

Section III

Recalibrating American Power



Secretary of Defense arrives for a commencement ceremony at the U.S. Military Academy

President Barack Obama faces a world that is being shaped by an array of eight complex trends. These global trends do not manifest themselves equally: each region across the globe exhibits divergent features of these trends that remain closely linked. Beset by financial crises and other pressing issues at home as it establishes legitimacy and influence in the eyes of the international community, the new administration must contemplate bold innovations enlightened by common sense to recalibrate the American role in the world. This recalibration is central to the administration as it seeks to recover America's political legitimacy and influence. This section looks at sustaining a unique—albeit evolving—U.S. role in the changing security environment.



U.S. Army



U.S. Air Force (Gary Coppage)

Left to right: Iraqi soldier on patrol in Baghdad; Emergency vehicles around Pentagon, September 11, 2001

American contributions to the international security arena are unsurpassed yet unsustainable. To manage global disorder, U.S. leadership and greater assistance by more actors are necessary to seize opportunities to cope with a range of serious challenges. Even critics often look to the United States for its active participation if not leadership in grappling with those challenges. In adjusting to a new role in the world, revisiting the rise to dominance of the Nation during the early part of the 20th century is instructive. The hard reality is that any relief is elusive: whether it concerns leading large-scale stabilization campaigns—including a soft landing for a new Iraqi government and vigorous support for the fledgling Afghan state—or effective ways to deal with ongoing humanitarian crises such as Darfur, America will undoubtedly play a crucial if perhaps more limited role in effective strategies. Building partnership capacity and expanding cooperation with other nations or

groups of nations are processes that will supply the building blocks to address future security concerns.

One area in which the Nation will enjoy significant advantages while it ponders hard choices is the military. The Armed Forces face a widening spectrum of missions. In the words of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, the U.S. military cannot opt out of missions that do not conform to preferred notions of the “American way of war.” There is no one type of contingency or conflict for which the United States must be prepared. Instead, globalization and the effort to preclude confrontation with American forces may give rise to hybrid warfare in which adversaries—states, nonstates, or some combination of both—resort to a combination of means in an extended battlespace. The Army, which succeeded in mastering counterinsurgency operations,

will seek highly trained Soldiers while also preparing for conventional missions. The Navy will pursue competitive strategies to retain its irreplaceable, unrivaled strategic global mobility and maritime power for deep-ocean missions, as well as for persistent offshore presence in contested zones along the littorals. The Marines will focus on expeditionary capabilities in what some envision as the second era of small wars. Modernizing the Air Force will require making tradeoffs in fifth-generation fighters, next-generation bombers, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms, while shaping new missions in energy security, cyberspace, and space. Although the All-Volunteer Force has been a remarkable success for more than 35 years, an unprecedented era is dawning that will challenge the recruitment and retention of a diverse and talented force. The Nation must rigorously yet cautiously balance the risks as well as coveted resources in matching current demands against future priorities.

There is a consensus in the United States in favor of realizing greater whole-of-government approaches. A comprehensive approach to national security will entail root-and-branch assessments of leadership, structures, processes, human capital, and expertise. It will also require reform starting at the top, where some complex problems will require authority at the highest level to work across seams of government. The U.S. Southern Command proffers a model for interagency cooperation that allows the commander to assume the leading or supporting role with civilian officials depending on the situation at hand. In terms of developing national security practitioners, joint professional military education must be rounded out with exposure of the officer corps to interagency and international affairs, as well as exposing the interagency community to the military. Similarly, U.S. officials aiming for “joined-up” planning for complex contingencies would do well to build on existing guidance, which includes National Security Presidential Directive 44 and DOD Directive 3000.05. How to strengthen civilian capacity outside of the defense establishment should receive special attention. Finally, the recent transformations of both the intelligence and homeland security communities are best seen as works in progress, with the reform of intelligence remaining open to debate and the enhancements in homeland security an ongoing challenge.

The penultimate chapter of this assessment considers how America can foster greater collaboration with allies and new partners through appreciation of the benefits and limits of multilateral action. Managing alliances is a persistent task, but such alliances are vital to the United States, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, strengthening Middle Eastern partnerships will be challenging for the Nation in promoting greater stability in that region. While rethinking the American role in the develop-

ing world, it may be useful to consider establishing a global alliance for progress, whereby economic growth and conflict prevention become the dual instruments of engagement. The more basic problem of building coalitions to deal with fragile, failing, and recovering states is likely to remain an ingredient of international security. The question will be how its various elements can be synchronized more effectively. The United States must also stimulate broader appreciation of security assistance. Finally, getting accustomed to coalitions as a means of preserving global security is another prominent feature of a new security landscape.

From seizing opportunities and facing challenges to building alliances and countering threats, American leaders are best served by relying on tools of statecraft and strategies for engagement. The final chapter of this *Global Strategic Assessment* rehearses some of those strategies without attempting to cover the entire range of issues in need of fresh approaches. Strategies focused on rehabilitating the image of America in the world; advancing soft as well as smart power to influence rather than intimidate; preparing civilian agencies to work in operational settings; mobilizing other international actors; learning the lessons of previous eras to include the Cold War; developing indirect approaches to hasten the demise of terrorist groups such as al Qaeda; reassessing the strategic centrality of public diplomacy, strategic communications, and information operations while recasting America’s approach as one focused on peace, prosperity, and partnership; and ensuring that policy is girded by successful implementation. Any and all of these ideas in that last chapter provide a springboard for thinking about some aspect of strategy as America recalibrates its role in the world. **gsa**



U.S. Air Force (Christopher Matthews)



U.S. Navy (Marcus Suarez)

Left to right: RQ-4 Global Hawk is a high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial reconnaissance system; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton participates in humanitarian and civic assistance mission in Haiti, April 2009