

U.S. HEGEMONY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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The flattening of the world as a result of globalization brought a tidal wave of economic prosperity, the dawn of the information age, and unprecedented levels of interdependence. The United States reaped massive benefits resulting from globalization, solidifying its position as an unmatched military and economic power. U.S. hegemony has also turned out to be a great burden. The United States is as much a target as a political and economic paragon. The realist application of power to achieve national objectives has not proven effective. Likewise, liberal and idealist goals of spreading democracy, based only on its innate appeal, to achieve objectives seems like a misguided pursuit of Shangri-la since self-determination and nationalist urges often do not identify with western liberalism. Napoleonic application of the military instrument to impose ones will on another is no longer viable. Economic concerns and the control over information are increasingly important elements of statecraft which must be mastered to realize national goals. It appears grand strategy and strategy are collapsing. Given the inadequacies of any singular approach, how should the United States wield the instruments of national power, i.e., diplomatic, information, military, and economic, to achieve national objectives?

U.S. HEGEMONY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has taken on a new shape and complexion—the spherical, loosely-bound conglomeration of states is increasingly transforming to a flatter, more interdependent and self-aware set of polities. This flattening has been coined “Globalization”, and is often perceived as the “Americanization” of the world, contributing to an increase in Anti-Americanism. Globalization is neither a monolithic force inexorably penetrating and transforming states and societies across the world, nor is it a new phenomenon. To varying degrees, the world has been flattening for centuries as levels of travel and trade increased and ideas spread. Moreover, there are different aspects of globalization—political, economic, and cultural—the impact of which is uneven across states and civilizations. Some states will adapt to globalization, e.g., Japan, Eastern Europe, Taiwan, while other states will resist, e.g., Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Zimbabwe.

The challenges which contemporary globalization presents are numerous. Along with a tidal wave of economic opportunities came the information age and unprecedented levels of interdependence. Information is now a fungible commodity. Peoples, previously disconnected from external societies, can listen to or watch events happening half way around the globe in real time. Tensions between polities are often as acute as ever; the stability of the international system is precarious as states accept or resist the “New World Order” characterized by U.S. hegemony and accelerating globalization. First, the basis of the subsequent analysis is the following historical survey of the international system from World War II to the contemporary era of globalization. Second, events since 1945 cannot fully explain the current state of world

affairs, but World War II is an appropriate entry point as it marks the beginning of Pax Americana. Third, the impact of globalization on state power and its compatibility with traditional power structures and pre-modern economic systems explains the rejection of modernity, the rise of anti-Americanism, and the probability of a volatile, often violent future. Fourth, the three competing theories of International Relations, i.e., Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism, are examined to determine if they can serve as a prescription for how actors should posture themselves to gain influence over the evolution of the international system. Fifth and finally, the paper evaluates how the United States should develop and execute national strategies which maximize U.S. influence over the trajectory of the international system and key regions despite a likely decline in its relative power.

The End of Imperialism, Cold War Spheres of Influence, and Festering Nationalism

The end of World War II brought forth a new strategic milieu and concomitant shift in the global balance of power. After two World Wars, Europe was economically and militarily devastated. The colonial empires of France and Great Britain were crumbling from imperial overstretch. Japan and Germany's ambitions for regional dominance had been destroyed in the war. The post-war settlements and institutions were designed to rebuild the economies of the defeated powers, but prevent any possibility of military rearmament for other than defensive purposes. The United States emerged as the dominant power, determined to develop and nurture an international system conducive to liberalism and the dismantlement of imperial preference. The United States became the economic engine of the global economy. In 1950, the U.S. Gross National Product (GNP) was greater than that of all remaining European powers

combined—U.S. GNP was 381 billion; the total GNP of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Japan, and Italy was 356 billion.¹ The disparities in military spending reflect the dawning of Pax Americana even more dramatically. In 1950, the defense expenditures of the United States (14.5 billion) were four times that of Britain and France combined (2.3 billion and 1.4 billion respectively).² It was obvious a strategic realignment of power within the West had occurred. The balance of power shifted from Europe to the United States, and was followed by the immediate onset of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

During the Cold War, the international system was preoccupied with the bipolar competition between the United States and Soviet Union. The ideological clash between communism and capitalism resulted in a decades-long struggle between two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union. Both superpowers sought to establish a sphere of influence in Europe, and once the bifurcation of Europe was complete, worked to expand their spheres of influence to the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. To be sure, other political and economic pressures were present in the international system, but they were eclipsed by the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. Because of their repressive policies, many of the European empires collapsed or were nearing collapse by the end of WWII. Self determination movements were maturing across the global. From 1945 to 1989, the number of states in the international system tripled as colonialism was discredited and nationalist and resistance movements demanding political transformations propagated.³ The Non-aligned Movement, lead initially by Yugoslavia, Egypt, and India, brought

attention to Third World issues, but these states, individually or collectively, did not have sufficient power to compete with agendas of the United States or Soviet Union.

The twentieth century was thus a period of remarkable trauma and turbulence in the international system, resulting in a four-fold increase of nation-states. By 2000, the United States emerged as the global hegemon of a world which had experienced three “waves of disintegration” brought about by World War I, World War II, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The result was the demise of the “empires that had dominated the three previous centuries: the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, British, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Russian.”⁴ The New World Order is a conglomeration of states characterized by considerable heterogeneity, in no way signifying Fukuyama’s prophetic claims of an end to history. Rather, an uneasy, and potentially explosive coexistence continues along an array of fault lines and fissures, e.g., the North and South, the West and Islam, resource-rich states and resource-poor states, freedom movements and autocratic regimes. Successfully negotiating this uncertain and potentially volatile environment is a formidable undertaking. In the *Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, Paul Kennedy finds that as great powers gain economic strength, their territorial obligations expand, resulting in an increase in military expenditures to protect overseas interests, ensure access to markets, secure adequate natural resources, and sustain alliances.⁵ As the hegemon of a diversified and an increasingly interdependent environment, the United States is encountering the same “guns or butter” dilemma that plagued previous great powers in maintaining stability and its power.

Globalization Unleashed and Its Confrontation with Modernity

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 fundamentally changed the nature of the international system. The bipolar system in existence since the end of World War II was replaced by a unipolar system in which the United States dominated as the global hegemon. In addition to the reality of a “unipolar moment”, the world appeared to be fundamentally changing in profound ways as the forces of globalization accelerated. What is globalization and why is it important? Globalization has traditionally been defined as an economic occurrence involving the denationalization of production; growth in the levels of international trade; and a global financial system permitting unrestricted capital flows.⁶ Kirchner broadens the definition by describing globalization as “shorthand for an array of phenomena that derive from unorganized and stateless forces but that generate pressures that are felt by states.”⁷ Kirchner’s comprehensive definition is more appropriate for this analysis as it takes into account political, ideational, economic, and environmental factors that may affect state power, as well as bilateral interdependencies and systemic factors which impact state behavior and choices. It is important to recognize that globalization is not an inexorable force that will eventually engulf all cultures and polities; rather, it is a process that can be slowed or reversed. Well before the onset of the current economic crisis, Hoffman asserted that if the United States experienced a severe, protracted economic crisis, it would have a devastating impact on globalization.⁸

The globalization taking place since 1991 is not simply a matter of increased levels of economic integration and openness because capitalism triumphed over communism. The nature of economic activity and communication experienced profound changes and the magnitude of interdependencies increased substantially. Significant,

qualitative changes to the global economy occurred over the last 20 years: the production of goods and services denationalized; employment and trade shifted from manufacturing to services, most markedly in the industrialized countries; foreign direct investment more than tripled from 1980 to 2003; and merger, acquisitions, and joint ventures increased dramatically.⁹ Regarding the revolution in information, globalization has rendered the state monopoly on information virtually obsolete. The number of “disconnected” people in world decreased significantly. A person in the United States can share pictures, files, videos, etc., instantaneously with a person in India, South Africa, Chile, or France. In the *World is Flat*, Thomas Friedman identifies several informational world flatteners, including, *inter alia*, the popularization of Windows-enabled personal computers, the World Wide Web, virtual networks, wireless connectivity, and video-teleconferencing.¹⁰ In a manner of speaking, the world is literally at one's fingertips if they have a cell phone or access to the internet.

In many respects, globalization has been a positive force. The denationalization of production and the burgeoning of a connected world have lead to unprecedented economic prosperity in the developed and developing worlds, increased cultural awareness and understanding, and the exposure and remediation of human rights abuses. While globalization has contributed positively to societal progress and human betterment, it is not always embraced as it can undermine traditional, long-standing power structures and societal norms in non-Western states. The current wave of globalization is largely based on Western concepts and ideas from the Enlightenment—modernization, secularization, individual liberties, free market economies, and consent of the governed. Greater global reach and societal penetration through increased

economic interdependence and information flows can be perceived as a threat to the stability of autocratic, non-liberal states; these same forces may also undermine traditional norms and values of a culture. Moreover, globalization may exacerbate tensions between the developed nations and underdeveloped nations. In other words, globalization is contributing to and intensifying the dissonance between modernity and some traditional political and socio-economic systems, which has profound, worldwide implications regarding the stability of states and regions.

Michael Mousseau argues that liberal-democratic values and collective-autocratic values are increasingly clashing in mixed market-clientalist economies of the developing world because of globalization.¹¹ Because hierarchical, patron-client relationships are ingrained in clientalist economies, the patrons at the top of the economic pyramid have the most to lose from the encroachment of market-based economies as transactions are based less on in-groups and more on impersonal contracts. From a cultural and sociological perspective, individuals strongly tied to clientalist norms perceive individuals driven by self-interest, a norm associated with market economies, as lacking strong social ties and, more damningly, devoid of values all together.¹² For the least-developed tribal societies, the dissonance exacerbated by globalization between modernization and tradition is particularly acute as they must negotiate three major economic developments—the agricultural, industrial, and post-industrial revolutions.¹³

In a more comprehensive study, Kirchner analyzes how globalization can alter, positively or negatively, the security of a state by “reshaping state capacity, recasting relative power, and revising the calculations associated with international conflict.”¹⁴ As globalization spreads, states have less control over internal economic and information

systems, which is simultaneously producing substantial societal benefits and inducing greater vulnerabilities to state security. Autocratic states will find it increasingly difficult to control the flow and content of information to their peoples. While market integration and the dismantling of trade barriers foster economic growth and development, a state's capacity to prevent the trafficking of illicit goods and the proliferation of sophisticated military technologies is reduced. Kirchner's examination reveals a mixed outlook for security of states and conflict—wars between great powers is less likely, whereas conflict within weak states will be more likely as insurgencies or violent groups exploit the inability of these states to govern effectively.

Given the findings of these studies, the prognostications of a more peaceful world are unlikely in the future. Globalization, with its basis in liberal thought, will continue to be perceived as an assault on the governments of autocratic and underdeveloped states in one of two ways: as an internal threat to the legitimacy and stability of governments or by provoking perceptions of neo-imperialism. Globalization will generate crises in pluralism in which traditional political and sociological structures, e.g., caste systems, absolutist monarchies, dictatorships, state-run economies, etc., will oppose liberal modernization, e.g., market-based economies, secularization, and representative style governments. Democratic peace theorists assert that the process of democratization is often a violent endeavor as the forces of liberalism collide with tradition. In *The Clash of the Civilizations*, Huntington was correct to identify fault lines between civilizations as potential areas of conflict¹⁵, but that does not tell the entire story. Nationalist movements and inequality between the industrialized countries and developing countries arising from the pressures of globalization may also lead to war

between states or within states. That said, the intensity of the flash points in which religion plays a critical role in political and cultural identities, e.g., Islam vs. Christianity, will likely be especially difficult to manage as the differences are particularly profound and permeate nearly every aspect of a polity.

A brief look at how two rising powers, Iran and China, are reacting to the tension between globalization and modernity is illustrative. In both cases, strong and weak states are wary of their rise and the implications it will have for power relationships and stability of the international system. Iran is one of the starkest examples of globalization dissonance as the main thrust behind the 1979 Islamic Revolution was rejection of the Shah and his attempt to modernize the country by emulating the West. Currently, Iran's behavior and actions continue to move in the direction of a regional instigator determined to diminish Western influence and spread revolutionary ideals. Iran is a known state sponsor of terrorism and main supporter of Hezbollah, Hamas, and other Islamic terrorist groups in the region. It violently opposes peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and appears determined to develop nuclear weapons despite international calls to cease uranium enrichment. The President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, frequently engages in vitriolic rhetoric, such as calling for the destruction of Israel. Furthermore, Iran has a horrendous record of human rights abuses. Iran's desire to reestablish regional hegemony in the Persian Gulf is viewed as a threat to other states in the region. Internally, political and social tensions in Iran are simmering as the economic situation deteriorates. Inflation reached 31 percent; unemployment is four million and rising; and a sharp decline in the price of oil from \$140 per barrel to \$50 will force the government to make difficult choices because its budget is based on \$80 a

barrel for oil.¹⁶ Significant sectors of population are once again disillusioned with the current establishment and are calling for political emancipation from a corrupt, oppressive authoritarian government whose policies have contributed to increases in economic inequality. A contest between the reformists who desire political and social liberalization and the conservatives seeking to maintain the survival of the authoritarian regime is already developing as each side prepares for elections later this year.

China's reaction to globalization and modernity and its trajectory toward or away from liberalism is less clear. China has largely embraced capitalism while functioning under a communist political structure that is criticized for extensive human rights abuses and political oppression. The economic liberalization which China is undergoing reflects a deepening interdependence with the outside world. As of 2004, China is third largest trading partner, with a total volume of foreign trade greater than \$1000 billion; the Chinese government expects foreign direct investment to exceed \$100 billion annually through 2010.¹⁷ Globalization is penetrating China in other ways. Grass-roots movements are demanding democracy, freedom, and human rights. Chinese intellectuals are calling for an end to state-run news programs, and petitions are circulating demanding an end to one-party rule, the establishment of an independent judiciary, elections, and freedom of expression.¹⁸ State governments and international organizations have expressed significant concern over human rights abuses in China and the government's ruthless oppression of dissident political groups, religious groups such as the Falun Gong, and ethnic minorities in Tibet and the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Regions. The Chinese government appears to understand that political reform is necessary, but is uncertain what form it should take, e.g., Western-style

participatory democracies, or benign authoritarianism similar to Singapore's. Continued economic growth and internal stability are the main concerns of the Chinese government. China's leaders insist they are engaging in a quite rise that is non-threatening, but the industrial and economic power of China could cause a realignment of power relationships not just regionally, but globally.

International Relations Theory: Explaining Change in the International System?

How, then, does the U.S. preserve its power by successfully managing the heterogeneous, fragile world in which it exists? International Relations (IR) theories are instructive as they increase our understanding of the factors which cause power realignments and influence the behavior of states in the international system. Furthermore, the three main theoretical constructs are informative as they may explain the policy choices of governments and non-state actors given their beliefs about the nature of the international system. The dominant IR Theories are: Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism. There are variations to each construct, but for the purpose of this paper, a basic understanding of the key elements of each theoretical framework is sufficient.

Under the realist approach, maximization of interest, specifically power, drives the international system. Fundamental premises of the realist construct are that states are the principal actors in the world system; behavioral actions of states are determined by external, not internal factors; and a state's thinking is motivated by competition for power among themselves.¹⁹ The Defensive Realism espoused by Kenneth Waltz contends that states engage in balancing behaviors and expansion because they must²⁰, whereas the Classical Realism of Hans Morgenthau contends that states seek

to augment power because of an insatiable appetite for it.²¹ Defensive Realism would assert the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were driven by defensive expansion to defeat terrorism, whereas Classical Realism would claim that World War II was offensively inspired by Germany's quest for European domination.

The liberal theory of international relations espouses a more progressive history of state interaction in which an evolutionary process transforms the anarchic world to a just and peaceful world order. Immanuel Kant, a key thinker of the liberal school, asserted that because of the calamity of persistent war, reason and experience would transcend power and war as the primary concern of international relations.²² Increased economic interdependence and democracy reduce the likelihood of conflict between states. Higher levels of economic interdependence increase the opportunity cost of waging war as it disrupts the economic order and the accumulation of wealth. Democratic Peace theory claims that democracies do not fight each other, therefore a world in which democracies are more numerous would be more peaceful. Other liberal scholars believe the international institutions redirect state focus on long-term interests at the expense of short term gains, fostering lasting cooperation among states.

Lastly, the constructivist theory of international relations maintains that the impact of ideas is the primary inducer of change. Constructivists do not deny that power is germane to international affairs, but underscore the importance of how ideas and identities are formed, evolve, and shape state behavior.²³ The acceptance or rejection of ideas, and the emergence of competing ideas, are the primary drivers of transformations in global affairs. Daniel Philpott argues that the social power of ideas brought about colonial independence from Britain and France because self-

determination movements demanded liberation from colonial rule by calling into question the legitimacy of colonialism itself. Questioning the legitimacy of colonialism created a crisis of pluralism and the eventual creation of new, sovereign states.²⁴ Constructivism challenges realism and liberalism by claiming that structural factors in the international system are not the primary causes of change. More importantly, constructivism claims to explain the “origins of the forces that drive” both realism and liberalism.²⁵

Stability and Progress in the International System: Shaping the Global Landscape

The preponderance of power enjoyed by the United States after World War II was an historical anomaly. As other powers regenerated economically and militarily, U.S. power would inevitably be diminished relative to other states in the international system. It is generally accepted that U.S. relative military and economic power vis-à-vis other states in the international system declined since World War II. This decline should not, however, be viewed as a symptom of national decline as the “sharing of the world's resources and the development of other societies and economies has been a peculiarly American objective ever since the Marshall Plan.”²⁶ To be sure, there are no peer competitors, economically or militarily, to the United States. Continued economic power and military power are essential to it maintaining a paramount position in the world hierarchy. The ability of the United States to preserve alliances, build new coalitions, and maintain influence in key diplomatic and economic institutions is also dependant on the persuasiveness of U.S. power, and more fundamentally, the attractiveness of U.S. values, norms, beliefs, and solutions for governance.

As mentioned above, the ongoing debate between realism, liberalism, and constructivism regarding the primary factor(s) which cause change in the international system is constructive as it forces evaluation of the nature of the international system and motivations behind state behavior. However, none of these theories merit adoption as singular prescriptions for how the United States should position itself to address the myriad of challenges it faces in the 21st century, e.g., terrorism, economic inequality, weapons and drug trafficking, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the vulnerabilities from which are all amplified by globalization. The development and implementation of solutions to overcome these global problems are increasingly complex. Use of power in the name of “interest” when interest is not easily identifiable is not viable, whether the power is executed for defensive or expansive purposes. Using power at the expense of norms and values cannot serve as the basis for state behavior without invoking long-term resentment from internal or external forces. States form international institutions to establish legitimate norms for behavior in the international system even though the identification of norms limits their ability to act unilaterally without impunity. The reality is each school of thought is useful in explaining state behavior depending on the situational context. As we consider the philosophical underpinnings of policy and strategy, U.S. history is once again useful. Its foreign policy, similar to its demographic character, represents a “melting pot” of theoretical approaches. America’s history demonstrates a varied approach as it endeavors to strike the right balance between the use of military force, fostering favorable international institutions, and advancing norms and values conducive to U.S. interests. The application of all three theoretical frameworks is present throughout U.S. history—

defensive realism to contain communism and defeat international terrorism; Clintonian claims of America as the indispensable nation to further liberal progression; and the constructivist triumph of capitalism over communism as a more attractive system. More recently, however, the use of military force to impose the will of the United States on other actors has dominated and significantly overshadowed norm and institution building and reinforcement.

The question of intervention and democratization as an instrument of policy is more controversial and deserves an in depth examination given the current debate over the preemptive war in Iraq and the difficulties achieving stability in Afghanistan. Democratization as a prescriptive strategy is more problematic for short and mid-term goals. Democratization as means to an end can almost never be achieved in a short period of time. Significant time is required for individual enlightenment to stimulate discourse and take hold. Indigenous institutions and norms cannot be created overnight; they must be sufficiently mature to defeat competitors vying for power. Kant recognized that individual reason and political institutions develop slowly, and that progress “will evolve in a series of gradual and sometimes meandering stages, slowly moving toward a distant world of peace and justice.”²⁷ In other words, the actualization of peace and justice is the goal, and progress towards this goal is an evolutionary process that cannot be rushed or forced. Interventionist attempts to impose democracy is not generally consistent with Kantian liberal thought, however he accepts that democracies may have to engage in preemptive war to protect and preserve their way of life. In this regard, there is no standardized approach for building and cultivating representative government, civic responsibility, or individual reason. Humans from

disparate sociological backgrounds have embraced progressive, Kantian tendencies and a willingness to adopt liberal concepts, e.g., tolerance, self-governance, and equality. Whether and how the transition toward liberal principles unfolds is a journey heavily influenced by cultures and history. When given the chance, people regardless of culture or place in the world, desire the opportunity to choose their government. This is not a phenomenon idiosyncratic to the United States as states with non-Western historical roots, e.g., Japan, Turkey, South Korea, Taiwan, have adopted liberal, democratic governance.

The Convergence of Grand Strategy and Strategy

What does this mean for the development of U.S. strategies? In some ways, it means strategic choices in a world experiencing accelerating globalization are harder to control and define. U.S. power has been in relative decline since World War II, and the threats are becoming increasingly “diffuse, ambiguous, and express themselves in a multitude of potential forms.”²⁸ While non-state actors will not supplant the preeminence of the state, drug cartels, terrorist networks, and other non-state organizations are increasingly difficult to manage and may greatly harm the stability of a state or region. Deepening global interdependencies magnify the effects of disruptions, and shocks or perturbations in one area may lead to greater global, regional, or intra-state instability—a concern mostly recently underscored by the present economic crisis. U.S. power, while still immense, is not unlimited. Its hegemony will continually be challenged, and the degree to which its rule-making and rule-enforcing powers erode will likely cause a change in the policies of other states, whose increasing autonomy is brought about by the concomitant decline in U.S. influence.²⁹ The increasing autonomy of states and

concurrent rise in tribal, ethnic, and religious tensions as traditional societies embrace or reject the globalization of liberal political and economic systems portends a precarious 21st century and may bring about more waves of disintegration. Norms and values regarding effective governance and responsible state behavior that serve as the philosophical basis for the system are as important to the cohesiveness and long-term stability of the system as the use of military force to protect them.

The fault lines threatening to undermine U.S. hegemony and the liberal system advanced through globalization are causing the distinction between strategy and grand strategy to collapse. For decades, the military shouldered the overwhelming burden of framing and enforcing U.S. policies. Military power alone cannot secure the United States or advance U.S. interests—to be sure, it never could. While not new, the present debate expressing concern and regret over the militarization of American foreign policy and the need to devote greater resources toward diplomacy, economic, and information elements is necessary and will hopefully lead to a more comprehensive approach to foreign policy strategy and implementation. Different approaches are required to address the challenges of the different regions and potential areas of conflict. Grand strategy must strike the right balance between the use of soft power and hard power. In *“The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War”*, Murray and Grimsley contend that “Strategy is a process, a constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate.”³⁰ Contextual analysis is indispensable to the development of strategies to ensure the most effective instruments are applied in furtherance of U.S. goals. The limited, careful application of military power, the establishment of responsible international institutions, and advancement of

representative governance and human rights must work in concert to achieve national strategic objectives. In other words, an investment in *all* elements of national power—diplomatic, economic, information, and military—will be required in the world in which many poles are competing for dominance in the international system. In recent Congressional testimony, Secretary Clinton called for the pursuit of “smart power”, which involves the application of the right tool, or combination of national security tools, to combat threats and capitalize on opportunities “in a profoundly interdependent world in which old rules and boundaries no longer hold fast.”³¹ Secretary Gates stated that civilian agencies responsible for diplomacy and development have been chronically under-resourced to the detriment of our national security.³² Competitor states are attempting to redefine the prevailing norms and values of the international system. Partners and allies reassess regularly their political relationships and economic policies to determine if they advance their national security. For these reasons, the attractiveness of U.S. political and economic ideas matter as much as the decisive impact of military missiles.

Managing U.S. Hegemony

Since the creation of the American republic, the philosophical underpinnings of liberalism, its revolutionary potential, and its undeniable appeal have long been perceived as a threat to extant, non-liberal polities. Europeans feared liberal republicanism of the United States as it would undermine the political and moral legitimacy of the conservative monarchies in the 19th century; the United States has been perceived as the “dangerous nation” and is, in fact, a revolutionary power.³³ Anti-Americanism is once again on the rise as many claim that globalization is simply a

contemporary form of imperialism, threatening authoritarian regimes and internal power arrangements on every continent. Globalization highlights, positively and negatively, variable rates of growth and cultural tolerance. The great power politics of the bipolar era that were tolerated before, albeit reluctantly in many cases, will not be sufficient to overcome the challenges and potential conflicts globalization presents under U.S. hegemony. The immutable fact is that, in a world of limited resources, development and progress will proceed at different rates, even in areas where the differences are minimal and societal values are more or less compatible. Given the convulsions of the three waves of disintegration previously mentioned, it seems likely the international system will continue to experience turmoil and be characterized by uncertainty and volatility as long as globalization remains on the advance. A retreat of globalization which causes a movement away from liberal political and economic norms and values would be turbulent as well. The evolutionary direction of the international system is profoundly relevant as it can either reinforce U.S. hegemony or significantly undermine it. The United States cannot afford, economically or politically, foreign policies in which military force is the preponderant instrument employed to preserve an international system conducive to its interests and shape behaviors. The United States must develop and implement “smart” strategies that marshal the synergistic efforts of all elements of national power by managing threats to the stability of the international system, while simultaneously reinforcing its normative and institutional foundations.

Endnotes

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