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**ADAPTING AMERICAN POLICYMAKING TO OVERCOME AMERICAN
EXCEPTIONALISM**

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Commander, U.S. Navy

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Adapting American Policymaking to Overcome American Exceptionalism

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes. (Or appropriate statement per the Academic Integrity Policy)

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ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Happily for America, happily, we trust, for the whole human race, they pursued a new and more noble course. They accomplished a revolution which has no parallel in the annals of human society. They reared the fabrics of governments which have no model on the face of the globe.¹

- James Madison

United States foreign policy makers and those who influence U.S. foreign policy travel a comfortable and well-worn path of American exceptionalism. American foreign policies dutifully export the nation's ideals of freedom, democracy, and opportunity, and these well-meaning policies are understandably centered on American ideals, American security, and American interests abroad. This internal focus, however, distracts the foreign policy maker from prior in-depth consideration of the ramifications of these policies and their reverberations throughout the global community. Further, where those reverberations impact a fellow nation, the policies often lack appropriate consideration of the desires of that fellow nation, or the global community, writ large.

Nation-centric policies and the desire to influence other nations is commonplace and accepted state behavior. It is when that focus and desire ignores or marginalizes its implications that American exceptionalism, American hubris, emerges and begets animosity and enemies. American exceptionalism is defined here by frequent action, taken from perceived moral, ethical, and/or ideological high ground; it is action heedless of extra-national cultures, priorities, and rights to self-determination. For example, policy implementation labeled by America as globally beneficial, yet perceived or intended to benefit only the few. Relationships, as a result, become strained, intentions are

¹ James Madison, The Federalist Papers Federalist No. 14, November 20, 1787.

questioned, and gaps open which may be exploited by detractors, recruiters to anti-American causes, and would-be attackers of the American homeland.

America is at that precarious stage today, the stage at which policy decisions ignore the skein of historical Arab and Muslim ideologies and motivations, and formulate and implement globally impactful foreign policies that keep America in constant tension with a dominant global civilization. Politics and policies shape U.S. national and military strategies in such a manner that they disfigure the truly exceptional nature of this nation in the eyes of many in the Arab and Muslim community. To some within this community, those detractors, recruiters and attackers mentioned earlier, America is indeed a force within the region, but not a force for good. Foreign policy formulation must acknowledge the tension between American values and American interests and evaluate the validity of mitigating the ill-perceptions that may result in order to diminish America's ideological blind spot - the source of American exceptionalism.

Examination of historical examples of American involvement in Iraq, as well as study of strategic messaging and operational military missions, illuminate the ill effect of American exceptionalism on U.S. foreign policy decisions within the Middle East.² To mitigate this effect, foreign policy makers must actively seek informed guidance and opinion, and policy game decisions to acquire a deeper understanding of the Arab and Muslim world *before* policy is implemented. Only such action will help the United States

² For the purposes of this paper, the term "Middle East" assumes the generalized definition of the group of largely Arab or Muslim nations including those in North Africa – from Morocco to Egypt; in Central and South Asia – Pakistan and Afghanistan; and as distant as Indonesia. This definition encompasses the expanse of those nations defined by varying degrees of similar societal, political, cultural, and historical identities but is not intended to marginalize the distinct identity or heritage of the aforementioned nations.

avoid the indelible consequences of ill-informed engagement and action, and reaffirm America's place as a flag bearer of modern civilization.

It is through well-informed and adept policy decisions that the words of anti-American conspiracy theorists and anti-democratic regimes or organizations of the Middle East will begin to lose their audience. In this silence, the United States could regain much of the respect and trust lost. Here, America would be afforded an opportunity to replace its reputation of "exceptional by exception" with that of an emissary of opportunity and a partner to the global Arab and Muslim community. Regardless of amicable or acrimonious ties between the U.S. and regional governments, it is this community, writ large, which must witness such demonstrations of adept and well-informed decisions. Globalization brought with it a far-ranging audience. That (intended or unintended) global audience in its entirety, must be addressed because it is from its ranks that the next great ally and the next dealer of violence toward America will emerge.

The Etymology and History of American Exceptionalism

American exceptionalism is defined as many things, and justified through many irrefutable examples of national strength, of global leadership, and of concern for the well-being of the global community. Classically, American exceptionalism refers to the uniquely free nation's founding as a republic inclusive of the personal freedoms afforded by a democracy - freedoms asserted by the Declaration of Independence, and conferred by the Constitution of the United States in the aftermath of the American Revolution.³ References to American exceptionalism evoke collective images of Puritan John

³ Ian Tyrrell Blog at WordPress.Com, "What is American Exceptionalism," The Caraline Theme, <https://iantyrrell.wordpress.com/papers-and-comments/> (accessed 17 February 2015).

Winthrop's "shining city on a hill"⁴; of Thomas Jefferson's "sole depository of the sacred fire of freedom"⁵; and of Ronald Reagan's "the last best hope of man on earth."⁶

Deborah Madsen, author and professor of American literature and culture at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, asserts that "American exceptionalism permeates every period of American history and is the single most powerful agent in a series of arguments that have been fought down the centuries concerning the identity of America and Americans."⁷ Peggy Noonan, American political pundit and author of several books on American politics and culture, wrote recently in *The Wall Street Journal* that:

America is not exceptional because it has long attempted to be a force for good in the world; it attempts to be a force for good because it is exceptional. It is a nation formed not by brute, grunting tribes come together over the fire to consolidate their power and expand their land base, but by people who... coalesced around not blood lines but ideals, and they defined, delineated and won their political rights in accordance with ground-breaking Western and Enlightenment thought. That was something new in history, and quite exceptional.⁸

From Cabinet member to frontiersman, these words describe the patriotism, the theological principles, and the sense of the unique nature of the expanding country felt by a young and adventurous American nation.

Over recent decades, American foreign policies, practices, and operations abroad challenged a global impression of America as exceptional. In a sense, foreign policy makers' efforts to create a world in which pursuit of national interests may take place

⁴ John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," sermon delivered aboard the ship *Arbella* to the future Massachusetts Bay colonists as they sailed to the New World, 1630.

⁵ Bradford Perkins, *Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 41.

⁶ Ronald Reagan, "We Will Be a City upon a Hill," speech delivered at the First Conservative Political Action Conference, January 25, 1974.

⁷ Deborah Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 1.

⁸ Peggy Noonan, "Noonan: Vladimir Putin Takes Exception," *The Wall Street Journal Opinion*, September 13, 2013, under "Declarations," <http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323392204579071590253066918>, (accessed 3 December 2014).

unimpeded and in security, give the global Muslim and Arab community reason to believe America is no longer that force for good, but a force for its own good. Exceptionalism once meant a nation free from tyrannical rule and offering of bountiful opportunity. Today, American exceptionalism represents a strategic culture of immunity from challenge, exemption from judgment, and of unquestionable moral high ground. Stanley Hoffman, Professor, *emeritus* at Harvard University, concludes American exceptionalism is the “the lofty feeling of democratic superiority and universal relevance [that] was perfectly compatible, in practice, with a pursuit of national interest and advantage...”⁹ To others, who consider themselves victims of American exceptionalism, America’s unique nature, its strength and liberty has curdled into a sense of entitlement.

American exceptionalism’s depreciated definition finds example in the statement of Dmitry Minin, an on-line author for the Strategic Culture Foundation and very enthusiastic detractor:

The irrational, unfounded faith in exceptionalism does not let Americans see why others reject the United States hegemony or why its foreign policy evokes such indignation in different corners of the globe. It is viewed as hypocrisy, be it the issue of human rights or the US propensity to condemn others while turning a blind eye to the slip ups and gaffs of its foreign policy course...¹⁰

Zealous though the author’s sentiment may be, there is truth to be gleaned from the underlying message: it is time for America to see itself through the world’s eyes. This is not to say that policy must now be forged and shaped by external rhetoric or by the will and interests of other nations. But, as the proclaimed last best hope of man on earth,

⁹ Michael Ignatieff, *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 225.

¹⁰ Dmitry Minin, “Americans Believe in National Exceptionalism from Obama to McCain,” Strategic-Culture.org, <http://www.strategic-culture.org/pview/2013/09/25/americans-believe-in-national-exceptionalism-from-obama-to-mccain.html>, (accessed 4 December 2014).

American foreign policy makers and influencers must attempt to listen to and better understand the nuances still distinct within this globalized world. Through these attempts, they may understand where American interests and Arab and Muslim interests intersect and where they diverge. With this understanding, foreign policy makers may then develop a plan best suited to integrate the two. Certainly, American interests must be furthered abroad, and its ideals of liberty and freedoms espoused. But these interests and ideals can be successfully furthered – potentially *more* successfully furthered – through increased judiciousness on the part of the foreign policy makers championing them.

CHAPTER 2: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM, THE EARLY YEARS

The United States grounded its ideology in ideas about liberty, yet practiced slavery. National myths, symbols, and ideologies portrayed the United States as a bounded, sacred, and timeless space, yet actual social practice revolved around territorial expansion and the search for boundless markets.¹

- George Lipsitz

The roots of American exceptionalism flourished in the fertile soil of a nation blessed with an abundance of resources and populated from the onset by men and women seeking and willing to work for a better situation; tens of thousands of immigrants seeking an improved life and opportunity.² Young America remained isolated from the wars of the world and selected at will when and where to become involved in international affairs. As George Washington foresaw in September of 1796, “If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off...when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.”³

At an impressionable age, America defeated the world’s supreme power and gained independence. Victory left a cautious but lasting impression of the nation’s ability to effect change; and of desire for perceived good to triumph over perceived evil. That desire has not faded with the coming maturity of the nation. Nor has the outward-looking

¹ David Noble, Foreword by George Lipsitz, *Death of a nation: American culture and the end of exceptionalism*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xvi.

² It should be mentioned that within this process of creation, decidedly *unexceptional* actions took place. An ancient nation of natives was systematically displaced or eradicated; slavery was imported; women were not afforded a vote for nearly two centuries; and many who emigrated from the Old World brought with them their own biases, corruptions and self-interests. It is the state which emerged, perhaps in spite of itself, from an amalgamation of representatives from all corners of the world to form one democratic, nationalistic, and eventually powerful nation of equals which is undeniably exceptional within the annals of history.

³ George Washington, “Farewell Address 1796,” Yale Law School.
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp (accessed 20 March 2015).

nature of the nation today been informed by an understanding of the nuances of foreign civilizations and cultures such as those of the Middle East.

Thus born and situated, generations of Americans, in a sense ill-socialized globally, grew somewhat detached and lost their deep understanding of the unique cultures, distinct interests, and machinations of the world – the cultures from which America’s own inhabitants’ emigrated. Americanism, nationalism, grew alongside the citizens’ sense of being exceptional. Busy with the affairs of piecing together the nation state, and far removed from their European forefathers, isolationism naturally surfaced. In a letter to Patrick Henry dated October 9th, 1775, George Washington wrote of his desire for a sort of political isolationism for America, that it might remain unfettered from Europe:

My ardent desire is, and my aim has been . . . to comply strictly with all our engagements foreign and domestic; but to keep the United States free from political connections with every other Country. To see that they may be independent of all, and under the influence of none. In a word, I want an American character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for ourselves and not for others; this, in my judgment, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home.⁴

Americanism grew alongside the citizens’ sense of being unique in the world until detachment and isolationism eventually, somewhat reluctantly, retreated amidst 20th-century turmoil and the ensuing calls for American intervention.

On the one hand, Theodore Roosevelt made his case for American involvement in European and Latin American affairs. On the other, WWI and the Great Depression fueled the isolationists’ argument. “Immediately following the First World War, Congress

⁴ George Washington, “Foreign Policy Quotations,” We Still Hold These Truths, <http://westillholdthesetruths.org/quotes/category/foreign-policy>, (accessed 03 March 2015).

rejected U.S. membership in the League of Nations [...] out of concern that it would draw the United States into European conflicts.”⁵ And “during the interwar period, the U.S. Government repeatedly chose non-entanglement over participation or intervention as the appropriate response to international questions.”⁶ But as the Depression faded and the homeland was attacked, and with its allies suffering, the Land of Opportunity began to realize the worth of the nation and its unique power for good abroad. This view survives today. A recent survey conducted by the Brookings Institution sheds light on much the same belief that surfaced among 20th century Americans. The survey found that 58 percent of Americans agree with the statement, “God has granted America a special role in human history.”⁷

This American role was welcomed by Europeans in the 20th century. Today, however, America’s recent attempts to replay that role in operations and activities throughout the Middle East and Southwest Asia take on the flavor of aggression for the sake of American interests – not limited to security. Post WWII, American actions bore the mark of being motivated by a desire for the security and prosperity of global society. Today, that message is questioned by a skeptical audience within the Arab and Muslim community. These skeptics grew from American missteps and aggressions, from the narrative that the United States pre-emptively attacked Iraq and expanded operations in

⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Milestones 1914-1920,” Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/wwi> (accessed 21 March 2015).

⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Milestones 1914-1920,” Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/wwi> (accessed 21 March 2015).

⁷ David Morris, “The Real American Exceptionalism,” Institute for Local Self Reliance, <http://ilsr.org/the-real-american-exceptionalism/>, (accessed 1 March 2015).

Afghanistan because it could – to save its nationalized oil, not its oppressed people⁸; that drones patrol the skies of Pakistan and Yemen because they can⁹; and that America acts without permission and without respect, and in a manner which its own foreign policy makers would find unacceptable from another nation.

Tarnishing Exceptionalism

In Thucydides' Melian Dialogue, the Melians accuse Athens of acting aggressively and inconsistently with Athens' own stated principles. The Arab and Muslim community accuses America of doing the same today. As the stronger nation, America acts as it will in response to threats and pursuit of interests, while the weaker nations of the Middle East suffer what they must at the hands of American foreign policy makers.¹⁰ From this inconsistency emerges the reputation of a nation of tainted exceptionalism. The danger of exceptionalism in foreign policy remains today as it was in Thucydides' time. The

⁸ This perception is widely acknowledged and headlined in cross-party news blogs and opinion pieces and media outlets around the world, including msnbs.com: The Rachael Maddow Show, "Why we did it' Part 1, US thirsty for energy," 6 March, 2014.

⁹ International Security, "Drone Wars: Yemen Analysis," "Drone Wars: Pakistan Analysis" <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/yemen/analysis.html>, <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/pakistan/analysis.html> (accessed 13 March 2015).

¹⁰ The Melians appealed to Athens that the two nations – despite differences in self-interest – could coexist peaceably, to which Athens replied that any nation embittered by the impositions of Athens was a threat and must therefore be subjugated. Thereby, Athens created and then had to destroy enemies who would otherwise never have existed. The United States is accused of the same creation/destruction today through the imposition of its interest on the Middle Eastern and Arab community.

Melians: For here again, since you will not let us mention justice, but tell us to give in to your interests, we, too, must tell you what our interests are and, if yours and ours happen to coincide, we must try to persuade you of the fact. Is it not certain that you will make enemies of all states who are at present neutral, when they see what is happening here and naturally conclude that in course of time you will attack them too? Does not this mean that you are strengthening the enemies you have already and are forcing others to become your enemies even against their intentions and their inclinations?

Athenians: We are more concerned about islanders like yourselves, who are still unsubdued, or subjects who have already become embittered by the constraint which our empire imposes on them. These are the people who are most likely to act in a reckless manner and to bring themselves and us, too, into the most obvious danger.

Melians warned the Athenians of the repercussions of an aggressive pursuit of national self-interests: “Does not this mean you are strengthening the enemies you have already and are forcing others to become your enemies even against their intentions and their inclinations?”¹¹ As Melos did Athens, thus many American allies warn the nation’s foreign policy makers today.

In one sense, the degeneration of America’s image began with its emergence from isolationism and is traceable to the Monroe Doctrine, in which America warned European nations to not interfere with the affairs of the Western Hemisphere. “Articulated in President James Monroe’s seventh annual message to Congress on December 2, 1823. The European powers, according to Monroe, were obligated to respect the Western Hemisphere as the United States’ sphere of interest.”¹² Several decades later, victory in the Spanish-American War caused the United States to also inherit interests in Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Surrounding itself with a swath of near abroad security, and acquiring possessions in the Pacific, the United States donned the trappings of a modest colonial empire.

In 1904, Roosevelt proclaimed the U.S.’s authority to employ an “international police power” in opposition to European collection of outstanding debts in Latin America - a little too close to the interests of the United States’ empire.¹³ Proclaiming these collections as “chronic wrongdoing,” Roosevelt deployed the Marines to Santo Domingo,

¹¹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 1954), 403.

¹² OurDocuments.gov, “Monroe Doctrine (1823),” Our Documents, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=23> (accessed 18 February 2015). Information excerpted from *Milestone Documents* [Washington, DC: The National Archives and Records Administration, 1995] pp. 26–29.

¹³ Department of State, “Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine,” Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine> (accessed 3 April 2015).

Nicaragua, and Haiti between 1904 and 1915 in support of what became known as the Banana Wars, so called due to U.S. commercial interests in the region.¹⁴ Certainly President Roosevelt actively promoted policies that exported American values and interests, believing such exportation would have an ennobling effect on the world.

TR's diplomatic maxim was to "speak softly and carry a big stick"... He therefore sought to assemble a powerful and reliable defense for the United States.... Roosevelt followed McKinley in ending the relative isolationism that had dominated the country since the mid-1800s, acting aggressively in foreign affairs, often without the support or consent of Congress.¹⁵

Both the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt's aggressive foreign policies denigrated America's reputation and promoted the idea of force justified by exceptionalism in the mind of Britain and many Latin American nations. Specifically detrimental was the Roosevelt Corollary, which the President introduced in his 1904 State of the Union address following the Venezuelan Crisis. This corollary made efforts to order the world and provided justification for Roosevelt's perceived aggressive policies, taking the Monroe Doctrine to the next level.

[Roosevelt] turns the Monroe Doctrine on its head and toes says the Europeans should stay out, but the United States has the right, under the doctrine, to go in in order to exercise police power to keep the Europeans out of the way. [O]ver the next 15 to 20 years, the United States will move into Latin America about a dozen times with military force, to the point where the United States Marines become known in the area as "State Department troops" because they are always moving in to protect State Department interests and State Department policy in the Caribbean. So what Roosevelt does [...] leads the United States into a period of confrontation with peoples in the Caribbean and Central America that was a really important part of American imperialism.¹⁶

¹⁴ Department of State, "Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine," Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine> (accessed 3 April 2015).

¹⁵ Miller Center University of Virginia, "American President Theodore Roosevelt," University of Virginia, <http://millercenter.org/president/roosevelt/essays/biography/5> (accessed 24 November 2014).

¹⁶ Walter LaFeber, interview by David Grubin, 1996, on *Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President*. Produced by David Grubin Productions, Inc., for PBS.

In another sense, all was soon forgiven by Europe and exceptionalism was temporarily restored, by American leadership and sacrifices on the Continent. Along with American sacrifices during WWI and II, the Marshall Plan (hereafter referred to simply as “the Plan”) applied ample salve to the foreign policies of the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary. Among other motivations, U.S. foreign policy makers seized upon the long-term interest of creating a strong European market for American goods by sacrificing American treasure and goods in the short term. Economic historians Bradford DeLong and Barry Eichengreen describe the Plan as "history's most successful structural adjustment program."¹⁷ ¹⁸ Meanwhile, the American propaganda machine churned continuously and the perception created is clear. Along with American sacrifices in Europe during WWII, the Plan subtly Americanized or ingratiated many. Indeed, West Germany honored George Marshall and his Plan in the form of a stamp.

A global community seeking to avoid future conflict and repair the immense damages of WWII looked to America which, against early odds, assisted in the Allies’ defeat of the German Axis yet still retained the economic wherewithal to assist Europe from the ashes. So America entered the exportation business in Europe as it had in Latin America, the United States became a state from which examples should be drawn, and its leadership promoted ideologies and values that became the expected standard of a civilized society. Yet this European society, with its similar culture and ideologies, is far removed from the culturally and historically divergent society found in the Middle East –

¹⁷ J. Bradford DeLong and Barry Eichengreen, "The Marshall Plan: history's most successful structural adjustment program" UC Berkeley Department of Economics, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3b1108bj#page-2> (accessed 24 November 2014).

¹⁸ Structural adjustment programs are typically loans provided to nations under the burdens of economic crises by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). In the Marshall Plan, the United States acted in the stead of either the IMF or WB to draw a region out of crisis.

a society with which America was unacquainted as it turned its attentions to the lands of the Ottoman and Persian Empires as the century closed.

CHAPTER 3: THE RECENT PRACTICE OF EXCEPTIONALISM

*When an American says that he loves his country, he means not only that he loves the New England hills, the prairies glistening in the sun, the wide and rising plains, the great mountains, and the sea. He means that he loves an inner air, an inner light in which freedom lives and in which a man can draw the breath of self-respect.*¹

-Adlai Stevenson

In a survey carried out in 2003 and 2004 among 33 countries, America's collective sense of being an exceptional nation is clear.

The U.S. ranks first in pride of the following domains: the way the democracy works; its political influence in the world; its economic achievement; its scientific and technological achievements; and its armed forces. In addition, it ranks second in terms of its pride of its history.²

Past and recent American policies both at home and abroad are the tool that created that exemplary nation. Yet today, that pride must be tempered with discernment as its wide reach affects the relationships the United States has within Arab and Muslim nations.

Increasingly, these nations perceive that reach is spanned by aggressive hands, hands that sculpt America's future enemies.

Exceptionalism in Policy and Practice

In his second inaugural address in 1997, then-President Bill Clinton spoke in the intellectual and emotional tradition of exceptionalism, which permeates American society and guides the hand of U.S. foreign policy decision making when he said, "At the dawn of the 21st century... America stands alone as the world's indispensable nation."³ There is no

¹ The Library of Congress, ed., *Respectfully Quoted, A Dictionary of Quotations*, (Dover: Dover Publications, 2010), 70.

² Tom W. Smith and Kim Seokho. "National Pride in Comparative Perspective: 1995/96 and 2003/04," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 18, 1 (Spring 2006), 127-136.

³ CNN, "WILLIAM J. CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, Jan. 20, 1997," All Politics. CNN. TIME, <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1997/01/20/transcripts/> (accessed October 22 2014).

doubt that emotive and nationalistic expressions are expected during the likes of inaugural addresses and speeches delivered amid elevated international tensions; particularly by Americans who find them a source of understandable pride. Under close scrutiny by the international public, however, it may be perceived to be bloviating - an unfortunate and misinterpreted response, but a response to be noticed and considered, nonetheless.

Similarly, President George Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) was, quite understandably, replete with poignant statements of unilateral action and of America at the lead of all things democratic, idealistic, and militaristic. Through the lens of passionate post 9/11 times, and clouded by a prevailing sense of exceptionalism, policy makers and influencers ignored the far reaching implications of their words and actions. This was exemplified by President Bush when, seeking to convey the powerful symbolism of a battle of the righteous versus the unrighteous, used the word "crusade" to describe the American retaliation against its Middle Eastern attackers in 2001.⁴ While use of the word was all but unnoticed in the United States, Europe and the Arab and Muslim world cringed. Soheib Bensheikh, Grand Mufti of the mosque in Marseille, France, lamented that the President's use of the word "was most unfortunate [and] recalled the barbarous and unjust military operations against the Muslim world."⁵ Unanticipated by President Bush, the juxtaposition of the foreign reaction to the U.S. intention through use of the word provided a loud and clear warning to foreign policy makers and influencers: know

⁴ President Bush's used the word "crusade" on the national day of mourning (September 16, 2001) during which the more than 3,000 victims of the attacks were honored. In his remarks on the South Lawn, President Bush remarked, "This crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while"; The White House, "Remarks by the President upon Arrival on the South Lawn," The White House Archives, <http://georgewbushwhitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html> (accessed 23 February 2015).

⁵ Quoted by Staff Writer Peter Ford of The Christian Science Monitor, "Europe cringes at Bush 'crusade' against terrorists," The Christian Science Monitor. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0919/p12s2-woeu.html> (accessed 20 January 2015).

your enemy and know your allies as you know yourself. The debate remains as to whether American foreign policy makers knew their enemy in Iraq or their audiences in the Arab and Middle Eastern communities as they entered planning for the second Gulf War.

The Arab and Muslim community was not alone in their discomfort at President Bush's rallying good against evil speeches and the words of the NSS. The President's us versus them foreign policies intensified the impression of policy shaped not by dispassionate objectivity but by exceptionalism and unilateralism. Francis Fukuyama, member of the Political Science Department of the RAND Corporation illustrates this point:

Clearly, a doctrine of preventative war is not one that can be safely generalized throughout the international system. [...] The fact that the United States granted itself a right that it would deny [unless in keeping with U.S. interests] to other countries is based, in the NSS, on an implicit judgment that the United States is different from other countries and can be trusted to use its military power justly and wisely in ways that other powers could not.⁶

In spite of the tragic events that inspired American preventative action, and of the Bush doctrine of preemption, foreign policies must seek to be above such reproach and condemnation where possible. America must strive to be above reproach because it is, indeed, a city on the hill – observed and judged as a world leader, and demonstrably vulnerable to attack. Because if it is a shining city upon a hill to and by which others may be guided, it cannot be effective – or as secure - if it is reproachable. Fukuyama's assessment reflects the sentiments in the Arab and Muslim community that America – as it did in the Roosevelt Corollary – felt it had a right to act (because it did so nobly) where

⁶ Y. Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 101.

others did not. Some within the Arab and Muslim community disagreed, loudly passing judgment from which anti-U.S. aggression was given room to grow.

President Bush's decisions, regardless of intentions, led to foreign policies which expressed his – and the nation's – emotions at the time. Ideally, he would have balanced his the domestic demagoguery with rational and defensible foreign policy internationally. His, as all, foreign policies must be made only after full consideration of their ramifications to those nations who may be made an enemy as a result of the policy and its (mis)interpretation. Even the most rational and dispassionate, clinical decision process will have unintended consequences and nth order effects. How much greater and potentially more damaging may those reverberations be when set in motion by an impassioned decision making process? Globalization further complicates this process by demanding the difficult, but essential, simultaneous consideration of both foreign and domestic audiences. Responding to President Bush's speeches, Hussein Amin, a former Egyptian ambassador warned of the consequences of alienating nations, "The whole tone is that of one civilization against another. It is a superior way of speaking and I fear the consequences - the world being divided into two between those who think themselves superior" and the rest.⁷

The influence of exceptionalism is also woven throughout the words of the mission statements that guide American governmental agencies. The mission statement of the Department of State, for example, articulates that in its commitment to protecting U.S. national interests and in order to meet its strategic objectives and goals, the Department

⁷ Ambassador Amin is quoted by Staff Writer Peter Ford of The Christian Science Monitor, "Europe cringes at Bush 'crusade' against terrorists," The Christian Science Monitor. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0919/p12s2-woeu.html> (accessed 20 January 2015).

focuses on several key priorities, which represent Presidential initiatives. One such initiative is to promote “democracy and economic freedom in the Muslim world.”⁸ The mission statement continues to describe this effort: “As we focus on reaching peace in the Middle East, we also recognize the profound need for democracy and market economies to meet the aspirations of a new generation . . . Public diplomacy will be central to communicating our objectives and changing negative views of the United States.”⁹

While devoid of ill intent and with a stronger global peace in mind, this mission statement, and the foreign policies and actions which arise in support of it, lack discernment and a fundamental understanding of the Arab and Muslim world. (However, the statement is spot on in mentioning a plan for propitiation abroad through public diplomacy and communication.) This mission statement assumes democracy is the aspiration of a new generation of Arabs, or that there is a “profound need” for democracy throughout the Middle East. Perhaps their need and desire today is more basic: survival, or the absence of oppressions. Perhaps in some regions within the Middle East, this lack of oppression and expectation of life is as great a gift as democracy or self-expression could be.¹⁰ Perhaps moderates among Muslim and Arab communities, once survival and

⁸ U.S. Department of State, “FY 2004-2009 Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan (2004-2009),” Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/dosstrat/2004/23503.htm> (accessed 22 October 2014).

⁹ U.S. Department of State, “FY 2004-2009 Department of State and USAID Strategic Plan (2004-2009),” Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/dosstrat/2004/23503.htm> (accessed 22 October 2014).

¹⁰ In 2010, political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel created the Inglehart–Welzel cultural map of the world based on the World Values Survey. This chart depicts, along an x-y axis, the divergence of needs from the fundamental need for survival to the ideal desire for self-expression. Islamic nations, Pakistan for example, are depicted as motivated by Survival and Traditional Values. Western or Protestant/Catholic nations such as Sweden, prize Secular-Rational and Self Expression Values.

an absence of oppression is assured, may then have the air they need to breathe in and understand and perhaps even seek the idea of democracy.

Today however, the Department of State's statement presupposes, demonstrably incorrectly, that upon being given the freedom to remove an oppressive or corrupt or simply undesirable leader and to elect a suitable government, such a government of and for the people exists or could exist imminently to take its place. Worse, it does not recognize the violence with which democracies often emerge from autocracies – violence which, in the case of each nation touched by the Arab Spring over the past half-decade, did not end in peaceful, nationalistic resolution. Neither has the Arab Spring, with the hopeful exception of Tunisia, ended in stable democratic rule. A 2002 paper written by the Partners for Democratic Change prepared under a United States Institute for Peace grant studied the source of this violence and the barriers it presents within would-be democracies:

Violent, post-violent and potentially violent inter-group conflict poses a unique challenge to building stable democracies in transitioning countries worldwide. Managing change, resolving conflicts and building consensus within a community requires a basic level of trust, communication and willingness to cooperate among sectors of society. When xenophobia, racism, discrimination and other forms of intolerance divide a community, any efforts at building democratic institutions and participatory initiatives take on a new dimension; this becomes especially challenging in developing democracies, which often simultaneously undergo structural changes and social upheaval.¹¹

Yet the Department of State's mission statement moves forward with the hope that the divide of Sunni and Shia, of Christian and Muslim, of wealthy and poor, educated and ill-educated, corrupt and honest may be made more peaceful by provision of the right of

¹¹Jonathan Leit, with contributions by Brad Heckman & Jennifer Lofing, "Building Cooperative Peace in Response to Violence in Emerging Democracies," Partners for Democratic Change, <http://www.partnersglobal.org/resources/Building%20Cooperative%20Peace%20in%20Response%20to%20Violence%20within%20Emerging%20Democracies.pdf/view>, (accessed 4 March 2015).

the people to elect their leader and experience the freedoms of democracy. Notably, the United States does not ask, but assumes such people desire a democratic form of government before, unaware of its own cultural blind spot, making preparations for its exportation. Such was the hope in Tunisia, in Libya, at the onset of the fleeting season of the Arab Spring in Egypt and within Arabian Gulf nations which experienced similar, smaller, upheavals. One might argue against U.S. intervention in the tensions and political affairs of a region so foreign to western culture and so unpredictable in its reaction to U.S. involvement in its evolution and rule. The global economy would certainly survive, though perhaps be shifted. If U.S. foreign policy makers do step aside, giving up the opportunity to intercede in the hope of a favorable outcome for society, would it, rhetorically speaking, diminish the right of the United States to claim itself as the last best hope of mankind? Perhaps where failed attempt follows failed attempt, this argument may be presented successfully.

Yet America's sense of exceptionalism, its sense that American democracy and the American right to self-determination is exceptional and therefore must be transferred as a universal form of government despite vast cultural and historical divergences between those cultures, continues. It is as dangerous a mission statement as it is damaging as a foreign policy. There is a nobility within many of America's actions, even found within some taken solely on the basis of American values; but America cannot understand why this nobility is not more often seen and appreciated by others. And because foreign policy makers neither ask beforehand nor see clearly in hindsight the consequences of their actions, it becomes a false nobility.

America in Iraq – Neoconservatives at the Helm

“This tendency to over-steer is characteristic of human interaction with dynamic systems. We let ourselves be guided not by development... but by the situation at each stage. We regulate the situation, not the process.”¹² Did American policy makers over steer in 1980s Afghanistan and 1990s Iraq when they focused on the present and did not fully game the consequences, pushing them off to an as yet undetermined date? Does America over-steer when it calls for regime change or government restructuring in Iran knowing the turmoil likely to ensue? One could argue the case. If so, then experience suggests future wars and tensions America will confront in the Middle East are the offspring of policies forged by exceptionalism in the same region today. It suggests that attempts at the democratization of Iraq, as it fell into fragmented civil war, were premature and fertilized the soil for the growth of extreme and violent organizations such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).¹³ It suggests that declaring a “war on terror” was in reality a grasping in the dark for an unknown opponent and left to interpretation the borders, enemies, and duration of war.¹⁴ It suggests that for over a decade America, well

¹² Dietrich Dörner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations*, (New York: Basic Books, A member of the Perseus Books Group, 1989), 30. Refers to how humans understood and reacted to the processes to avoid the disaster at Chernobyl instead of stepping back to look at the system in its entirety. This study of human character demonstrates general behavioral tendencies to focus on the narrow rather than the broad solution, and extrapolates the snowball effect such myopic focus may cause.

¹³ The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), is an Islamist extremist group comprised of fighters and supporters from several nations. ISIL controls territory and conducts operations mainly in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt though it is often attributed with further-ranging operations. The stated goal of the group is to establish, grow and rule a Caliphate – or global system of theocratic governance replacing all other forms of government.

¹⁴ Terror is not an enemy. Terror is a tactic – an age old one. When defined, as it was post-9/11, as an enemy, it dramatically broadened the battlefield America and its allies would face in the indeterminate future.

intended though its foreign policies and military operations may be, has sculpted future enemies throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

Madeleine Albright considered the enlarged ranks of such an enemy when she said in a *Newsweek* interview in 2006, “I hope I'm wrong, but I am afraid that Iraq is going to turn out to be the greatest disaster in American foreign policy - worse than Vietnam, not in the number who died, but in terms of its unintended consequences and its reverberation throughout the region.”¹⁵ Secretary Albright’s fear was correct, but she underestimated the reverberations’ extent, globally.

As previously mentioned, across Europe and the Arab world, reaction to the highly-charged words of President Bush and his foreign policy advisors in the aftermath of 9/11 called loudly for temperance and discernment. While most nations were sympathetic to the American loss of life, they understood the world in a broader context and some perceived the interloping foreign policies of the United States were due a portion of blame for motivating the attacks of 9/11. Whether due to self-referentialism, cultural centrism, or an ideological blind spot, American policy makers and influencers did not share this perception.

President Bush’s team would have done well to exercise reason over emotional generalities to better foresee the globe-altering effect of their actions, especially in Iraq – a nation irrelevant to the events of 9/11. As foretold by the title of a *Le Monde* article on 18 September, 2001: “L'Irak Reste Une Cible Tentante Pour l'Équipe Bush; Une Attaque

¹⁵ *Newsweek* Staff, “The Last Word: Madeleine Albright,” *Newsweek.com*, July 23, 2006, under “News,” <http://www.newsweek.com/last-word-madeleine-albright-112601>, (accessed 3 December 2014).

Contre Bagdad Pourrait Briser La Solidarité Des Européens Et Des Pays Arabes”¹⁶ – “Iraq remains a tempting target for the Bush team. [However,] an attack against Baghdad could break the solidarity of Europeans and Arab countries.” To many within European and Arab nations, the undeniably tragic context of 9/11 did not give America leeway to invade Iraq. However, in the minds of the many American policy makers and influencers, such as Donald Rumsfeld and neoconservative Paul Wolfowitz, it did.

On 13 September, 2001, Mr. Wolfowitz attended a Pentagon briefing during which he stated, "I think one has to say it's not just simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending states who sponsor terrorism. And that's why it has to be a broad and sustained campaign."¹⁷ In the aftermath of the U.S.’s pre-emptive invasion of Iraq, Mr. Wolfowitz participated in several interviews in which he discussed the administration’s decision process which led to the decision to invade.

During a May 9, 2003, interview with Vanity Fair's Sam Tannenhau, Wolfowitz recalled a meeting at Camp David between President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Secretary Rumsfeld, and others in the administration that took place two days after Wolfowitz’ “ending states” declaration. "On the surface of the debate it at least appeared to be about not whether but when [Iraq should have a place in the counterterrorism strategy of the United States]. There seemed to be a kind of agreement that, yes it should, but the disagreement was whether it should be in the immediate response or whether you

¹⁶ Patrice De Beer, "L'Irak Reste Une Cible Tentante Pour l'Équipe Bush; Une Attaque Contre Bagdad Pourrait Briser La Solidarité Des Européens Et Des Pays Arabes," *Le Monde*, 18 September 2001), www.lemonde.fr (accessed 17 January 2015).

¹⁷ Paul Wolfowitz, quoted by PBS.com in “The Evolution of the Bush Doctrine,” PBS.com, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/etc/cron.html>, (accessed 4 April 2015).

should concentrate simply on Afghanistan first."¹⁸ During the interview, Wolfowitz recalled discussing with President Bush a pre-emptive attack against Iraq, based on a "gut feeling," not proof, Saddam was involved in the attacks of 9/11.

President Bush's jingoism turned international sympathy to alarm and eventually a lessening of support. The international community not only saw no guilt on Iraq's part in the attacks of 9/11, but did not experience Wolfowitz's same gut feelings. "If this 'war' takes a form that affronts moderate Arab opinion, if it has the air of a clash of civilizations, there is a strong risk that it will contribute to Osama bin Laden's goal: a conflict between the Arab-Muslim world and the West," warned the Paris daily *Le Monde* in an editorial.¹⁹ This warning was an unfortunately accurate foretelling. America retaliated against an almost unidentifiable enemy, his tactics unfamiliar outside the Special Forces realm and his politics and ethos equally foreign. American neither knew its enemy as Sun Tzu would urge, nor understood its politics and therefore its reason or means for war, as Karl von Clausewitz would assert. Yet, exceptionalism demanded immediate retaliation, and immediacy begat oversimplification. Discernment between foes be damned, America sought to battle its old enemy in Iraq as a way of putting a face to those still surviving and guilty of fostering a society in which 9/11's could incubate.

Iraq – Bin Laden's Success Story

Clearly, atrocities took place at the hands and orders of Hussein as he sat upon one of the world's largest supplies of energy. Whether war for the traditional purpose of

¹⁸ Scott C. Monje, quoting Paul Wolfowitz in *The Central Intelligence Agency: A Documentary History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008), 313.

¹⁹ Joshua Feblowitz, "La Fin D'un Reve: French Newspaper Coverage of 9/11." *Student Pulse*, 2010, Vol. 2 No. 01, <http://www.studentpulse.com/a?id=112> (accessed 14 January 2015).

resources, or war to depose a dictatorial ruler, it was initiated amid heightened post 9/11 sentiment and justified on the basis of the Bush Doctrine for pre-emption. Certainly past and current foreign policy makers have forgiven many atrocities at the hands of Saudi, Egyptian, and Israeli rulers where they saw fit. This practice is tainted by a double standard, a duality, and brings to light the tension between American ideals and American practices and policies. When exposed, this tension opens the door for American policies and practices to be judged and condemned by members within the Middle Eastern and Arab community.

If the actual perpetrators of 9/11 could be interviewed today, their satisfaction would be palpable. In the nationalistic upheaval following their act, and after years of witnessing horrible acts at the hands of Hussein, the United States foreign policy makers justified war against a nation – however distasteful and guilty of other crimes – blameless in the events of 9/11.

Clinton Goes to Cairo

In 2011, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton conveyed, as did President Obama, enthusiastic optimism at the onset of the “Arab Spring.” In March, 2011, Secretary Clinton toured Tahrir Square in Cairo following President Hosni Mubarak’s fall from power in Egypt. She commented, “To see where this revolution happened and all that it has meant to the world is extraordinary for me, it’s just a great reminder of the power of

the human spirit and universal desire for freedom and human rights and democracy.” She added, “It’s just thrilling to see where this happened.”²⁰

That optimism diminished into disillusionment during her visit as she met with a collection of students and activists at the Four Seasons Hotel in Cairo.

I was curious to hear about their plans to move from protests to politics. . . I found a disorganized group not prepared to contest or influence anything. They had no experience in politics, no understanding about how to organize parties, run candidates, or conduct campaigns. They didn’t have platforms and showed little interest in forming them. Instead they argued among themselves, blamed the United States for a variety of sins, and were largely dismissive of electoral politics. “Have you considered forming a political coalition and joining together on behalf of candidates and programs?” I asked. They just looked at me blankly.²¹

For better or worse today, these educated students and activists were proud of the revolution they brought to bear in Egypt, as in Tunisia and Libya, and of the rule they ended by both media and by bloodshed. Unfortunate is Secretary Clinton’s naiveté vis-à-vis her limited comprehension of the motivations and limited objectives of the activists and their preparedness to act on either or both beyond mob protests. In spite of experiences as First Lady, and extensive travels as Secretary of State, she simply did not grasp a people without clear long term democratic goals or purpose or experience, nor a government beyond her own.

If the policy makers of the United States are to imbue real change in and seek stable coexistence with the Arab and Muslim world, they must first educate themselves – at the very least on Islam’s fundamental tenets – with open minds. Then they must endeavor to offer targeted assistance during the evolution of the fledgling nation, not

²⁰ Statements made by Secretary Clinton to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo staff and her Egyptian escorts as she walked through Tahrir Square. Elisa Labott, “Clinton visits anti-government rallying site from Egyptian revolution,” CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/03/16/egypt.clinton.visit/> (accessed 4 March 2015).

²¹ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices. A Memoir*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014),

simply help an Arab or Muslim nation from the confines of the nest of a previous regime in expectation of successful flight. To put it another way, America should avoid attempting to teach a Penguin to fly simply because it is a bird and must want to and understand how to.

Separation of Mosque and State – An Un-Muslim Ideal

Just as many U.S. foreign policy makers and influencers struggle to understand the nuances of Islam or the types of government born of it and accepted by it, those governed by the canons of Islam similarly struggle with America's religion-free democracy. Recognizing this divergence in understanding, the United States must pause to reflect before naively encouraging political change in expectation of a democracy automatically ensuing. Foreign policy makers must consider past experiences of attempts at playing a leading role in or encouraging the removal and replacement of governments within the Arab and Muslim community. Such experiences may bring to light democracy's fundamental conflict with Islam. Alon Ben-Meir, Senior Fellow for Global Affairs at NYU, provided a summary of this contentious relationship, including democracy's tenuous hold in Turkey under President Erdoğan, in his July 2103 article in the Huffington Post. Specifically, he notes:

The Middle East is not the only place where religious ideology might compel people to vote against their own social, economic, and political interests. But history teaches that if there is any prospect in wedding Islam to democratic ideals, efforts to do so must concurrently work on religious, economic, and political levels.

Religiously, the concept of the separation of church and state has practically no hold in Islamic thinking. The idea is entirely foreign to most Islamic orthodoxy, and even if a political party were secular in name, they dare not forsake the basic tenets of Islam.

The strong religious identity currently imposed on the average citizen would effect a transposition of Islamic views on political affairs, thus nullifying this vital separation of powers and coloring political discourse.²²

The separation of church and state cherished by many in America is a foreign, if not profane, ideal to much of the Muslim world. Islam is as much a political system as a religion. In other words, the state is intended to be inseparable from religious rule. While many Muslims are loyal to the laws of the non-Islamic countries in which they live, this is in spite of Islamic teaching, not in keeping with it. This does not mean everyone must be forced to convert to Islam, but, strictly speaking, that everyone must submit to Islamic rule.²³ Democracy and Islam co-exist within moderate societies, but it is essential to temper the manner in which democracy is offered to an Islamic country, to determine what form of democracy, if any, may fit its societal and religious constraints.

This approach better equips foreign policy makers to interact with a would-be democracy, it displays thoughtful pragmatism, breaks from cultural universalism, and provide an opportunity to determine what a nation seeks, what could strengthen it, and where there may be room to assist or encourage growth or freedoms or success. Importantly, this approach also opens a door of opportunity to nations that do not consider democracy viable for their own form of government, but are willing to consider a democratic nation a viable ally and partner.

²² Alon Ben-Meir, "Is Islam Compatible with Democracy?" Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alon-benmeir/is-islam-compatible-with_b_3562579.html? (accessed 22 March 2015).

²³ TheReligionofPeace.com, "Muslim Loyalty to Non-Muslim Governments" The Religion of Peace <http://www.thereligionofpeace.com/Quran/014-loyalty-to-non-muslim-government.htm> (accessed 18 February 2015).

CHAPTER 4: POLICY MAY LEARN FROM MILITARY LESSONS

One of the few unequivocally sound lessons of history is that the lessons we should learn are usually learned imperfectly if at all.¹

-Bernard Brodie

Some believe the trends of antagonism as well as the conflict between the United States and the Muslim and Islamic world have yet to reach its most deadly and that the military planning for such a conflict is best informed by the lessons of the past. These lessons are easily adapted to guide foreign policy makers as they seek to improve upon their own policies and procedures.

In October 2011, General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called for a study by the Joint Force into U.S. military actions and operations subsequent to the events of September 11, 2001. The J-7 Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (JCOA) task was to “make sure we actually learn the lessons from the last decade of war.”² The task amalgamated studies, observations, lessons learned, and reports addressing a full spectrum of military operations across the globe between 2003 and 2012. The result was the two-volume report, “Decade of War. Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations,” releasable to the widest audience possible in an effort to promote the greatest learning.

The very first “enduring lesson and challenge” to the military operations of the previous decade enumerated by the study, from Haiti to Pakistan, from Humanitarian Relief to combat operations, was to “Understand the Operating Environment.” The single

¹ Quoted in Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984), 25.

² GEN Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), to LtGen George Flynn, “Chairman Direction to J7,” official letter, 6 October 2011.

greatest lesson learned was that, “A failure to recognize, acknowledge, and accurately define the operational environment led to a mismatch between forces, capabilities, missions, and goals.”³

While the findings of this report address military failings, these same failures are easily found within the foreign policy making process and can just as easily be internalized and learned from. U.S. foreign policies similarly fall short in recognizing, acknowledging and accurately defining the diplomatic and cultural operating environment within the Arab and Muslim community. As leaders of a globally-involved nation linked inextricably to the Middle East, policy makers are obliged to make the effort to reach an understanding with and of this community, earning credibility through a narrative of understanding, and setting a new tone for American security in the Middle East.

A second military example to emulate may be drawn from the success of Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN), the focus of American military operations in the Middle East. These operations give the military man and woman the opportunity to flourish by understanding, by feeling, “the pulse of the local populace, understanding their motivations and caring about what they want and need. Genuine compassion and empathy for the populace provides an effective weapon against insurgents.”⁴ This weapon is essential, particularly as the gap separating Middle Eastern and Western cultures slowly closes, and globalization makes one culture keenly aware of the other. Such is the weapon with which foreign policy makers must be armed.

³ Joint Staff J-7, Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (JCOA), *Decade of War, Volume I Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations* Published by the Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (Suffolk VA, 2012)

⁴ Headquarters, Department of the Army and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency*, U.S. Army and Department of the U.S. Navy (Washington, DC, 2006.)

CHAPTER 5: INFORMED DECISION SHAPING

America is much more than a geographical fact. It is a political and moral fact - the first community in which men set out in principle to institutionalize freedom, responsible government, and human equality.¹

- **Adlai Stevenson**

Samantha Power, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, recognizes America's recent global loss of legitimacy and asserts that "we're neither the shining example, nor even competent meddlers. It's going to take a generation or so to reclaim American exceptionalism."² America must reclaim exceptionalism untainted and undamaged by the policy duality of ideals and interests, and as it was perceived during the times of the Marshall Plan. This process of reclamation will be difficult and time consuming, but it must begin.

Similarly, in a hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on February 26, 2009, John Kerry testified to the importance of legitimacy to U.S. security:

Nobody thinks that national security policy should be a popularity contest. But, what should be equally clear is that our legitimacy matters. Not only do we need it to dissuade those vulnerable to an extremist message from taking up arms against us, we also need the active support and cooperation of their governments and communities. Part of restoring trust will be broadening relations with Muslim nations beyond the few lightning-rod topics that have defined them since 9/11...³

¹ Adlai Stevenson, quoted by Ronald Reagan and writing in the Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1984.

² Michael Hirsh, "No Time to Go Wobbly, Barack," *WashingtonMonthly.com*, 21 January 2009, <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2007/0704.hirsh.html>, (accessed 3 December 2014).

³ U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, "Engaging with Muslim Communities Around the World. S. Hrg. 111-60" The United States Senate, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-111shrg51302/html/CHRG-111shrg51302.htm> (accessed 24 February 2015).

Clearly, the central role of legitimacy is apparent. What remains is for policy makers and influencers to slow the growth of enemies of American exceptionalism by diminishing current or reclaiming past exceptionalism.

To do so, they must strengthen the foundations of their decisions by taking the long view of second and third order consequences. As Thomas Huxley wrote of scientists, the same could be written of policy makers: “Sit down before facts as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and whatever abysses nature leads - or you shall learn nothing.”⁴

This may be accomplished by the likes of Congressional Committees, Security Councils, and Cabinet-level briefings if they demand facts which allow them to understand the politics and means of the nations. These facts must be presented by reasoning experts and reviewed with discretion to determine when and where they may best further the American ideal of the betterment of mankind. While American interests must be furthered abroad, they can be *more* successfully furthered through greater judiciousness and discernment on the part of foreign policy makers. This is not a casting aside of America’s own value system or marginalization of its ideals; quite the contrary, America’s actions in pursuit of its interests would be better informed and guided.

America’s foreign policy makers must sit in the world café and watch and listen. There they must discern the necessary tool or best method by which interests essential to the United States may continue and its endeavors find success. Policy makers must make every effort to diminish the message of exceptionalism American foreign policies may promote, to know both the enemy and the broader Arab or Muslim audience and defeat or

⁴ Thomas Huxley, “BrainyQuote.com,” Xplore Inc, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/thomashux1106393.html>, (accessed 9 March 2015.)

win the narrative of both. This fundamental knowledge of the enemy and audience is where foreign policy gamers may find a pivotal niche within the policy making and advising process.

Foreign Policy Gaming – A Page from the Military Handbook

War gaming exercises are carried out by war colleges and military schools well in advance of the first boot being on the ground so that advisors and soldiers may better understand the foe and the underlying tensions and foresee the nth degree effect of a decision in war. Foreign policy decision making must have a similar place within the decision process. Foreign policy “gamers” would be equipped to not only look at global and regional tensions from the standpoint of the totality of U.S. national interests, but also from the significant and distinct standpoint of the region and culture in which the tension has emerged.

George Friedman, founder of Stratfor, a geopolitical intelligence firm, wrote:

...if one fully understands the motives and reasoning of the players, it is possible to understand events while they are happening, or even before. The key is to understand the actors as they understand themselves and to understand the forces that drive and constrain them even better than they understand them.⁵

As Friedman asserts, some find the events of the world, specifically of those leading to and during the U.S. war against terrorism, happened chaotically and without apparent connection. Quoting Macbeth, that events were “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” Yet war gamers could find connections and reason, and through

⁵ George Friedman, *America's Secret War, Inside the hidden worldwide struggle between America and its Enemies* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), preface.

foresight, understanding of the actors and forces that drive and constrain them. This information, though perhaps imperfect, would be invaluable to guiding foreign policy decisions.

Exceptional warfighters are made more so by an understanding and knowledge of those around them – enemy, neutral and ally. Such knowledge spans languages, cultures, means and capabilities, and the like. Each minimizes misunderstanding and adds color and dimension to the bigger picture. This same knowledge and experience base, translated to the larger geopolitical world, would integrate beautifully at the foreign policy maker level. Beyond (but inclusive of) State Department advisors, policy gamers must be willing and able to knowledgeably speak truth to power. They should come from a wide range of professions, including, where necessary and available, foreign national advisors. They must span the disconnect between national interests and national misunderstanding.

Until the slow but inexorable animal of globalization brings Christian and Protestant Europe, English Speaking cultures, and the Islamic culture closer together though a combined recent history, that disconnect must be addressed. And, most importantly, that recent history must begin to be shaped in a favorable way through informed, judicious foreign policies. As a world leader, the United States is obligated to take every step possible to wisely engage its fellow cultures. The development and employment of policy gamers is one such step.

This step, however, is moot if it is not internalized and used to inform the decision-makers. Foreign policy leaders must seek out the experts from groups such as those mentioned previously and assimilate their knowledge to closely assist the national security

councils, presidents and other foreign policy leaders as decisions are made that shape the indelible actions of the United States abroad. This insight and guidance is of particular value in Middle East and Arab regions where nuanced, dynamic, and volatile environments present the United States a near-insoluble Gordian knot.

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel released recently a Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments with the subject of Wargaming and Innovation. The memorandum is meant to bring attention to the essential nature and reinvigoration of the wargaming process. However, the Secretary's opening paragraph illustrates well – when adapted – the description and purpose of *policy* gaming. The suggested adaption of Secretary Hagel's wargaming memorandum is as follows:⁶

Foreign policy decision makers' – including members of the National Security Council and Department of State staff – ability to test concepts, scenarios, and diplomatic engagement plans using experience-based simulation and other techniques – otherwise known as policy gaming – is limited to nonexistent. To most effectively pursue an insightful, preemptive foreign policy, avoid strategic and relationship missteps, and make the best use of our limited resources, we need to invigorate, institutionalize and systematize policy gaming across the foreign policy spectrum. Invigorated policy gaming across the policy-making and implementing enterprises fits within the National Security Strategy, which aims to protect the homeland, bolster global security, and encourage

⁶ Robert Hagel, Secretary of Defense, Wargaming and Innovation Memorandum, Washington, DC, 09 February, 2015. The opening paragraph of Secretary Hagel's Memorandum is reworded with relatively minor adaptations in order to provide a mission statement of sorts to a policy gaming initiative. The concept is of appropriate, educated, preemptive planning in order to achieve an outcome best supporting of U.S. national interests abroad in a manner which does not immediately or in the foreseeable future cause damage which threatens the security of the homeland.

support of the advancement of U.S. interests at home and abroad through responsive thinking and actions.

This would be a memorandum well sent and wisely heeded by foreign policy making institutions and individuals within the U.S. government. Its words and intent would be a guide to finding strengths in foreign policies and perspectives, a means to highlight areas for improvement, and a call for introspection otherwise unheard.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

“United States foreign policy has changed dramatically from George Washington's day. Although Americans always pay attention to the advice of their revered founder, the world is of course not the same. The many people that shape American foreign policy today accept the fact that the United States is a member of a world community that cannot afford to ignore the importance of getting along.”¹

- Independence Hall Association, Philadelphia

An apologist policy is not necessary to repair the damages of exceptionalism, but rather, a foreign policy process appreciative of consequence; a process governed by those who not only “accept the fact that the United States is a member of a world community”² but embrace it and govern accordingly. Decision makers, like great debaters, are best equipped to formulate comprehensive and applicable solutions or arguments to a dilemma when they evaluate the circumstances of a problem in its totality - when an assumption is made and then examined for weakness and for counter assumptions, not leaving out uncomfortable factors or ignoring the nth order effects in the expectation it will become another generation's or another administration's burden. Full exploration of the implications of policy prior to its publication and implementation is essential. America's subsequent decade of war in Iraq, and the global - and thus far unending - reverberations of it, lay in testament to such a need. An exceptional nation should not assume the luxury of policy formulation without a full measure of thought and consideration. When America does presume that luxury and acts as it wishes, not only when it should, the world notices. Distorted exceptionalism becomes indivisible from the decisions it guides.

¹ USHistory.org, “Foreign Policy. What now?” Independence Hall Association, Philadelphia, <http://www.ushistory.org/gov/11a.asp> (accessed 11 May 2015).

²² Ibid.

Foreign policy makers and influencers must seek out the challenge of understanding the other position, the other culture, and its history, laying aside exceptionalism for the higher achievement of knowledge and legitimacy. They must ground American foreign policy in informed pragmatism, finding a difficult balance between the national interests and security of the United States and consideration of the interests of foreign nations. Then, immediately after that balance is achieved, reevaluate and adapt it. Do not disregard the politics, the human factor, or the will of the region within which America's foreign policy is momentarily focused. As American interests are furthered in this manner, temper and shape efforts made with full consideration to such influencers. The result of a foreign policy so implemented is a greater measure of success in achieving support for – or less resistance to – American interests abroad; a win-win circumstance.

America's forefathers believed democracy was an example to emulate as a tool of political freedom. They did not feel America had the responsibility to export democracy nor did they seek to impress upon other nations the ideals and rights of Americans. Globalization insists policy makers adapt these beliefs to today's circumstances. An astute and systematic foreign policy must guide this adaptation if America is to discard the reputation of aggressor, of empire-builder, and of exactly what America sought freedom from in 1776. Otherwise, American foreign policies shaped by exceptionalism will continue to cause the United States to forfeit opportunity after opportunity to gain legitimacy and respect in the eyes of the Arab and Middle Eastern community. Exceptionalism views the political problem set of the Middle East or Arab world only in

the light of what solutions may benefit the United States, not in the nuanced light of what is better for all concerned. This does not go unnoticed abroad.

Madeleine Albright's fear of the unintended and disastrous consequences of American foreign policy in Iraq are realized and the ranks of America's enemies and its detractors are distended by eager belligerents. This realization addresses directly the global Islamist adversary fostered for the past three decades by a culturally censured or narrow American foreign policy. U.S. actions post 9/11, as with foreign policies today, give those in the Arab or Muslim civilization who would do this nation harm what they want: an America further removed from the hearts and minds of the Middle East... an America depleted, further mistrusted, and held in lower regard.

This nation - the United States - became as it is through a Revolution. That Revolution began as a statement, as the inhabitants' call to seek their own destiny, control their own homes, monies, and liberties, and seek their own alliances. America's founders fought, despite the threat of poverty and death in many cases, to ensure they, their families, and their neighbors would live, and hopefully thrive, free from the control of a distant nation. Understanding that, foreign policy makers must reevaluate America's well-worn path of exceptionalism in foreign policy decision making and find where they have become King George III, where they are now the leader forcing and determining the destiny of another nation. Through this self-evaluation they may avoid or contain the fallout from the Afghanistans, the Iraqs, and the Irans of the global Arab and Muslim community.

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