent years over the fact that Europe lacks a serious capability to intervene militarily outside its borders, the countries of Europe manage to deploy almost half the number of troops abroad as the United States, and with less than half the defense spending. Although European nations are well positioned to assume some of the security burdens that America is currently shouldering, the political will and popular consensus lag behind.

The resurgence of Russia has been focused on presenting a counter to American leadership, in particular through military posturing and leveraging energy supplies to reclaim authority in the so-called

near abroad. While the conduct of Moscow can be explained, its willingness to resolve international security challenges outside its immediate sphere of influence is questionable given its ambivalence toward joining with Europe, the United States, and to a certain extent even China in cooperating on critical issues such as the disputed Iranian nuclear program. Defining a realistic, limited strategic partnership with Russia may prove to be as difficult as it is important.

Some consider the ascent of China as a global power to be an alternative to American influence in the world. Even if such a transfer occurred, and assuming that China embraced the values of the Enlightenment, Beijing definitely is not about to seek, accept, or be given chief responsibility for global security leadership in the foreseeable future. China's decision to help combat piracy by sending ships to the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea is a potential barometer of its willingness to contribute more to international security, as well as of the international community's willingness to make room for that role. As China's stake in the global economy has grown, so has its awareness that it has a common stake in protecting sea lines of communication that are vital for trade and energy supplies. But fathoming China's long-range intentions is difficult, and the direction of the People's Liberation Army may or may not be on the same trajectory as a cautious Communist Party or a more mercurial Chinese society. The meteoric rise of China since Deng Xiaoping opened the country in 1978 to impressive economic growth and created a challenging range of domestic environmental, social, and political concerns. The downturn in the global economy has deeply influenced the views of the Chinese leadership, which is hopeful but no longer supremely confident that tapping into huge cash reserves and pushing more competitive exports will circumvent systemic trouble.

Other emerging power centers such as India, Brazil, South Africa, Japan, Indonesia, and even Iran are flexing their muscles, but none is able to secure peace within its respective region on its own, and in the case of Iran, peace may not be the objective that some leaders have in mind—all of which underscores that the United States remains unique in its military prowess. But even though there is still no alternative to America as the leading enforcer of the world order, it would be risky to assume that it will take on international security missions simply because others will not or cannot. The United States has too many challenges to cope with and too few resources to apply to them. Redefining complex problems,

exercising strategic restraint, mobilizing new power centers, and employing more leverage strategies will be crucial if the United States is to help balance its ambitious objectives with more constricted means.

In the decade ahead and most likely beyond, the United States will be the dominant military power on the international stage. But dominance is not what it used to be; the ability of military power to address modern security challenges is open to debate, and America has had difficulties in converting preponderance into influence. The change in Presidential administrations might turn the tide with regard to American legitimacy, but whether such a reversal of fortunes can be held together by a limited political consensus around the world remains to be seen. To the extent that the failure of the United States to achieve its security objectives has been the result of a breach of moral legitimacy among its closest allies, especially in Europe, there is an opportunity to mobilize international support around a common goal. As Sir Michael Howard opined:

American power is indispensable for the preservation of global order, and as such it must be recognized, accommodated, and where possible supported. But if it is to be effective, it needs to be seen and legitimized as such by the international community. If it is perceived rather as an instrument serving a unilateral conception of national security that amounts to a claim to world domination . . . that is unlikely to happen.

The evolving relationship among the major powers, the role of power centers and institutions in grappling with various traditional and global issues, the ability of nation-states to be effective political actors, shifting political norms, and the impact of religion and transnational forces are all salient issues that national security decisionmakers and military planners will be called upon to confront in the future. Some of the major questions that arise from a world in political flux are the following: how an expanding concept of responsible sovereignty may be useful in fashioning greater multilateral cooperation to tackle transnational challenges; the continuing relevance of shifting international norms; the evolving role of the nation-state and nationalism; the relationship between politics and religion, particularly Islam; and the complex political challenge posed by the fundamental problem of food security. The contributions that follow highlight these and other key issues.

International Cooperation in an Era of Transnational Threats

The greatest test of global leadership in the 21st century will be the way in which nations act in the face of threats that transcend international borders, from nuclear proliferation, armed conflict, and climate change to terrorism, biological hazards, and abject poverty. Today, national security is interdependent with international security. Globalization has led to unprecedented advances in every sector of the economy. The ability to use global markets for capital, technology, and labor has allowed the private sector to accumulate wealth unfathomable 50 years ago: it has helped lift hundreds of millions of people in emerging economies around the world out of poverty.

The forces of globalization that stitch the world together and drive prosperity could also tear it apart. In the face of new transnational threats and profound security interdependence, even the strongest countries rely on the cooperation of others to protect their national security. No nation, including the United States, is capable of successfully meeting the challenges, or capitalizing on the opportunities, of this changed world alone. But American foreign policy lags behind these realities. A new approach is required to revitalize alliances, diplomacy, and global institutions central to the inseparable relationship between national and international security. Leadership by the United States is indispensable in managing threats for the world. Yet that leadership must be focused on traditional partnerships with allies in Europe, Asia, and Latin America as well as on new relationships with ascendant powers such as China, India, Brazil, Russia, and South Africa. The attitudes, policies, and standards of major states will exert a disproportionate influence on whether the next 50 years move toward international order or entropy. Actions by the President, working in collaboration with the leaders of many traditional and rising powers, will profoundly influence the course of international security and fruits of prosperity in a global age.

Responsible Sovereignty

Spirited interdependence does not make international cooperation inevitable. Instead, shared interests must be turned into a common vision to revive an international security system that will profit everyone. Foresight, imagination, pragmatism, and political will, fueled by effective American leadership, established a new international era after World War II. Institutions such as the United Nations,

International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (now the World Trade Organization) contributed to economic growth with extraordinary results and prevented another conflict among major powers.

However, the vision for an international security system is clouded by the mismatch between post-World War II multilateral institutions premised on traditional sovereignty—a principle that says borders are sacrosanct and that insists on noninterference in domestic affairs—and the realities of a transnational world where capital, technology, labor, disease, pollution, and nonstate actors traverse national and regional boundaries irrespective of the intentions of sovereign states.

The domestic burdens inflicted by transnational threats such as poverty, civil war, disease, and environmental degradation point toward cooperating with global partners and strengthening international institutions. Entering into agreements or accepting help from other states does not weaken sovereignty—it is exercising sovereignty to protect it. The project on Managing Global Insecurity calls for building international cooperation on the principle of responsible sovereignty. This means taking responsibility for the external effects of one's domestic actions: sovereignty entails obligations toward other states as well as one's citizens. To protect national security, even sovereignty, states must have rules to guide actions that reverberate beyond their borders. Responsible sovereignty implies a positive interest by powerful states to provide weaker states with the capacity to exercise their sovereignty responsibly.

Sovereignty is emphasized because states are the primary units of the international system. As much as globalization has diminished the power of states, there is simply no alternative to the legally defined state as the primary actor in international affairs or substitute for state legitimacy in the use of force, provision of justice, and regulation of both public spheres and private action. Responsibility is raised because adhering to traditional sovereignty and deferring to individual state solutions have failed to produce peace and prosperity. In a transnational world, international cooperation is essential for the sovereignty of states: it protects people and advances interests. Responsible sovereignty is a guidepost to creating a better international system. Just as founding members of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions had a vision of international cooperation based on a shared assessment of threat and a shared notion of sovereignty,

global powers today must chart a new course to meet greater challenges and opportunities.

Agenda for Action

Global realities have led to the convergence of international interests to build a security system for the 21st century. The case for action to defuse or prevent regional and global crises is not a soft-hearted appeal to the common good, but rather a realist call to action. If short-term crises crowd out lasting reforms, nations and policymakers will be denied the tools to address future disasters. If action languishes, nationalistic opportunism may provoke unilateral actions that undermine sustainable solutions. Then conflict, isolationism, and protectionism will be imminent threats to global security and prosperity. Climate change and nuclear proliferation, for example, could become existential challenges to the planet: the clock is ticking.



UN (Joao Araujo Pinto)

Member nation flags fly at United Nations Headquarters, New York

International cooperation requires power to underpin responsibility. This analysis identified five prerequisites: effective American policy and leadership, institutionalized cooperation among traditional and emerging powers, negotiated understandings of responsible sovereignty in threat areas, efficient and legitimate international institutions, and nations with the capacity to achieve their responsibilities toward their people and the international community. An action plan would embrace these prerequisites on parallel tracks to restore U.S. standing internationally, revitalize international institutions, respond to transnational threats, and manage future crises.

Track 1: Credible Leadership. No other nation in the world has the diplomatic, economic, and military

capacity to rejuvenate international cooperation. But to lead, the United States must reestablish itself as a good-faith partner.

Unilateral action in Iraq, Guantanamo, and Abu Ghraib as well as the sanctioning of torture, use of rendition, and linkage of the Iraq War with democracy harmed American credibility. The Nation must demonstrate its commitment to a rule-based international system that rejects unilateralism and looks beyond exercising military power. In turn, major states will be more willing to share the burden in both resources and political capital to manage global threats. Toward that end, the United States should immediately undertake a number of initiatives that include:

- sending top-level officials to consult with allies and rising powers on international priorities
- delivering consistent messages on international cooperation, including in the lead-up to the Group of Eight (G-8) and United Nations (UN) General Assembly meetings by outlining a vision for a 21st-century security system
- initiating the closure of Guantanamo and sustainable detainee policies, and committing to adhere to the Geneva Conventions, Convention Against Torture, and other traditional laws of war.

In time, the United States will need to dramatically upgrade its foreign policy apparatus, including doubling the number of Foreign Service Officers over the next 10 years and rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act to elevate development priorities and improve effectiveness.

Track 2: Power and Legitimacy. The status of international institutions must be enhanced by including representatives of emerging powers and refocusing their mandates on 21st-century challenges. Leaders and mandates of institutions from the G-8 to the UN Security Council have not kept pace with powerholders and dynamic threats in a changed world. Emerging powers are excluded from decisionmaking processes that affect their security and prosperity. The traditional powers cannot achieve sustainable solutions on issues from economic stability to climate change without new great powers at the negotiating table. Accordingly, global leaders should:

- Create a Group of 16 (G-16) to engage with Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and Mexico (Outreach 5) and the Muslim-majority nations of Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt, and Nigeria. Replacing the outdated G-8 with the G-16 would serve as a prenegotiating

forum to forge agreements on key challenges.

- Initiate voluntary veto reform of the UN Security Council as a confidence-building measure.
- End the Euro-American monopoly of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and refocus the International Monetary Fund to monitor exchange rate policies and facilitate unraveling of global imbalances.
- Strengthen regional organizations, including a 10-year capacity-building effort of the African Union and support for a regional security mechanism for the Middle East.

Expansion of the UN Security Council would be a signal of the commitment to share the helm of the international system, but conditions for this reform are not likely to be propitious in 2009. However, the decisive expansion of the G-8 in 2009 would represent a credible foundation.

Track 3: Strategy and Capacity. It will be necessary to enhance international cooperation and institutions to manage the global agenda. A number of upcoming items will require action, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and global trade issues. In the case of climate change, continuation of the current trends in using fossil fuels would be tantamount to a new era of mutually assured destruction. There is no doubt about the catastrophic effects if nuclear weapons are used. Global leaders should:

- Negotiate a climate change agreement under the auspices of the framework convention that includes emission targets for 2015 and 2050 and investments in technology, rainforests, and mitigation.
- Revitalize the core bargain of the nonproliferation regime of nuclear weapons states by reducing their arsenals, particularly those of the United States and Russia. Every nation should endorse the additional protocol and work to develop an international fuel bank.
- Initiate G-16 prenegotiations on an open and inclusive trade regime to conclude a round of the World Trade Organization that benefits poor countries.

In addition, progress must be achieved on other global challenges—those threats associated with the use of biotechnology, regional and civil conflict, and global terrorism—in order to:

- build local public health capacity to fully implement the International Health Regulations and

develop an interagency panel to forge consensus on the dangers and benefits of biotechnology

- increase international investments in conflict management with a goal of a reserve force of 50,000 peacekeepers and a \$2 billion fund for peace-building

- establish the post of UN High Commissioner for Counterterrorism to focus international efforts to build counterterrorism norms and capacity.

Track 4: Crisis Response. The diplomatic mechanisms for crisis response in the Middle East must be internationalized to address regional conflict and transnational threats. Global leaders must be confident that a 21st-century international security system will produce better outcomes for the crises at the top of their national security agendas. The Middle East is the most unstable region in the world and a vortex of transnational threats. The G-16, in cooperation with leading regional actors, can identify shared interests and catalyze more focused support to:

- move the Annapolis Process forward to support an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement

- commit adequate forces and civilian capacity to create a stable peace in Afghanistan

- focus U.S. and international efforts on a political settlement and civilian surge for Iraq

- conclude successful regional diplomatic negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program

- initiate efforts toward a regional security mechanism for the Middle East to provide a process to guarantee borders and protect stability as existing crises ease.

Sequencing and Targets of Opportunity

This agenda for action is sweeping but unavoidable. It will require immediate and sustained attention, political momentum, and parallel action to achieve results across diverse issues and pending crises facing global powers. The international community will look for signs that the United States is genuinely seeking global partnerships. Accordingly, Track 1 should begin in earnest to restore the standing of America as the basis for revitalizing the international security system. The world will not support Washington's lead to make reforms if the United States does not commit itself to cooperative efforts.

The convening power of the G-16 and the weight of its collective economic, diplomatic, and military strength as well as combined populations would create an unparalleled body to mobilize international

action: an entity to navigate the turbulence of diffuse power, transnational threats, and the changing distribution of power among key states. The formation of the G-16 in 2009 would help by revitalizing international institutions (Track 2), combating transnational threats (Track 3), and internationalizing crisis response (Track 4). G-8 leaders should make a concerted effort with their Italian host to shape the agenda for the meeting in 2009 to ensure G-16 formation. But if the G-16 is not created in 2009, the United States and other powers should act as if it does exist and convene informal meetings to achieve comparable effects. That may strain American diplomacy, but it will pay dividends in making the U.S. diplomatic efforts more effective.

The international agenda will impose a schedule of action on transnational threats, including the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2009 and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference in 2010. These two events provide venues to sustain dialogue and take concrete steps on climate change and nuclear proliferation. Actions over the next 2 years will determine if the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization or another trade negotiation can produce an agreement that brings poor countries into global supply chains or undermines the organization's credibility as a rule-setting global institution.

Finally, crises will continue. They will remain at the top of domestic foreign policy priorities and thus require immediate attention. Yet powerful nations such as the United States will be more likely to reach a political settlement in Iraq, address the nuclear threat of Iran, and promote civil order in Afghanistan by working through stable global partnerships and effective international institutions. Progress on a larger agenda to revive the international security system and engage rising powers in cooperative arrangements must be accomplished in parallel. The success of this global agenda will not only address crises today but will also prevent disasters tomorrow.

Global leaders face a choice: they can either use this moment to shape an international rule-based regime that will protect their global interests or resign themselves to an ad hoc system in which they increasingly find themselves powerless to influence international events. An agenda for action will not be realized in 2 years or even 10. But the longer the delay in beginning to develop approaches to counter the threats of today, the more difficult it will become to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Leaders should chart a path that combines power and responsibility

to achieve what cannot be achieved separately—peace and security in a transnational world.

The Normative Shift: Sovereignty versus Intervention

The modern world poses a set of realities for the international community that include terrorism, globalized markets, information technology, emerging powers, climate change, failing states, the changing nature of war, mass migration, proliferation, pandemics, and so forth. There is no shortage of challenges to the existing world of international law, and at the top of any list is sovereignty. For some observers, the issue for the international community is whether it can or should “recognize a responsibility to override sovereignty in emergency situations—to prevent ethnic cleansing or genocide, arrest war criminals, restore democracy or provide disaster relief when national governments were either unable or unwilling to do so.”



Anti-American mural in Tehran, Iran

The Cold War Consensus

It was fashionable to think of international law as creating norms that linked a three-tiered chessboard of interconnected power with overlapping integrated values. The top board featured military power. The West coalesced under collective agreements such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and security was based on a mutual assistance pact. The Soviet Union and its satellites had the Warsaw Pact. Although proxy wars or crises punctuated 60-plus years of peace, a dreaded nuclear exchange was avoided. Liberation wars occurred from Korea and Cuba to Vietnam and Laos, and aborted revolutions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia embarrassed the Western powers, but still the international system held. All agreed that the Geneva Conventions governed the law of armed conflict, and violators expected worldwide opprobrium. Even though the expansion of the Geneva Conventions and the establishment of the International Criminal Court were not supported by the United States, compromises were found to preserve the international consensus. Developments such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group supported control of the number of nuclear powers and the production of nuclear bombs, which are the ultimate weapon.

The United Nations structured the middle board or international political power game where the post-World War II great powers navigated the tricky waters of containment, mutually assured destruction, and nuclear deterrence. When conflict strained the doctrines of nonintervention and self-determination, the Security Council promoted the international consensus on the balance of power. Issues such as the Palestinian question were deferred because they threatened to unhinge the board, but shifting coalitions held the pieces together. Although there were regional groups, such as the European Union or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, international exchanges focused on the United Nations.

The bottom board, which supported the entire structure, was the economic game. In addition to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank were international financial institutions and economic agreements that became legal underpinnings of the world market. The U.S. dollar replaced the British pound as the international reserve currency, and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries managed oil as a

Courtesy Bertil Videt

commodity. Markets became interconnected trading emporiums that gave rise to various industries, competitors, and globalization.

Cracks Become Chasms

The three-tiered game maintained the international status quo, and a great deal of effort was expended to ensure the top board never disabled the supporting boards. The West strove for consumer expansion without socialist influence while the East attempted to have growth without liberalism. Cracks in the boards appeared, with the rise of economic actors such as Brazil, Russia, India, and China. The Security Council gradually became impotent because of the veto exercised by the great powers, who protected special relationships with client states that began to implode. Although such behavior was anticipated in the case of China and Russia, the United States also began to consider any expansion of the board games as negative. America was reluctant to be constrained on any board, rejecting international treaties such as the expansion of the Geneva Conventions (that is, Protocols I and II), limitations on landmine use, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The triple-tiered board game and international legal system were upended by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the attacks on September 11, 2001, and more recently the fall in the dollar and oil prices. The United States chose a three-tiered board strategy that was a radical departure or transformative approach to the game. On the political level, America and Europe outflanked the Security Council and the vetoes of Russia

and China by choosing NATO, a regional security organization, to legitimize involvement in Kosovo. Subsequently, on the military level, the United States ignored the Geneva Conventions and the protections for prisoners of war by using its new theory of unlawful combatants. The doctrine of self-defense was suspended to allow for preemption in an unusual expansion of the doctrine of prevention. Although the United Nations was approached on Afghanistan, the United States acted largely unilaterally in Iraq and ignored the protestations by the Security Council. In the face of a weakened Russia, and without a peer competitor on the horizon, the United States became a non-status quo power militarily.

The non-status quo power approach migrated to the political board based on military moves. Political unilateralism began to undermine the United Nations and European Union. Historic allies, members of regional alliances that once were thought to be counterweights to foes of nonliberal systems, now were seen as unwanted anchors to unfettered U.S. movement. Economically, domestic upheaval in the housing market combined with an external debt-driven growth model to devalue the dollar and spike oil prices. Although the World Trade Organization is strong and supported, it is clear the growth of globalism will entail a resource scramble to sustain economic powers that may upset the military board. These policies emboldened a rejuvenated, aggressive Russia, flush with increased oil revenues and profiting from economic and political uncertainty, to march into Georgia under the questionable justification of protecting its people from genocide. In August 2008,



Federal Republic of Germany (Bernd Kühler)

Leaders of Group of Eight leading industrialized nations gather during 2007 summit

as the world watched Russian tanks roll into Georgia and debated ways to react, some argued for sanctions on the economic board such as expulsion from G-8 economic summits while others contended that a new Marshall Plan for Georgia was needed. Although no response gelled, it was apparent that the global legal order was being tested and the international response would help define the future consensus over sovereignty versus global intervention.

Chasms and Bridges

At a conference on international law convened by Craig Allen at the Naval War College in 2006, a group of experts pondered a vision of the future global legal order. Allen boiled down the possibilities of the global legal order to six potential futures that may arise by 2020:

- no growth
- slow growth
- significant growth
- total disintegration
- fracturing the order into regional and bilateral arrangements
- no one single future—that is, constant flux.

American policies will be critical in determining which of the six futures will ascend. To some observers, the world has become a competition among three types of regimes: autocratic economies (Russia and China), Islamic traditional states (Iran and Saudi Arabia), and liberal democracies (the United States and European Union members). These groupings have internal rivalries but share certain values. Each will struggle on the three-tiered chessboard to expand power, gather satellites for alliances, and maneuver for comparative advantage.

The United States should adopt a fox bridge-building approach rather than a hedgehog go-it-alone strategy for each board. Board blending is the goal of the future whereby strategies must be understood in light of how they affect games on the other levels. On the political board, a call for a new multilateralism of both international actors and institutions is required. It should not be a council of democracies or a bloc comprised of the United States, European Union, and India versus the world. America should seek regional alliances with strategic local actors to establish agreed principles of regional intervention, which may require acceding to the International Criminal Court. More specifically, the Nation must forge coalitions to condemn

repressive actions by Sudan. The United States must work in concert with regional players in the event that national sovereignty is violated in the name of humanitarian rights.

Secondly, a number of conventions should be readopted, confirmed, and created. The Geneva Conventions and Convention Against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Behavior should be reaffirmed. Debate should be started on Protocols I and II, which have not been signed. The Senate should confirm UNCLOS and renew debate on the Kyoto Protocol and Land Mines Convention. Cyberspace has generated challenges that call for negotiating a convention on this new field, which can serve as an economic tool or potential weapon. Before Georgia was invaded by Russia, its infrastructure became a target of destabilizing cyber attacks. Moreover, the United States must reestablish its legitimacy through a process of reform. But the regional organization and Security Council tracks should be pursued simultaneously. Issues such as proliferation and international crime require shifting coalitions of like-minded states.

In sum, great powers and power blocs—old and emerging—must find ways to build bridges so sovereignty claims do not result in the projections of force that destroy the accomplishments of the post-World War era. Although the status quo did not help people under communism in the 20th century, it did succeed in allowing for a 21st century. The old saw that nation-states have become too small to handle global problems and too big to handle the new politics of identity has merit. Cold War institutions served their purpose but must be reformed to deal with current and emerging challenges. America will play a major role in determining the future bequeathed to the next generation, but it will not dictate its version to the world. The international community is watching to see if the United States can help build institutions for the next century.

The Fate of a Faith

Most great wars of the 19th and 20th centuries were waged in the name of nationalism. Moreover, they were fought by nations with large conventional forces and national liberation movements in league with insurgents. From the French Revolution and nation in arms to the anticolonial wars of the 1950s through the 1970s and beyond, nationalism and the nation-state remained front and center in the realm of international politics and the execution of military strategies.

Nationalism and the Nation-state

In the first half of the 20th century, both nationalism and the nation-state posed the greatest of all foreign challenges to the United States, culminating in two world wars. By 1910, the development of nationalism and the nation-state reached its most intense form in Wilhelmine Germany. Only the grand alliance of Britain, France, and America could marshal the forces to defeat and temporarily subdue the ferocious unity, determination, and ruthless efficiency of the German nation. And only two decades later, nationalism and the nation-state reached new heights in National Socialist Germany. Only the grander alliance of Britain, Russia, and America could assemble the means to defeat the German nation for a second time. Furthermore, almost as developed as Nazi Germany in terms of nationalism and the nation-state was Imperial Japan, which also posed an epic challenge to the United States. Indeed, in order to defeat the challenges from Germany and Japan, the United States itself developed a higher and more intense form of nationalism and the nation-state than it had in its past or has since then. It was overcoming these immense challenges that would lead to the American way of war.

The defeat of the United States in Vietnam was inflicted by a movement with international communist support that used nationalism to unify a nation by the force of arms. Unfortunately, by the 1960s, America possessed a much less vigorous nationalism and nation-state than it had only a generation before, which contributed to its ultimate defeat in Vietnam. For much of the 20th century, foreign threats to the United States came from some version of nationalism and the nation-state. But in the 21st century, transnational Islamist terrorist networks have replaced the once-central role of nationalism and the nation-state. Indeed, many political and military leaders and policy analysts have concluded that the era of nationalism and the nation-state has ended, or at least has abated with only the fading vestiges of those once-powerful forces still at play.

The ideology of nationalism and the nation-state was a product of a particular place and time. The place was Western Europe, initially Britain, then France and Germany, until all Europe was reshaped around nationalism and the efforts to institutionalize its manifestations in nation-states. The time was the high modern era from the French Revolution to World War II, which was the greatest conflict between nationalism and nation-states and was so destructive that it went far toward bringing an end to nationalism and independent nation-states in their homeland, Western

Europe. That age also corresponded to the Industrial Revolution and the eventual development of mature industrial economies as well as mature industrial military organizations and warfare.

Postmodern Era

The current post-European, perhaps even post-Western, era is marked by the great and dynamic economic and political developments found beyond Europe, particularly in the rising great powers of China and India but also in the rising transnational religion of Islam. Moreover, in regard to the societies of Europe and more generally the West, this is also the post-modern age. Ironically, the most dynamic examples of nationalism and the nation-state today are China and, to a lesser but growing extent, India. Perhaps this is because these rising powers have entered their modern age, with rapid industrialization and burgeoning business and professional sectors, at the same moment that Europe and the West have been graduating from theirs.

The Middle East and Muslim world passed through a sort of modernizing and nationalist age of Arab nationalism in the 1950s to the 1980s, but in reality much of the Muslim world only resembled the Western originals. Modernization and nationalism never fit Muslim societies and, after a generation, ended in exhaustion and failure to be succeeded by the Islamic revival, or more accurately by the part-traditional, part-modern ideology of Islamism, which is post-national and transnational. The only real example of strong nationalism or the nation-state in the Muslim world has been Turkey, since Atatürk established the new republic in the 1920s. But today even Turkey is being transformed by a rising Islamism, albeit one that is less militant than the Arab, Iranian, and Pakistani versions, which in their most extreme manifestations threaten both the United States and Western Europe.

Since 2000, classical populism and anti-Americanism have been resurgent in Latin America, the form of traditional nationalism in that region. The waves of populism and anti-Americanism have come and gone before, normally about once every generation. The region has not been able to create widespread and well-grounded nationalist identities, such as Europe, or establish strong and legitimate nation-states. Finally, with regard to Sub-Saharan Africa, that vast and poor region is stuck in the era of tribalism and predator states, in which one tribe savagely preys upon the other. In Africa, nationalism and the European, modern-style nation-state remain divergent.

Overall, nationalism and the nation-state were once authentic, strong, and vigorous in Europe, but they

are no longer so. Rather, they have been succeeded by a listless system composed of the supranational and spiritless European Union and by the subnational and self-centered individualism of postmodern Europeans. In the Muslim world, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, nationalism and the nation-state were, with rare exceptions, never truly authentic, strong, and vigorous, and have almost totally disappeared in both Muslim and African countries. The one place where nationalism and the nation-state still thrive is East Asia, particularly China.

Variations on European Themes

A century ago, the one dynamic society in East Asia was Japan, which was rapidly modernizing, industrializing, and nationalizing. Japan had developed nationalism and the nation-state to an almost perfect degree by brilliantly emulating nationalism and nation-states in Western Europe. The Japanese nationalism proceeded to terrorize the rest of East Asia, especially China, for about four decades until 1945 when the U.S. military devastated this exemplar of the nation-state. The Japanese reinvented nationalism and redirected their military prowess to economic prowess. This period also lasted for about four decades until the early 1990s. But today, Japanese society has become quite postmodern, and its nationalism and the nation-state are considerably weaker than during most of the 20th century.

China is moving along a path that is similar to but more sophisticated than the one that Japan took nearly a century ago. Indeed, China exhibits similarities to another modernizing, industrializing, and nationalizing state, Germany of a century ago. But China also resembles the United States in that era. America under Theodore Roosevelt was establishing an authentic, strong, and vigorous nationalism and nation-state, which the 26th President called the New Nationalism.

Of course in the examples of Japan, Germany, and the United States in the early 20th century, vigorous industrial expansion provided newly confident nations with modern armies and fleets. Today, nearly double-digit annual growth rates over most of the last two decades and confident nationalism are facilitating the modernization of Chinese ground, sea, and air forces. However, Beijing seems to be investing in the potential of cyberwar in the information age rather than in weapons systems of the industrial era. There is increasing evidence that China intends to trump the overwhelming American advantage in the most advanced warfighting systems by achieving an equality or even superiority in new technologies and cyberwar tactics of the information age as evidenced by attacks

on Department of Defense computer systems. The increasing capacity of the Chinese to neutralize or contain traditional American military advantages within East Asia (including the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific) will pose a definite challenge.

The New Central Kingdom

How will nationalism and the nation-state unfold in China over the next decade, and what will it mean for the rest of the world and especially the United States? The Chinese path toward a fully developed nationalism and the nation-state may follow earlier Japanese, German, and American models, and it will make a great deal of difference to all parties concerned which of these modern countries China comes to resemble most closely.

However, China as a civilization and the Central Kingdom with its distinct way of ordering social relationships, including with its neighbors, had existed many centuries before the modern era of European-style nationalism and nation-states. For example, Imperial China traditionally ordered relations with eastern and southern neighbors (Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, and Vietnam), not in a European-style colonial system of direct rule, but in a tributary system of indirect rule, in which local monarchs had a great deal of independence, as long as they deferred to the authority of the Emperor in Beijing and did not allow their territory to become a base for other powers to threaten China. The growing Chinese economic and cultural presence and soft-power offensive in Southeast Asia, and increasingly in Central Asia, bear similarities with this traditional manner of conducting foreign relations. In the event, both nationalism and the nation-state in China will have their own distinctive Chinese characteristics, to paraphrase the words of Mao Zedong.

In the fullness of time, China also may enter its own postmodern and postnational era, once again with its own distinctive characteristics. What China and the United States will look like at that time is almost impossible to tell. But one thing probably can be assumed. Just as China had existed as a distinct civilization long before nationalism and the nation-state came into existence, China will endure as a distinct civilization longer than nationalism and the nation-state.

Islamism and the Crisis of Governance

It is an undeniable fact that with the end of the Cold War and the eclipse of the Soviet Union, the political center of many if not all Muslim-majority nation-states has been occupied by those who see Islam not merely as a faith and value system, but also as a vehicle for

political mobilization. Therefore, Islamism is a real phenomenon that cannot be discounted any longer, nor should it be regarded as an aberration, a quirk in the developmental process of the Muslim world.

For reasons that now have become clear, the ascendancy of political Islam is not accidental: Islamists were actively courted by their respective states as well as the United States as allies in the struggle against communism from the 1960s to the 1980s. In Indonesia, Islamist organizations were instrumental in checking the advance of the communists in 1965–1970. In Pakistan, Islamist parties such as the Jama'at-e Islami and Jamiat'ul Ulema-e Islam were influential in countering communists at home and in mobilizing Afghan jihadists against the Soviet occupation. It should come as no surprise that Islamists in countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia have achieved such preeminence, given their cozy relationship with the government in the recent past.

Muslim governments faced another crisis that came about as a result of the global economy. The impact of globalization has been manifold, opening up developing economies and societies faster than ever. But it has also meant that under the liberal market regimes favored by global capital, many developing states have experienced economic governance and protectionism, which reduce the role of the state as the determining factor in the national economy. From the 1960s to 1980s, it was the relative boom in many developing economies that allowed states to maintain their grip on the local Islamist movements through the combination of coercion and cooptation. Today, as globalization renders states weaker around the globe, the capacity to control, guide, and domesticate potential Islamist opposition in their own territories has been visibly weakened.

Because much of this globalization process has been driven by Western capital, globalization has come to be conflated with Westernization and more specifically Americanization—hence the constant attacks on the emblems of global consumerism that are equated rightly or wrongly with American culture, politics, and hegemony. The rejection of globalization-Americanization is not unique to the Muslim world, for similar campaigns have been waged against American popular culture in non-Muslim countries, such as predominantly Hindu India and predominantly Catholic Latin America.

The Othering of America

Another development that has impacted directly on relations between the West and Muslim states

over the last three decades has been the gradual process of distancing or the *othering* of America, which resulted from many factors, chief among them U.S. foreign policy in the Muslim world. Research conducted over the last 7 years involving hundreds of interviews with Islamists in India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia points to the conclusion that the United States is seen as a threat to Muslim interests and partisan in its approach to the global Muslim community. The factors accounting for this perception, which has become hegemonized and sedimented among Islamists, range from the American position on the Israel-Palestine peace settlement to interventionist policies in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan and even Sudan.

It is important to note that this perception of the United States as a threat to Muslim identity and politics is relatively new. In the wake of World War II, America was seen in a positive light as the liberator that helped many Muslim countries remove the yoke of European imperialism or Japanese militarism. This is particularly true in the case of the biggest Muslim nation, Indonesia, where America is credited with challenging Dutch and British colonialism in the region.

America also was seen as the most important strategic ally to Muslim states and communities during the Cold War, when foreign aid and military assistance was sought by Muslim countries to fend off perceived communist threats. This was certainly the case in Indonesia and Malaysia in the 1950s and 1960s and Pakistan after the rise to power of Zia 'ul Haq. This spirit of mutual support and cooperation persisted throughout the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and in many respects was seen as the model condition to emulate by Muslims the world over until the cessation of hostilities in Afghanistan. This also accounts for how and why so many Muslim governments turned to the United States for inspiration for their own development models, and why so many nations sent many of their students to American universities to continue their education.

The turning point came after the end of the Afghan conflict, and the period of relative neglect that followed. It was during this time that many Muslim governments began to feel the impact of their uneven development, with rising expectations that could not be satisfied because of weak political structures exacerbated by debilitating effects of a rapid globalization process.

Latent antigovernment resentment over unfair and uneven developmental policies coupled with the loss of patronage on the part of Muslim states meant

that Islamists could mobilize and challenge the state. In the process, many populist, mass-based urban Islamist movements lashed out at comprador allies and patrons in their governments, and in sweeping generalizations made against their own elites condemned close associations with foreign governments, multinationals, and international agencies, many of which were either American or U.S.-based. Support of Muslim governments, many of which had assumed the role and stature of nonrepresentative or authoritarian regimes by the 1980s, meant that condemnation of Muslim leaders such as Suharto in Indonesia also included condemnation of their American allies and strategic partners.

The failure of American foreign policy outreach was ignoring mass-based populist Islamist currents and groups that were developing in countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia. It is important to note that much cooperation between America and its Muslim allies from the 1960s to the 1990s took the form of government-to-government ventures, and seldom focused on the ground-level developments that were taking place in emerging urban spaces such as universities. When new Islamist groups began to appear on Indonesian campuses in the late 1990s, many Western policymakers were caught by surprise, unaware of the fact that these groups had initially begun to organize and mobilize their efforts as early as the 1970s.

The New Voice of Islamism

The relative marginalization of the official discourse in many Muslim societies means that states no longer have exclusive monopolies on communication in their respective societies. In nations such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, a new generation of Islamist leaders, orators, nongovernmental organizations, civic groups, political parties, and business networks contest dialogue of the public sector, and the state has become only one voice among many. Muslim governments, regardless of their relationship with the United States, are no longer in a position to moderate or determine the tone and tenor of popular Islamist discourse in their countries and cannot be depended on to balance the negative images of America.

For this reason, alternative modes of direct engagement must be considered in reaching out to Muslim societies today. In the 1970s, for instance, American and Western agencies could still cooperate with Muslim governments and civil society networks to jointly advance progressive social reforms such as family planning, for the simple reason that the

United States was regarded as a sympathetic ally to Muslim interests. But today, most attempts on the part of America and Europe to further agendas, such as gender equality, educating women, and democracy, is seen in a negative light as part of a plot to weaken the Muslim world. U.S. policymakers must realize that because of the popular reaction to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the American image in the Muslim world is at an all-time low. American foreign policy initiatives have been cast as unilateralist and detrimental to Muslim solidarity and welfare, and reform initiatives are regarded with suspicion. Top-down initiatives through courting and coopting Muslim elites, intellectuals, and spokespersons no longer work, as demonstrated by the failure to reform religious schools or *madrassas* in Pakistan and promote liberal Islam in Indonesia. In the latter instance, previously respected Indonesian scholars and activists who were identified as model progressive Muslims or Muslim democrats were labeled as traitors and American agents not only by hardline Islamists, but also by mainstream Muslim media. The hand of America can be costly for Muslim nations, and top-down modes of engagement may prove counterproductive in the short to long run.

Faced with the prospect of further alienation, American policymakers should consider means of engagement that are less controversial, direct, and restrictive. Engaging with the Islamists by listening to their grievances may be such an alternative. One example of this approach was the 2-week program for Islamists from Indonesia and Malaysia that was conducted in Berlin under the sponsorship of the Task Force for the Dialogue with the Muslim World with support from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Equally needed is low-level, bottom-up engagement in the affected localities, rather than traditional inter-elite contact (often dubbed the Hilton Hotel inter-religious dialogue). Since many Muslim elites are themselves alienated from their societies and may have little credibility, the utility of such inter-elite dialogues has come into question.

Serious ground-level efforts should be undertaken in countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia to determine trends in Islamist mobilization, identify services these groups provide to meet local need, and find ways in which American agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private groups can effectively cooperate with local Islamist movements to achieve common goals such as education and health care. These are areas where American and Western intervention is most in demand. Demon-

strating a long-lasting commitment to addressing real needs instead of abstract issues such as theological debates will offset negative images of the United States and other Western nations as potential enemies of Muslim communal and social life.

Images of America were not always negative in the eyes of Muslims, and their shifting views are the indirect result of U.S. foreign policy. If the United States chooses to maintain, improve, and expand the communication with the Muslim world, it must go beyond inter-elite dialogue and cultivate mutually supporting initiatives on the local level. This in turn requires identifying new actors and groups on the ground with attachments to communities as well as determining the aspirations and material needs that motivate the politics of those communities.

Rapid Increases in Food Prices

Basic food commodities have risen 83 percent in price in the last 3 years. The price increases have not been driven by sharp reductions in agricultural production; rather, increases have been slow over the past decade compared to previous periods, which has contributed to the stress on prices. Studies by the World Bank, International Food Policy Research Institute, and Food and Agriculture Organization attribute increases to a dramatic rise in oil prices that drives up the cost of fertilizer, rapid increases in the production of biofuels that are heavily subsidized by

Western governments, speculators looking for shelter from the weak dollar and turbulent stock and bond markets in commodity markets, export quotas and trade restrictions imposed by 48 countries on food staples, and the hoarding of grain supplies in anticipation of further price increases.

Most analysts believe that pressures driving higher prices are unlikely to subside any time soon, although the level of future increases is a question of some debate with no obvious answer. Three factors will determine the impact of the increases: their steepness, their rapidity, and the level of poverty and destitution among the population prior to the food crisis. As a general rule, the steeper and more rapid the price increase and the poorer the people before the crisis, the more severe the nutritional, economic, political, and security implications.

This general rule applies only in states whose economies are integrated into the international food system. In developing countries depending on international food markets, price increases could have serious consequences. In rural areas engaged in subsistence agriculture and isolated from markets, rising food prices will have only minimal adverse effects because they grow and consume their own food. This is particularly true for Sub-Saharan Africa where 60 to 70 percent of the population live in rural areas, use minimal if any chemical fertilizer (the price of which had rapidly increased with the



IRIN (Jamal Osman)

Displaced people wait for food during distribution organized by UN and USAID, Mogadishu, Somalia

price of oil), and consume what they grow with only small surpluses, which they sell in urban centers. Increased food prices may raise the income of rural farmers in some parts of the world to the disadvantage of urban dwellers who pay higher prices.



IRIN (Manochoer Deghati)

Food is plentiful in Nairobi’s many restaurants and supermarkets, but not all residents have access to it

Famines

Although pressure on agriculture commodity prices is unlikely to cause famines in all but three or four countries, they could occur if short-term prices spike. Thus, the dynamics of famine, which follow common patterns, could become relevant. Famines and food crises are not necessarily driven by reduced production. In one of the most celebrated formulations in famine literature, Amartya Sen, who won the Nobel Prize in economics for work on entitlement theory of famines, wrote: “Starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there being not enough to eat. While [the] latter can be a cause of the former, it is but one of many possible causes.” His research indicated that famines have occurred in periods of increased food production when access by the most destitute people to food through purchase or trade collapses because of rapid decline in household income or massive increase in food prices over a short period of time, or both.

Poor families that are food-insecure even in good times have developed coping mechanisms to deal with

periodic shocks associated with famine. Typically, families under stress will reduce food consumption from two to one meal per day, then one meal every other day, or in extreme cases stop feeding the weakest family members, a survival technique to preserve enough food to keep everyone else alive. These families will sell household furniture, clothes, tools, and jewelry to buy food. Farmers and herders will sell domesticated animals, which are a form of savings in developing nations, creating gluts in the market as animal prices collapse. In extreme situations, some parents sell their children, or men sell their wives to get money to buy food and to reduce the number of mouths to feed. In the early stages of famine, men and teenage boys often migrate to urban areas in search of work. In later stages of a famine, the remaining people in a village or neighborhood will leave in mass population movements to urban areas in search of food.

The mass population movement has the most profound consequences. Coping mechanisms often result in economic havoc for families using them to survive, deepening their destitution, and making it difficult to recover from the loss of assets before another nutritional crisis occurs. But people who starve or suffer acute malnutrition in rural areas often suffer in silence because of their isolation. If mass population movements drive people to urban areas or food prices spike in urban markets where a sizeable population of poor people live, the risk of political upheaval increases exponentially as hungry and dying people become visible, demonstrate and congregate in displaced persons camps which become radicalized, and have access to media and government officials. It is also the case that disparities of wealth are more obvious in urban areas and may increase popular anger and frustration.

IRIN (Hugo Ramil)



Inadequate public health care facilities in Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo, offer little help to poor patients

Although most famines have occurred in rural areas, the nature of current price increases will likely create crisis in urban areas and spare the rural areas. The consequences of famine will be manifest in different ways depending on the political system in a given country. Indeed, rural areas that supply surplus food at market prices to urban areas could grow more prosperous as prices increase, which might redress the traditional disparity in developing nations between low incomes in rural areas and higher incomes in urban areas.

Democracy versus Totalitarianism

Some argue that famines do not occur in democracies because popular pressure on elected officials and media coverage of the crisis force governments to act. In addition, feedback in democratic systems, even when weak, gets messages to political leaders through multiple avenues about what is happening in society. Conversely, five famines occurred under totalitarian regimes in the 20th century: Russia during the forced collectivization in Ukraine in the early 1930s; China from 1958 to 1962 during the Great Leap Forward, which killed 29 million people (one of the worst famines in history); Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s; Ethiopia during the mid-1980s; and North Korea in the mid-1990s. These famines were prolonged, characterized by high mortality rates, and accompanied by repression designed to ensure the famine did not lead to political instability. Since totalitarian regimes exercise such extraordinary control over their populations and all sources of power and influence, none of them has been overthrown by popular unrest. Most famines, however, were followed by campaigns of terror waged by totalitarian leaders who exercise total control over the political apparatus of the state that may have been lost or declined to some extent because of the crisis.

While there remain four or five totalitarian states in the world, of these only North Korea is seriously at risk of famine. Between 1994 and 1998, it experienced the worst famine in the late 20th century, in which nearly 10 percent of the population died. The factors that led to that famine have not changed: the country has not abandoned its inefficient collectivized agriculture system that makes poor use of one of the lowest ratios of arable land to population in the world. Pyongyang continues to denude its mountains of ground cover, which causes extensive flooding that destroys crops, reducing already-meager harvests; and it refuses to move to a market economy, which might increase revenue to purchase food abroad. The precipitating factors that have led to this dramatic crisis in North Korea include China prohibiting grain exports because of increased

prices, South Korea abruptly ending food aid and fertilizer after the election of a new president, severe seasonal flooding that reduced production, depleting reserves for the military, and rising prices that restrict the amount of food that can be bought internationally with limited resources. The United States announced a 500,000-ton food contribution to the World Food Programme in 2008 after Pyongyang agreed to accept international standards for the monitoring and management of international food assistance. But assistance had been hampered by Pyongyang's policies in the first half of 2009, especially its restrictions on food distribution and its nuclear ambitions.

In fragile and failed states, famines often result in rebellions or coups because their political systems are too weak institutionally to respond to the crisis or repress popular outrage caused by crises. During the great West African Famine of 1968–1974, every government in the Sahel Belt with the exception of Senegal fell to a rebellion or coup, including the government of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. African states are not well integrated into international food markets probably because they do not have the currency reserves or private capital to purchase food on international markets, and are less at risk than those fragile and poor states in other regions of the world that are dependent on these markets. Africa could be indirectly affected by food price increases because it receives 75 percent of all U.S. food aid, mostly for emergencies involving refugees and internally displaced people, and the total tonnage of assistance is declining again because of increased prices. This loss has caused major deficits in food within the international aid system that if not remedied could have serious nutritional consequences in Africa.

Productivity and Investment

Starting in the late 1980s, Western bilateral aid agencies and the World Bank began a precipitous drop in investments in agricultural development, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, which remains the most food-insecure region of the world. Although some of that insecurity is attributable to civil conflict, state failure, and regressive agricultural policies, it is obvious that reduced investment is also to blame. One striking example is Ethiopia, which is perhaps the most food-insecure country in Africa. Nonetheless, the U.S. Agency for International Development allocates 50 percent for the HIV/AIDS program, 28 percent for food aid, and only 1.5 percent for agricultural development because the White House and Congress have failed to fund the proposed agricultural programs in the annual budget for foreign assistance.

A major commitment by the United States to increased spending on agricultural development in Africa should advance a number of proposals for action, including the following:

- Support large and small farms, research on genetically modified organisms, local scientific capacity-building in African governments, and rural roads, which are essential for development.
- Provide scholarships for students from developing countries at U.S. colleges and universities to rebuild human capital in the agricultural sector, which has suffered from neglect for two decades.
- Eliminate production subsidies, impediments to free global trade in agricultural products, and ethanol subsidies for corn, given that subsidies account for 30 percent of increases in corn prices.
- Purchase up to 25 percent of American food aid locally in developing countries, which will increase the amount of aid that can be bought with a fixed appropriation given that 20 to 30 percent of the cost of U.S. food aid is for transportation.
- Introduce market intervention plans developed by nongovernmental organizations, the World Food Programme, and the United States that auction food aid in local markets to stabilize prices and force hoarded food onto markets. [gsa](#)

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