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INTRODUCTION
FORECASTING UNCERTAINTY

Carola McGiffert and Craig Cohen

What will be America’s top security challenges of 2008? It is impossible to know with any degree of certainty. We may anticipate continuity rather than change, but regimes fall, markets crash, new wars begin, and minor incidents can spiral out of control. For all our efforts to envisage the future, we are often blindsided by an unexpected turn of events. It is impossible to know which issues will affect the United States in the year ahead, and yet developing a long-term strategy depends on just such a forecast.

This volume of essays showcases CSIS’s collective wisdom on the top American decision moments of 2008—the major political, military, and economic challenges likely to have strategic implications for the United States. Some depend on political developments in other countries, while others hinge on U.S. actions. Some are regional in focus; others have a transnational or global reach. All have the potential to blow into a full-scale crisis and must be watched and managed carefully.

It should be no surprise that the three lead essays in this collection—by John Hamre, CSIS president and CEO, Christine Wormuth, CSIS senior fellow and staff director of the Jones Commission report to Congress on Iraqi security forces, and Julianne Smith, director of the CSIS Europe Program—address whether the United States will use military force against Iran, whether we will be able to get out of Iraq, and whether we can sustain NATO engagement in Afghanistan. All three essays seek to inject some realities into the narratives that portray war with Iran as imminent, a rapid exit from Iraq in 2008, and Afghanistan as a continued success story.

While Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan top the challenges facing the United States in 2008, they sit atop a sizeable list. Five CSIS scholars have produced short essays focusing on developments in Asia, which is fast becoming the new center of gravity in world affairs. Will the Beijing Olympics lead to rising U.S. anxiety over China? Will Taiwan’s presidential elections disrupt the
chances of preserving peaceful and stable relations between the mainland and Taiwan? Should we expect reconciliation on the Korean peninsula? Are the United States and Pakistan headed for another break-up? What regional architecture is likely to emerge to shape relations in the years ahead? CSIS’s Asia team is unmatched, with Charles Freiman, Bonnie Glaser, Derek Mitchell, Teresita Schaffer, and Michael Green contributing essays to this publication.

Next we move westward to Europe and examine the key security challenges likely to arise on the continent in the next year. Will 2008 be the “Year of Europe,” with France’s presidency of the European Union and the emergence of a more confident and influential EU? Will Russia proceed on a path of stable authoritarian modernization after the 2008 elections, or be plagued by historic trends of discontinuity and unpredictability? Will a new strategic underpinning arise for Turkey’s alliance with the West? Can the United States successfully manage the process of Kosovar independence? Simon Serfaty, Andrew Kuchins, Stephen Flanagan, and Janusz Bugajski provide their expert analysis on these vital issues.

Two further regional decision points are critical to the United States’ strategic interests in 2008. Jennifer Cooke and Kathleen Hicks ask what will be the effect of a more permanent U.S. military presence in Africa in the form of the new Africa Command. Closer to home, Peter DeShazo proposes new policy direction on Cuba that prepares for Castro’s departure from power.

The final essays in the volume examine three transnational challenges that bear on American security. Frank Verrastro and Sarah Ladislaw look at how 2008 will affect prospects for a post–2012 framework on climate change. Jon Wolfsthal uses the tenth anniversary of the South Asian nuclear tests to examine the international community’s commitment to nuclear nonproliferation. And Jon Alterman returns to the Middle East, where this volume began, to explore the humanitarian and security threats posed by the Iraqi refugee crisis throughout the region and beyond. There will undoubtedly be other vital decision moments in 2008, but the array of challenges described in the following essays are likely to have the greatest implications for U.S. security.

The main event that is likely to shape American security going forward will transpire at home—namely, the 2008 U.S. presidential election. Typically, elections are dominated by domestic political issues. But the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are likely to ensure that foreign policy will continue to play an important role in the national political discourse. In an afterword to this volume, CSIS trustees Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye provide their vision of a new approach to U.S. foreign policy that relies on smart power. Smart power is a means by which the United States can again export optimism and hope, big ideas and pragmatic solutions, and can regain its stature as a preferred brand in world affairs. America needs such a vision, particularly at a time of so much uncertainty.

It is impossible to know which issues will affect the United States in the year ahead, and yet developing a long-term strategy depends on just such a forecast.
From the earliest days of the Bush presidency, Iran has been one of the target states in the president’s “axis of evil.” Early administration thinking had it that Iran would collapse of its own weight if only the United States could establish a vibrant democracy on its border in Iraq. Of course, it has not worked out that way.

Iran has been a festering problem in U.S. foreign and security policy for years. We have long suspected that Iran is carrying out a covert program to build nuclear weapons, hidden within an explicit effort to develop commercial nuclear power. We knew that Iran was having (and may indeed continue to have) serious difficulties with various technical stages in converting natural uranium into reactor-useful material. Iran has continued to work at this steadily, however, and in 2007 claimed to have enriched small amounts of U235 (the active isotope in nuclear reactors).

Iran’s ongoing work on nuclear energy has not been the only problem. In addition, Iran’s new political leadership has taken a darker (even revisionist) outlook toward America’s ally Israel, going so far as to question the reality of the Holocaust and to call Israel an illegitimate state. Such provocative statements coupled with a pugnacious approach to the nuclear question have set Iran and the United States on a collision course.

Although the nuclear weapons program is the underlying cause of tension, during the past year a more tactical problem has surfaced as a more plausible basis for war. U.S. military authorities are convinced that Iranian intelligence and paramilitary organizations are actively collaborating with insurgents and rejectionists in Iraq to target U.S. military personnel. During the past several years, the lethality of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Iraq has improved substantially, suggesting that superior design and materials have been introduced by covert outside sources. Forensic diagnosis of IEDs has uncovered designs and materials that the United States believes demonstrate Iranian involvement.

It is increasingly argued in the Department of Defense and in Bush administration circles that the United States cannot blunt the IED attacks in Iraq until it goes after the supply sources in Iran. But covert supply channels used by intelligence operatives tend to be borrowed facilities and little more than nondescript depots. Attacking such facilities is unlikely to seriously disrupt Iranian supply efforts. As a result, others within the Pentagon argue that it would be preferable to attack Iran’s nuclear infrastructure because it is massive and fixed and thus easier to target.

Will the United States attack Iran during the coming year? War talk is building in Washington again, but it is substantially different from the talk in town five years ago about war with Iraq. Back then, the war talk was being led by the neoconservatives, with the rest of Washington mumbling rather incoherently about the issue. The fear caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, created a climate that made an attack on Iraq plausible. And, to be honest, no one offered a coherent opposing view.
This time the war talk is different. Now the debate is robust. For every individual making the case to attack Iran, there are equally strong arguments why an attack would unhinge an already dangerous situation in the Middle East.

No one should discount the possibility of an accident that could get out of control. Still, open conflict is not likely during the next year. President Bush has declared flatly that a nuclear Iran is “unacceptable,” but he has not delineated explicit redlines that define the threshold of unacceptable developments. Overall, the administration is continuing to put diplomacy at the forefront of its approach to Iran. To make real progress, however, President Bush must keep pressure on the international community, which would far prefer to ignore the situation.

Washington is frustrated with the process of trying to get tighter economic sanctions blessed by the United Nations Security Council. Security Council members Russia and China (who thus hold vetoes) are decidedly cool to tougher sanctions. The administration therefore has decided to try to shift the campaign for tighter sanctions away from the UNSC to the Group of Eight, an institutionalized coalition of the willing where global matters are discussed by friendlier big powers (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, United States) and no one has an official veto. It is thought that the G-8 will genuinely be willing to pursue tougher economic sanctions, tightening the rope around Iran. Whether this is true is unclear. France has been decidedly more hawkish in recent months following the election of President Nicolas Sarkozy. British enthusiasm for war is diminished under Prime Minister Gordon Brown, however, and the departure of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan takes another hawk out of the picture.

War talk in Washington cuts two ways when it comes to the sanctions debate. Most countries prefer to ignore the situation with Iran, so heightened talk of alarm and “unacceptability” about Iran is necessary to motivate reticent nations to deal with the issue. But, equally strongly, many nations fear a repeat of Iraq 2002–2003, when Saddam’s intransigence throughout a year of tighter sanctions was used as part of the rationale to justify regime change in Baghdad. European diplomats openly say that they will not support tighter sanctions because they see that as just a first step on a path that leads inevitably to war.

The Bush administration is therefore caught in a dilemma. It firmly believes that Iran is behaving in dangerous and unacceptable ways. It wants diplomacy to work and must issue threats of force as a backdrop to make diplomacy more attractive. But those threats undercut the diplomacy because of the United States’ earlier history with Iraq.

The greater problem is that the United States cannot invade Iran. The Pentagon is seriously winded now after four and a half years of conflict in Iraq and six years of conflict in Afghanistan. The U.S. military lacks the depth to support the surge in Iraq past April. Using ground forces against Iran is out of the question. Attacking Iran with airplanes—the only plausible course of action—presents the challenge of efficacy, especially against covert supply networks of people and small items of equipment. Attacking suspected warehouses will not likely staunch the flow of matériel and personnel. And U.S. intelligence forces believe that Iran can introduce far more serious weaponry into Iraq (shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, for example) to complicate our mission there considerably.

In addition, widening the conflict in Iraq by attacking Iran does not fit the current strategic thinking. The leadership in the Defense Department believes that we are currently on a more positive trajectory in Iraq. We must withdraw 5 of the 20 U.S. brigades during the first six months of 2008, and the Pentagon hopes to withdraw another 5 brigades during the second half of the year. The first withdrawal is solid. The second withdrawal depends on progress in Iraq. With this overarching objective, attacking Iran only seems to add oxygen to a fire we hope is dying out.

So, on balance, war with Iran during 2008 is not likely. Obviously all bets are off if we have some accident or military provocation. But ongoing diplomacy and economic sanctions are the safe bet.
The long-awaited “Petraeus report” is now in Washington’s rearview mirror and it does not appear to have changed many minds in Washington about the merits of the U.S. approach in Iraq. While September 2007 did not prove to be the turning point that many argued it would or should be, a significant drawdown of U.S. forces seems inevitable in light of political and military realities. The implications of a drawdown in Iraq for the United States are significant and depend to a large degree on what kind of drawdown takes place, how fast it happens, and what military forces, if any, remain in Iraq after the drawdown is complete.

For both political and military reasons, a drawdown of some kind will probably begin no later than shortly after a new president takes office. Public support in the United States for the war is low, and the war is already a centerpiece in the presidential campaign. With more than 160,000 military personnel in Iraq, a decision in 2007 to extend Army deployments to 15 months, and many soldiers on their second or third tour, American ground forces are under tremendous strain. Many senior military officials are pushing to reduce the number of troops in Iraq, both to restore the force in terms of equipment and readiness and to ensure that the country has sufficient combat-ready military forces available to address other potential national security challenges.
While the United States will not emerge from any kind of drawdown in Iraq completely unscathed, the strategic implications of a phased withdrawal

Although the United States cannot withdraw from Iraq without any negative consequences, there are better and worse ways a drawdown could unfold. A rapid withdrawal, which could result from a number of different factors, is likely to have negative strategic implications for the United States. If the U.S. military has to leave Iraq quickly—whether ordered to do so by the Iraqi government, or because widespread and uncontrolled civil war breaks out, or because the next U.S. president is elected on a platform to “end the war in Iraq”—the nation’s strategic position will be significantly weakened.

A quick pullout would be complicated in many ways, but would have two particularly important negative consequences for the United States. First, al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist groups would waste no time in painting a rapid withdrawal as a repeat of Saigon in 1975 and would use it to strengthen their narrative of a United States that is prone to surrender as soon as the going gets tough. This would be a significant strategic communications victory for the Islamic fundamentalists, and its impact should not be underestimated. Second, if the United States draws down its military presence in Iraq quickly, whether at its choosing or under duress, it will be difficult to leave in place a military presence sufficient to secure vital interests in the region.

The United States cannot let Iraq become a safe haven for Islamic extremists, nor can it afford the outbreak of a wider regional war in the Middle East. To prevent Iraq from becoming a “new Afghanistan” for al Qaeda and to minimize the potential for a regional war, the United States needs in the near term and in the mid-term to have military forces in and around Iraq to conduct counterterrorism operations, to maintain Iraq’s territorial sovereignty, and to assist Iraq where possible in creating a balance of power among its ethnic and sectarian groups. Not only would a rapid withdrawal impede the U.S. military’s ability to leave in place a military presence sufficient to protect U.S. interests in Iraq; a rapid withdrawal might prove destabilizing in and of itself—raising the likelihood of a wider regional conflict.

The United States will not emerge from any kind of drawdown in Iraq completely unscathed. Still, the strategic implications of a phased withdrawal that gradually shrinks and ultimately removes the U.S. military footprint from Iraq are more favorable. A planned, phased drawdown of U.S. forces would undercut the
that gradually shrinks and ultimately removes the U.S. military footprint from Iraq are more favorable.

Islamic extremist narrative of a cowed United States by demonstrating that the United States is leaving Iraq of its own volition, on its own terms, and on its own timetable. Denying al Qaeda and others who share its philosophy the psychological “shot in the arm” a rapid withdrawal would generate is crucial to the broader U.S. effort to contain and defeat Islamic extremism.

A more gradual drawdown would also allow the military to continue working with the government of Iraq to strengthen its borders, combat terrorists, and further develop the Iraqi Security Forces so that they can assume greater responsibility for Iraq’s internal and external security. In so doing, the United States has a better chance to secure its fundamental interests of eliminating terrorist safe havens and preventing a wider regional war.

A gradual withdrawal also would bring U.S. military forces home in an orderly fashion and mark the beginning of a much-needed effort to restore American ground forces to relative health and combat readiness. While this renewal could also begin in the wake of a rapid withdrawal, U.S. national security interests will be better served if the “visual” for the withdrawal is one of an orderly departure rather than a replay of soldiers clinging to helicopter landing struts.

Finally, a phased drawdown would position the United States to begin rebuilding its reputation in the international community and repairing essential relationships with strategic friend and allies. The U.S. involvement in Iraq has damaged the nation’s standing around the world—the United States has lost credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of its friends and has grown more vulnerable in the eyes of its enemies. A gradual drawdown, particularly if coupled with renewed, broader, and more genuinely multilateral diplomatic efforts to address Iraq’s security and stability, would demonstrate that the United States is beginning to restore its strategic position.

The strategic implications of a drawdown in Iraq are significant for the United States and will depend to a great degree on the speed, scale, and circumstances surrounding our departure. Whether the United States can salvage its strategic position—in the Middle East and in the world more broadly—depends on whether the nation can find a way to walk, rather than crawl, out of Iraq.
SAVING AFGHANISTAN

Julianne Smith

When asked what will be the biggest foreign policy challenge for the United States in 2008, most people cite the war in Iraq. With U.S. elections approaching and increasingly vocal calls from the American public to withdraw, questions about U.S. staying power as well as Iraq’s fragile future are expected to dominate headlines well into 2008. However, unless appropriate steps are taken now, another U.S.-led operation—the war in Afghanistan—threatens to become equally intractable for policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic for years to come. Afghanistan is heading in the wrong direction, and short of a complete overhaul of NATO strategy, it threatens to take its people, the future of the Alliance, and transatlantic relations along with it.
Several missteps over the last two to three years have gradually eroded outsiders’ confidence and taken Afghanistan off its early positive trajectory. As in Iraq, the initial military operation was successful, meeting little resistance and quickly eliminating the Taliban regime, which had provided safe haven for al Qaeda. Neglecting the lessons of previous interventions, though, which suggest that reconstruction is fundamental to long-term stability, the coalition made mistakes that continue to haunt the mission to this day.

The most glaring challenge—one that fuels a number of other problems on the ground—is the lack of a coordinated strategy. This is true both on the purely military level and in the area of civil-military cooperation. Some innovative models—such as the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)—have been developed. But in the case of the PRTs, each is led by a different nation, with little cooperation or common approach, resulting in confusion as to who does what, when, and where.

The United States and its allies have also failed to come up with a viable counternarcotics strategy. Recent estimates by the United Nations suggest that, despite sizeable sums spent by the West to put an end to it, Afghanistan’s opium production continues to grow, increasing by 34 percent since last year. The country’s output now accounts for a
staggering 93 percent of the world’s opium supply. Multiple ideas, ranging from new methods for poppy eradication to legalizing the crops for medicinal purposes, have been proposed to counter this trend, but consensus and resources remain elusive.

Because of Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf’s help in the hunt for al Qaeda, the United States and its partners have also neglected to address larger regional problems, especially the deepening unrest in Pakistan. As a result, Islamist rebellions in the lawless North-West Frontier Province and South Waziristan are growing and have had a dramatic destabilizing effect on Afghanistan.

Finally, many coalition partners never adequately explained to their publics the goals that their troops sent to Afghanistan are helping to accomplish. In some countries participation is justified on purely humanitarian grounds, while in others there is no public debate at all. Yet, as the security situation in the region has deteriorated and the number of casualties has grown, public opposition to the Afghanistan mission has mounted. This has put enormous pressure on political elites to bring their troops home just at a time when greater support (on both the security and development side) is needed.

The question for the next six months, therefore, is whether NATO and its partners on the ground will and can make the necessary mid-course corrections to save the mission in Afghanistan from failure. Or will the coalition simply muddle through?

To be sure, the list of mid-course corrections needed is long. First, the UN should appoint a special high commissioner to take on the herculean task of coordinating the various international actors on the ground and provide a framework under which various soft and hard tasks can be merged.

Second, NATO needs to redesign its overarching concept for its Afghan mission. That process should begin with clear agreement and articulation
of the mission’s aims, followed by a clarification of how NATO’s role fits into what some have dubbed the three Ds: defense, development, and diplomacy. Leaders in NATO countries then need to take that strategy to their publics and reiterate why this mission is crucial for the future of Afghanistan, the safety and security of American and European citizens, and NATO more broadly.

Third, more resources need to be put toward the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. That means greater involvement of multilateral and international organizations, such as the World Bank, the UN, and the European Union. Those organizations are on the ground, but their contributions to date have not come close to matching the scale of the tasks at hand. Police training, for example, is still woefully underfunded. And without proper training, the local army and police forces cannot be entrusted to prevent the Taliban from establishing lawless fiefdoms from which attacks can be launched on the Afghan government. There must also be massive investment in rural development to give local farmers an alternative to growing poppies and thus undercut the Taliban’s stranglehold on the opium trade.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of people are advocating just the opposite: that coalition countries, instead of making such mid-course corrections, should begin planning for withdrawal. Such calls are worrying. The dangers and consequences of abandoning Afghanistan to internal strife and economic collapse are very real. The aftershocks of a withdrawal would quickly spread throughout the region and reach the borders of Europe and the shores of the United States, possibly in the form of future terrorist attacks. Designing and implementing a new strategy for Afghanistan is not only what the international community owes to the Afghan people, but also what it owes to itself.

The author would like to thank Patrycia Podrazik for her valuable assistance in preparing this essay.
American airwaves are typically quiet the last month of summer before Labor Day. Not so in 2008, when U.S. households will be treated to several extended media events. The first, the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, kicks off on August 8 and continues through August 24. Though far less covered and watched than the Olympics, the Democratic and Republican presidential conventions follow shortly thereafter, August 25–28 and September 1–4, respectively.

Though the Olympic Games and the conventions are obviously dissimilar in many respects, it is worth considering their combined effect on the attitudes of Americans toward China at the height of the U.S. political season. These events are, after all, convened and carefully orchestrated by their organizers for political reasons—overt in the case of the conventions, but hardly ambiguous in the case of the Beijing Olympics.

The Beijing Olympics are, for China, of great symbolic importance. They are another signpost of China’s return to global prominence, an occasion that holds deep emotional and historical significance—like its recovery of Hong Kong from British colonial rule in 1997 or its entrance into the World Trade Organization in 2001. China’s recent development, which Americans are apt to consider as something new, is for many Chinese a story of a return to past great-nesses and China’s rightful place among the top panoply of nations. Before the Industrial Revolution and the arrival of
Western adventurers to China in the early nineteenth century, China had for centuries been comfortably unrivalled as a power in Asia and had represented nearly 30 percent of global economic output. China lost much over the next 150 years and the resulting toll on China’s national pride along the way was enormous. Annual growth rates of nearly 10 percent annually for the better part of three decades have done much to restore China’s international clout and domestic self-esteem.

For China, therefore, the Olympics are an opportunity to celebrate the country’s historical revival and a vehicle to present its new and glorious credentials to the rest of the world. But the story that China’s leaders may want to tell the world may not be the story that Americans see and hear. For one thing, Western media are not a uniformly docile crowd. Muckraking makes better copy than even the best state propaganda. Indeed, China’s leadership must be careful to ensure that a lack of tolerance for stories that clash with the theme of the Olympics as national celebration does not become a story in itself.

More fundamentally, the celebration of China’s rise that motivates the organizers of the Beijing Olympics will find a less credulous audience outside of China. But the theme cannot help but filter through the media coverage to international viewers, including those in the United States. So Americans will be treated to several weeks of spectacle not just of great sport (in which Chinese competitors seem poised to do extremely well), but of a new and rising power about which they are already highly conflicted.

Concerns about the bilateral trade deficit and perceived economic competition with China, intellectual property violations, human rights abuses, consumer product safety, and other matters have heightened American awareness of China’s rise and the challenges it presents. A spectacular commemoration of China as a rising power is unlikely to quell those concerns. For worried Americans, scenes of China’s bustling ports, dramatic new urban skyscrapers, and all the other indicia of modern China that the Olympic organizers will showcase in August 2008 will do little to send the message that China would prefer to deliver: “You have nothing to fear.” Indeed, China’s otherwise benign celebration will probably contribute as much or more to U.S. popular anxiety about China as any deliberately pot-stirring media report.

Then, just after China’s government presents itself through the Olympics coverage, Americans will engage in some political theater of their own. The images from China’s Olympic celebration will be fresh as the presidential nominees are declared and campaigns begin in earnest. Juxtaposed against the competing visions of America and its future presented by the rival candidates during the conventions, these images necessarily will raise questions about a U.S. political response to a challenge from across the Pacific.

Anxiety over China already occupies its fair share of the American popular psyche. The Olympics are likely to bring that anxiety into sharp relief at the most politically sensitive time on the U.S. calendar. The unintended effect of China’s Olympics celebration may therefore be to force the candidates to respond more actively to popular anxieties over China’s rise than they might otherwise be inclined to do. Whether the resulting policy prescriptions recommend a more or less confrontational path will require some soul-searching by the candidates, but the most diplomatically effective route is seldom the most politically expedient. Let the Games begin.
WILL TAIWAN’S POLLS BRING STABILITY OR WAR?

Bonnie S. Glaser

In March 2008, Taiwanese voters will go to the polls to directly elect a president for the fourth time in the Republic of China’s history. The United States has no favorite in the presidential race and will likely maintain strict neutrality, but it will nevertheless have important interests at stake. The issue for Washington is not which party or candidate will be in power, but rather what policies they will adopt. Preserving peaceful and stable relations between the mainland and Taiwan is a top priority. Strengthening U.S. ties with Taiwan, which have been badly frayed under Taiwan’s current president, Chen Shui-bian, is also important for American interests.

The two presidential candidates are Ma Ying-jeou, from the Nationalist (KMT) Party, and Hsieh Chang-ting, from the Democratic People’s Progressive (DPP) Party, which has ruled Taiwan for the past eight years. Taiwan politics are polarized and intensely combative, but Hsieh’s and Ma’s visions of future cross-Strait relations are remarkably harmonious. Both candidates advocate expanding cross-Strait economic ties and exchanges. Both maintain that it is up to the people of Taiwan to determine the island’s relationship with the mainland. Increasing participation in the international community in a way that does not subordinate Taiwan to the People’s Republic of China is a goal that both men
Although he rejects a “one China” precondition for opening direct talks with the mainland, Hsieh Chang-ting is a pragmatist who maintains that negotiations are possible if both sides deem them to be important. As mayor of Kaohsiung, Hsieh proposed the notion of “a constitutional one China”—an idea that intrigues officials and scholars in Beijing—but he has since backed away from that formula as a basis for recommencing talks. A central goal of Hsieh’s campaign is to make Taiwan a “normal country,” and he favors revising the current constitution, although he agrees to postpone changing the national title “Republic of China” until 70 percent of the population supports full identification with “Taiwan.”

While strongly opposing the KMT’s idea of a cross-Strait common market, Hsieh favors loosening restrictions on cross-Strait business relations, such as opening Taiwan to Chinese professionals and capital, but maintaining tight restrictions on Taiwan’s high-tech and agricultural exchanges with China. Further, he supports removing the ban on direct transportation and other links to halt and even reverse the exodus of Taiwanese businessmen to the mainland—as long as it can be done in a way that protects Taiwan’s security.
Despite Washington’s firm refusal to support Taiwan’s membership in international organizations that require statehood as a precondition for joining, both Ma and Hsieh back their respective parties’ proposed referenda to join the United Nations, which are slated to be held in tandem with the presidential election. The KMT’s version would accept UN membership under any acceptable nomenclature, including the Republic of China. The DPP’s version calls for becoming a member under the name Taiwan and has therefore set off alarm bells in Beijing as a deliberate challenge to China’s claim to sovereignty over the island. China fears that, if passed, such a referendum could be used to push more provocative steps that might ultimately be tantamount to juridical severance of Taiwan from the mainland. Under Article 8 of the Anti-Secession Law that took effect in 2005, “major incidents entailing Taiwan’s secession” could justify the employment of “non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

Under the scenario that the DPP referendum passes and Hsieh Chang-ting wins the election, cross-Strait tensions could spike, potentially even before the May inauguration. Beijing has repeatedly declared that it would sacrifice the August 2008 Olympic Games if necessary to thwart Taiwan’s independence. To avoid a crisis that could escalate to a major Sino-U.S. military confrontation, Washington will need to be especially attentive to cross-Strait dynamics in the run-up to the presidential elections and in their immediate aftermath.

Taiwan’s elections are traditionally difficult to predict. Although Ma Ying-jeou has led by a wide margin in the polls for many months, a close race is anticipated. Regardless of who wins, prospects are bright for more stable cross-Strait relations and better U.S.-Taiwan ties beyond May 2008. Adroit diplomacy by the United States can help to bring about the transition to a new phase of U.S.-China-Taiwan relations marked by confidence building and shared economic prosperity. ■
Predicting the behavior of North Korea and thus the prognosis for U.S. interests on the Korean Peninsula in 2008 is hazardous duty. Famously mercurial, Kim Jong-il and his colleagues display only one certain and consistent trait—a desire to survive both individually and as a regime. However, more than could ever have been expected as 2007 dawned, 2008 holds the potential for substantial progress in the fundamentals of security on the peninsula, unseen since the end of the Korean War. Nonetheless, many obstacles remain, not the least of which is fundamental uncertainty about North Korea’s strategic goals and intentions.

The February 13, 2007, Six-Party Talks agreement called for North Korea to freeze, declare, and disable its nuclear weapons program in return for political
and economic benefits and the establishment of working groups to address outstanding questions concerning bilateral and regional affairs. Despite delays in implementation, the two-phase agreement has led to a verified freeze on North Korea’s program at Yongbyon and the return of international inspectors, and to a process of interaction that has established momentum upon which further progress may be built. On October 3, another Six-Party Talks joint statement announced North Korea’s commitment to disable its Yongbyon facilities and provide a “complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs” by the end of the year, the first time it had set such a concrete timetable. If this occurs, the North will receive the equivalent of 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil in return (an initial 50,000 tons was authorized following completion of the first phase of the February agreement).

The United States also agreed to work to remove North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and to cease applying the Trading with the Enemy Act to the North, both of which are obstacles to the North’s receiving international financial assistance. Removing the North from its list of state sponsors of terrorism, however, could complicate the United States’ relations with Japan, where sensitivity about the abduction of Japanese citizens by the North remains acute.

Despite the announced timeline, if history is any guide, the process is likely to slip into 2008. A number of questions remain that could complicate implementation of the February agreement, primarily the definition and verification of “full disclosure” of the North’s nuclear programs and likewise “disablement” of its nuclear facilities.

One also cannot fully anticipate what additional demands the North may make as the cost of its full compliance. The North is legendary for adding new demands of its counterparts in the middle of a process. Such demands could include additional economic aid, curbs on U.S. or South Korean military activity, and even a light-water
nuclear reactor, an off-again, on-again demand since the days of Kim Il-sung.

Should the process stall for any reason, by the spring of 2008 discussion will begin to focus on whether the North is serious about compliance and whether there is enough time left for the Bush administration to finish the job of denuclearization. Likewise, questions will arise about whether the North is looking past Bush to working with a new U.S. administration in 2009.

If implementation of the February 2007 agreement proceeds to completion within a reasonable timeframe and at a reasonable cost to the other five parties, momentum will continue toward reaching another Six-Party agreement with new benchmarks for progress, presumably toward the ultimate goal of full denuclearization. Such benchmarks will presumably include full disclosure of the North’s nuclear weapons and a timetable for disablement of other nuclear facilities outside Yongbyon. As part of such an agreement, the United States in return would presumably agree to further moves toward normalizing relations with the North, provide additional economic assistance, and with other relevant parties—China and South Korea in particular—begin talks on a comprehensive peace regime on the Korean Peninsula that would end the state of war that has existed since 1950. The Bush administration has made clear, however, that completion of any peace treaty will occur only after verified denuclearization in the North.

The results of South Korea’s December 2007 presidential election may also affect events on the peninsula in 2008. It is expected that the South’s policy favoring outreach and reconciliation with the North will not change even if the more conservative opposition party takes power. However, the tone of relations between Washington and Seoul will likely be different depending on whether the conservative (GNP) or the progressive (UNDP) candidate wins. North Korea may gauge the results of the election to determine how far to test the will of the other five parties in the Six-Party Talks to maintain a united stance, particularly if South-North reconciliation outpaces progress on the nuclear question.

It appears that the Bush administration has decided to pursue serious diplomacy through the end of its term in order to reach a comprehensive settlement of the North Korean impasse. Rumors persist that Secretary of State Rice could travel to Pyongyang should the North fulfill its part of the February 2007 agreement. U.S. ambassador to South Korea Alexander Vershbow even commented that President
Bush would be open to a meeting with Kim Jong-il should the North verifiably denuclearize. If true, that is a substantial concession for a president who made a point of calling Kim Jong-il’s regime “evil” because of its international behavior (missile proliferation, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, etc.) and human rights record. Indeed, the issue of human rights seems to have disappeared from the U.S. agenda and remains a question mark for U.S. policy toward North Korea over the long run.

As many unanswered questions as there may be for U.S. policy, the intentions of North Korea are much more uncertain and consequential. Few can say with confidence whether North Korea has made the strategic decision to give up its nuclear weapons under any circumstances, despite its explicit pledge to do just that. Nuclear weapons remain the North’s ultimate deterrent, source of national pride, and, perhaps, source of legitimacy and control over its population. Many have suspected that the North seeks to bide its time so the world may tacitly accept its nuclear status, à la Pakistan and India.

In that case, Pyongyang may choose to draw out the Six-Party process through the end of 2008, understanding that a new administration in 2009 will take time to establish itself and build diplomatic momentum. In the meantime, it may calculate, the world will get used to a nuclear North Korea. On the other hand, the North might decide to take advantage of diplomatic momentum with a conservative U.S. administration to reach a comprehensive deal. Other developments in 2008 may also shape events on the peninsula, such as the sudden incapacitation or death of Kim Jong-il or open turmoil among the North’s elite. Indeed, predicting events on the Korean Peninsula in both the short run and medium run remains an uncertain enterprise at best, requiring sober expectations and vigilance throughout the coming year.
The news from Pakistan during much of 2007 revolved around an extended crisis. President Pervez Musharraf’s decision in March to suspend the country’s chief justice unleashed a wave of protest that shook the foundations of his government. His heavy-handed response to subsequent events reinforced the impression that he had lost much of his support among the Pakistani people. The United States, grateful for his support in the war on terrorism but frustrated at the continuing insurgency in Afghanistan and its apparent support from border regions in Pakistan, worked hard to rescue Musharraf’s government by facilitating an alliance between him and Pakistan’s largest nonreligious political party, Benazir Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP).

The important questions about Pakistan’s future, however, go beyond the drama of Benazir Bhutto’s return to Pakistan and even beyond the issue of who will head its government. Pakistan’s army has had a terrible year but remains the country’s biggest single political actor. The government and the army are on the receiving end of an unprecedented spike in extremist violence, both in the troubled tribal areas and elsewhere in the country. Pakistan’s relations with its neighbors are still troubled and have great mobilizing power in the country’s domestic politics. These issues all affect the Pakistani state’s fundamental ability to govern.

The starting point for addressing these questions is the “judicial crisis”—the protests following Musharraf’s action against the chief justice and the Supreme Court’s decision to reverse that action. In the past, the judiciary has generally been subservient to an often bullying executive. This departure from the historical norm caught the imagination of Pakistanis and was a tonic to the languid and dispirited political scene. Even if the challenges to Musharraf’s candidacy for president are definitively rejected, a residue of bitterness will remain, and the court is challenging his authority in other ways.

Because of Musharraf’s dual status as president and chief of the army, some of this resentment against Musharraf has hit the army as well. Pakistan’s army sees itself as the country’s only strong institution, the embodiment of the nation and of all that is best in it.
Pakistan has had military rulers for over half of its 60-year independent history, and the army has been a major political actor even when civilian governments ruled. The past two years have brought the army a string of embarrassments, however. Its effort to bring the tribal areas next to Afghanistan under control was not a success and cost some 700 dead. Recent violence has been aimed disproportionately at army institutions. The detention of more than 250 Pakistani military personnel in September in the tribal areas without their firing a shot was a serious blow to the army’s prestige, which polling data suggest had already fallen considerably. The army is always sensitive to public disturbances; the riots that killed 40 in Karachi in May 2007 must have caused unhappiness among the brass.

Not since Pakistan was split in two in 1971 has the Pakistani army faced a similar combination of military reverses and political controversy. There is no evidence that the army is fragmenting. But its travails could profoundly affect its attitude toward future governments and its ability to address internal security issues. If the army doubts its ability to bring order quickly to the country’s most troubled regions, it may be much more cautious about military operations in those areas, and by extension more cautious about dealing with armed extremists who claim an Islamic mandate.

The spike in extremist violence comes from two sources. First, military operations in the tribal areas as well as drone attacks apparently by the United States in western Pakistan have raised anger against Pakistan’s involvement in “America’s war” in Afghanistan. Second, there have been bombings and other attacks all over Pakistan, many of them directed at military targets. The trigger for this increase in violence was the government’s decision in July 2007 to raid the Red Mosque and associated schools in Islamabad, whose faculty and students had been arming themselves and kidnapping police and “immoral characters” on the streets of the capital. Many people thought that the government was slow to respond after six months of brazen defiance of the most basic government authority. But the real danger may lie ahead: after bombings that claimed several hundred dead in the first two months after the Red Mosque raid, will future governments—whoever may head them—decide that they need to treat these extremists as enemies of the state, or will they decide to handle them with kid gloves?

Regardless of who is in power in Washington or Islamabad, Pakistan will still occupy the critical space between an insurgency-ridden Afghanistan and the rest of Asia.
Pakistan’s troubled relationships in the neighborhood are nothing new. For once, India-Pakistan relations have been relatively steady. For nearly four years, a cease-fire has held and a multichannel official dialogue has continued, protected from political controversy by both governments. This is good news, though one should not assume that it will go on indefinitely in the absence of tangible results. The weakness of the Pakistani government will inhibit its ability to make the concessions necessary for further progress. Widespread expectations that India will face early elections some time in 2008 will have the same effect on the Indian side.

Pakistan and Afghanistan, however, are having increasing difficulty getting beyond the personal animosity between their leaders and the legacy of hostility they inherited. The United States has tried to encourage three-way cooperation, but with limited success. The problem is compounded by the mediocre results of efforts to pacify Pakistan’s tribal areas and by evident Pakistani skepticism about U.S. and NATO staying power. With the insurgency still strong in the parts of Afghanistan closest to Pakistan, there is some evidence that Pakistan has kept up its connections with the Taliban in case the present policies fail.

Regardless of who is in power in Washington or Islamabad, Pakistan will still occupy the critical space between an insurgency-ridden Afghanistan and the rest of Asia. Afghanistan cannot be stabilized unless the Pakistani state becomes healthier and the government more capable of wielding effective authority. Key to this process is the legitimacy of the government in Islamabad. This gives the United States an enormous stake in the quality of the next elections in Pakistan, and in the country’s governance after the elections. Ironically, the “judicial crisis” that caused great anxiety in Washington policy circles may turn out to be the first step on the long road toward more resilient institutions in Pakistan.
ORGANIZING ASIA
POLITICS, TRADE, AND THE NEW MULTILATERALISM

Michael J. Green

Asian multilateral meetings often appear long on symbolism and short on substance. The 21-nation Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) is known for its photo-ops, with leaders like Bill Clinton, George Bush, and Hu Jintao being forced to pose in the costume shirt of the hosting nation (who could forget the purple silk mandarin jacket the president had to wear at Shanghai in 2003). The larger ASEAN Regional Forum, or ARF, is known for the skits performed by foreign ministers on closing night. Colin Powell once put on Western garb and sang “I Am a Lonesome Cowboy” to the Japanese foreign minister, and Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick did an Asian rearrangement of the Village People song “Y.M.C.A.” Condoleezza Rice was considerably more dignified, playing classical piano for her less-talented counterparts from places like Russia, China, Japan, and North Korea.

Compared with the drama of Maastricht or the impact of NAFTA, Asia’s multilateral diplomacy is incremental, undercut by unresolved historical rivalries and ideological differences and sometimes just plain silly. Yet the aspirations in the region for an “East Asia Community” are growing, and major powers like Japan, China, and India are jockeying for position to define how the region organizes itself in terms of trade and diplomacy. And while the institutionalization is complex and fluid compared with that of Europe or North America, decisions made in 2008 will lay the foundation for whether in two decades Asia looks more like the EU or more like it did 50 years ago.

The idea of a multilateral framework in Asia was first broached during the Cold War by the United States, which sought to organize Asia into an alliance similar to NATO. But with recent memories of Japanese and European imperialism, Asians balked and the region is dominated by bilateral alliances to this day. The Soviets were next to try, when Gorbachev proposed a broad Asian forum in 1985 that he hoped would dilute the U.S. alliances that were containing Soviet military expansion in the region. The United States and its allies balked. Malaysia’s
iconoclastic pan-Asianist prime minister Mahathir bin Mohamad tried throughout the 1990s to create an East Asia Caucus, but the United States’ economic and political role was too important in the region for even China to sign on. After Washington’s response to the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis was viewed as too slow and then too draconian, Mahathir’s idea gained new currency. The 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) created a new forum with Japan, China, and Korea and began studying debt-swap arrangements that finance ministries saw as possible groundwork for a common Asian currency. In 2005 those nations formed the core of a new East Asian Summit that rivaled the U.S.-led APEC leaders’ forum and pointedly did not include the United States. A nervous Japan and Singapore brought in India, Australia, and New Zealand to balance Chinese influence and in the process raised the issue of the other rising Asian country, India, long absent from the Asian organizational scene but increasingly active in the region. Governments then began studying free trade arrangements that would include the original 13 or the broader 15 in the East Asia Summit. The original APEC idea of a free trade area spanning the Pacific quietly fell off of most countries’ agendas.

In response, the Bush administration advanced a series of initiatives to keep APEC and the United States at the center of the region’s debate about future institutional architecture. President Bush proposed a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) at APEC in 2006, reached agreement with the other members of the Six-Party Talks on North Korea (Japan, Korea, China, Russia, and Japan) to establish a permanent security forum in Northeast Asia, and signed a free trade agreement with South Korea that would lock the United States into the rest of the region’s trade liberalization debate and set a gold standard for WTO-compliant free trade (in contrast to the “low-quality” FTAs in the region, which are riddled with exceptions).

While few of these trade or security agreements are likely to be finalized in 2008, and while the phase-in period will be long with any trade pact, decisions made in 2008 will have an important effect on where Asia’s trade and political architecture go over the longer term. If Congress rejects the U.S.-Korea FTA in 2008, that will severely undermine the credibility of U.S. arguments for a trans-Pacific arrangement. The 2008 APEC Summit is in Peru—not East Asia—which could add further momentum to an “Asians only” grouping if the president does not find a way to go to Asia or engage its leaders effectively. The president had to pass on a planned summit with the leaders of ASEAN in 2007, but will he reschedule for 2008 and will that summit lead to advancement of a structure for U.S.-ASEAN trade liberalization and economic engagement like those already in place for China, Japan, and India?

Then there is the issue of democracy promotion, which is languishing in the Iraq and Middle East context but has quietly been a success story in Asia. Japan once championed “Asian values” as an alternative to the “Washington consensus” on political and economic liberalization, but today Japan is arguing for the application of free market principles and universal values in the new Asian architecture. Indonesia was an authoritarian state in 1997, but today trumpets its identity as a democracy under President Susilo Bambang Yudyono. ASEAN was originally organized around the principle of noninterference in internal affairs, but is preparing a new draft charter in 2008 that is expected to advance universal values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. If the United States pushes too hard on democracy promotion, it could cause a backlash and undercut this progress. But if Washington abandons the freedom agenda in Asia because of set-backs in the Middle East, that would undercut the important new principles and practices being advanced by Tokyo, Jakarta, Delhi, and others.

The year 2008 is not a year of war and peace in Asia. But decisions made in 2008 will set in motion important trends that shape the agenda of a region that is poised to become the most dynamic and influential in the world.
“Nineteen seventy-three,” declared Henry Kissinger in late April of that year, “is the year of Europe”—a time, he insisted, for the allies to join in “a fresh act of creation . . . equal to that undertaken by the postwar generation of leaders” on both sides of the Atlantic. Now, in 2008—the thirty-fifth year of “the year of Europe”—conditions seem to be broadly met, at last, for an answer from the European states and their Union.

First, at the level of the nation-states, the replacement of worn-out and often discredited leaders in Germany, France, and even Britain has ended the political agony that surrounded their last years in office. Unusually high levels of public support for their successors, combined with an opposition that is either in disarray or feeble, suggest that Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Gordon Brown are likely to remain in place for the next six to ten years. On the whole, these new leaders are political pragmatists who can relate to each other and also appear ready to work with the United States—as is confirmed by their open interest in engaging President George W. Bush even as each eagerly awaits the arrival of a new administration. With elections in Poland, Spain, and Italy as well as for the European Parliament due in 2008–2009, the political framework is being recast for all of Europe and its most significant interlocutors in the United States and Russia, both of which will hold presidential elections of their own in 2008.

Admittedly, these new leaders will have to bring some relief to a prolonged malaise that featured but was not limited to the sluggish state of economies and the cultural disarray of their respective societies. There is already some improvement, however, thanks, ironically enough, to legacies that have not received the credit they deserve: Gerhard Schroeder, who started the economic reforms that Merkel is now pursuing; Tony Blair, who confronted serious
acts of post-9/11 terror in a European capital, the threat of which Brown is now also facing; and even Jacques Chirac’s last prime minister, Dominique de Villepin, who introduced many of the policies his successor is now endorsing. With Germany acting again as the economic locomotive it is meant to be, France and the rest of continental Europe north of Spain are enjoying levels of growth not seen for at least a decade. In Germany, this year’s budget is expected to show a surplus for the first time since 1989; in France, unemployment has fallen to its lowest level since 1982; in Britain, a streak of 40 consecutive quarters of economic expansion is not about to end, with growth for 2007 projected at nearly 3 percent—still slightly above the projected average for the European Union, which grew 3.3 percent in 2006, a six-year high and more than one full percentage point ahead of the United States that year.

Politically more confident and economically more robust, the states of Europe are also institutionally more cohesive. For much of the past decade, the EU was a convenient alibi used by national governments to redirect their citizens’ discontent, thus facilitating an institutional crisis that exploded when voters in France and the Netherlands rejected the constitutional treaty in mid-2005. That debate was settled last June with a so-called simplified treaty that was floor-managed by Merkel but prepared by Sarkozy and ultimately endorsed by Brown. Now at last, the EU can return to debating what it must do, as compared to discoursing over what it should be. That, too, will be tested in 2008, as the French prepare for, and assume, their six-month presidency of the EU.

The French presidency, which will be one of the last such EU presidencies, looms as the defining moment for Europe in 2008. The French presidency, which will be one of the last such EU presidencies, looms as the defining moment for Europe in 2008: much of what will follow will depend on what is achieved during those six months—how (meaning, with whom) and to what ends (meaning, without or against whom). The Reform Treaty, which is scheduled for ratification by all EU members before the next European elections in June 2009, provides a good basis on which to build a European Union that can be a more assertive power in the world without failing to become a more cooperative U.S. partner in a strong and cohesive Atlantic Alliance. The treaty includes a full-time president of the European Council, who will be able to serve for as long as five years and will gradually become the face of the 27-member Union, while a smaller Com-
mission continues to act as a quasi legislative branch and a reinforced Parliament begins to reduce the current democratic deficit that has kept the EU institutions away from European citizens. On paper at least, the new regime moves the Union closer to becoming a virtual regional state whose rules of governance are not shaped by a constitution but by treaties—meaning “We, the Heads of State and Government” rather than “We, the People,” or, in Blair’s old formula, “a superpower rather than a super state.”

Properly used, the Reform Treaty can be an effective conduit for new initiatives in the defense and security areas. As is well known, U.S.-EU and EU-NATO policy harmonization has repeatedly suffered from divisions within the EU, not only among EU members but also between (and within) its various institutions. The new “High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy” will combine the security responsibilities of the European Council and Commission into one person and one instrument, thus providing the United States but also NATO with the legendary single telephone number to call. Should such a phone call be placed at some appropriate time in 2009, what they might talk about, and how, will also be determined in 2008, with an early preview during the NATO summit scheduled in the spring.

That summit, too, will have a significance that transcends the issue that is most likely to define it, namely another round of enlargement. As early as February 2008, the U.S. presidential primaries for both political parties will likely have delivered their verdict, thereby creating increasingly cacophonous sounds in a world that will find it difficult to listen to what outgoing President Bush says while trying to anticipate what either of his possible successors might do, or cease to do, a few months later. Under such circumstances, it will be useful to have a coherent and forceful European voice that, even (and especially) when speaking in French, can be heard speaking with an unusual American accent as, past Bush and beyond Iraq, the Europeans and their Union prepare for a new U.S. president.

Admittedly, there have been many other moments when Europe, seemingly on the verge of “being back” with an Atlanticist disposition and global expectations, was in fact held back or taken away from its senior partner across the Atlantic. Whether this current moment will last during and beyond the coming year is not certain, therefore, and it may depend on circumstances over which neither the states of Europe nor their Union have much control. Nor, in this initial phase in 2008, is this moment alone likely to produce the “fresh act of creation” that Kissinger called for 35 years ago. But, at least, improved relations between the United States and France in NATO, and between Britain, France, and Germany in the EU, are a much-needed start.
Russian president Vladimir Putin is due to step down in the spring of 2008 after a remarkable eight years in the Kremlin. Although a controversial figure in the West, Putin is wildly popular in Russia. Few would have predicted that this diminutive former intelligence officer would emerge as one of the world’s most notable and successful politicians of the new century. No honest Russia watcher today can predict with much certainty what the future holds for Putin’s successor, let alone his identity.

We can be certain, however, that the personality and, more so, the policies of the next Russian president will be of considerable consequence for his counterpart in the White House in January 2009. Russia is one of the most important countries in the world for U.S. foreign policy interests. This was true even in the 1990s, when Russia was weak, because of its huge arsenal of nuclear weapons, vast hydrocarbon and other natural resource wealth, geographical location bordering on East Asia and the Greater Middle East, and, finally, its UN Secu-
rity Council veto. But now Russia matters all the more because of its economic recovery, which, while greatly fueled by the high price of oil, was unexpected in both its magnitude and its speed. Russia’s nominal dollar GDP has grown by more than six times in less than 10 years, and it now holds the third-largest foreign currency reserves in the world (after China and Japan). Just five years ago Russia was a major debtor; today it is one of the largest creditors of U.S. deficits.

Who holds the presidency in Russia is also important because of the highly centralized nature of the Russian political system, in which so much authority is invested in the president. While we can expect that the next Russian president will, at least initially, have less authority than Putin (unless, of course, it turns out to be Putin), especially as the incumbent has assured us that he plans to remain politically active after his presidency, the “super-presidential” nature of the Russian constitution will most likely endure.

As Russia has emerged from its modern-day Time of Troubles and regained its confidence, its desire to integrate into the West has diminished. As Putin demonstrated in his watershed speech in Munich in February 2007, Russia sees itself as an independent great power in an international system that is replacing an ephemeral unipolar order with a rapidly emerging multipolarity. In Soviet parlance, the term was a shift in the “correlation of forces,” or what realist and neorealist scholars would call the balance of power.

In this shifting context, today and in the future we will be dealing with a Russia far more assured and ready to defend its national interests as it defines them, not as Washington would like necessarily. This does not mean that the next U.S. president may anticipate the danger of another Cold War looming; no important segment of the Russian political elite desires a return to an across-the-globe confrontation with the United States. That was a losing proposition in the second half of the twentieth century and, from Moscow’s perspective, looks even less promising today. Nor is Moscow likely to enter any serious anti-U.S. coalitions of great powers like China, as that scenario is not in any potential partners’ interests. Russia will likely remain kind of a strategic “loner,” but an increasingly vocal and at times contentious loner if we extrapolate from current trends. It is also probably not realistic to expect the current antidemocratic trend in Russia to reverse itself any time soon.

While it is obviously difficult to predict major discontinuity in Russia or elsewhere, the next administration will need to keep in mind that Russia for much of its history has shown a remarkable proclivity toward discontinuity and unpredictability. The current economic recovery and apparent political stabilization sit on a fairly fragile foundation. A crash in the price of oil will upset the

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current stability just as it was a precursor to major change and then collapse in the Soviet Union 20 years ago. There is no question that Putin and his team see themselves presiding over a stable authoritarian modernization of Russia for the next two to three decades. But history is replete with nations pursuing authoritarian modernization plans that have gone awry.

The Russia policy of the current administration amounts to pursuing engagement with Russia where it can (e.g., North Korea, Iran, nuclear cooperation) and confronting Russia on issues counter to our interests (e.g., Russia’s relations with near neighbors like Ukraine and Georgia, and democracy promotion). That policy has been severely hampered by the tremendous erosion of U.S. credibility and by widespread perceptions that the United States maintains double standards in its efforts to promote democracy and human rights. Russia has also been quick to take advantage of weak links in the transatlantic alliance, whether caused by differences over Iraq and Iran or by European energy dependencies on Russia. The Russian leadership also exploits the current perception of relative U.S. financial and military weakness. In other words, the things that are weakening our global standing vis-à-vis other countries figure particularly acutely in our ties with Russia because of its rapid recovery. The likely reality is that Russia is not as strong as it is acting now, nor are we as weakened as Moscow might like.

Finally, as the default position of Russian nationalism is anti-Americanism and as the Kremlin-controlled national television has been fueling a negative image of the United States, it will be especially difficult for Putin’s successor to quickly reverse the deterioration in U.S.-Russia relations. Any successor will have less political authority than Putin for some time to come, which will weaken his hand in pursuing a more pro-Western foreign policy than his predecessor did.

But we are probably past the time when it makes sense to describe Russian foreign policy as either pro-Western or anti-Western, pro-American or anti-American. Russian foreign policy will likely continue to be driven by a cold calculation of national interest that is most often aligned with commercial interests. That means that further Russian “integration” will be manifested primarily through commercial, trade, and investment ties. Increasingly, Russian companies will look to diversify their portfolios through equity investments in the United States. In principle, this is a good thing for both Russia and the United States. But, as we have seen with the Dubai ports sale and the Sinopec bid for Unocal, larger deals, especially in strategic sectors like energy, will be highly controversial. Of course, the fact that we will be arguing about market access rather than missile throw weights is remarkable progress considering the state of our relationship 25 years ago.
A sound relationship with Turkey is central to advancing a broad range of U.S. interests in Eurasia and the Middle East. Profound changes in Turkish politics and society—reflected in the dramatic 2007 electoral victories of the Justice and Development Party (AKP)—as well as shifts in relations with neighbors have altered many Turks’ views of their national interests. Years of papering over differences and a number of festering near-term problems have strained bilateral relations with the United States and Europe. This situation has raised concerns that Turkey will drift from its Euro-Atlantic moorings, with damaging consequences for its allies.
CHANGING CONTEXT
Throughout the Cold War, the United States and Turkey had a clear strategic relationship. Bilateral ties were anchored in a multilateral security framework, with Turkey as the linchpin of a containment strategy that protected the West from communist expansion. That status reinforced Turkey’s quest for deepening integration into the transatlantic community. But when the Soviet Union collapsed, the central rationale for that framework disappeared and secondary and tertiary issues soon began to dominate Turkey’s relations with its longtime allies.

The Gulf War of 1991 appeared to give new purpose to the Ankara-Washington relationship. Turkey played a key role in the U.S.-led war effort and came to be viewed in Washington as an anchor of stability in a volatile region. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, and European hesitation about actualizing mutual defense commitments, highlighted Turkey’s need for strong ties with the United States. Cooperation on nonsecurity matters, particularly energy, also grew. U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation remained robust, and Turkey made valuable contributions to the containment of Saddam Hussein and to NATO operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. However, these positive outward signs disguised unease beneath the surface.

Turkey’s relations with the United States and Europe have grown more strained since 2003. On the eve of the Iraq War, several European governments again balked at a U.S. request to reaffirm NATO commitments to the defense of Turkey, and the Turkish parliament later refused permission for U.S. Army units to enter northern Iraq from Turkey. After 30 years of associate membership and implementation of significant political, judicial, and human rights reforms, Ankara began formal accession talks in 2005, but negotiations have been opened on only 4 of 35 negotiating “chapters.” The EU partially suspended negotiations in December 2006 because of the lack of progress on Cyprus issues. Turkey’s future relationship with the EU has become further clouded with the election of French president Nicholas Sarkozy, who supports a “privileged partnership” as an alternative to Turkish membership in the Union. France has slowed Turkey’s accession talks and limited their future scope to chapters that would be consistent with such a partnership.

Turkish disillusionment with the United States has grown in the aftermath of the Iraq War. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a terrorist group that waged a bloody insurgency in Turkey between 1984 and 1999, has regrouped in northern Iraq, where an autonomous Kurdish state has also begun to take shape. Many Turks see the U.S. failure to halt PKK activities in northern Iraq as evidence of a double standard with respect to terrorism, and they fear that an autonomous Kurdish entity in northern Iraq will fuel secessionist tendencies among the 14 million Kurds concentrated in Turkey’s southeast border regions. The Turkish General Staff has repeatedly called for cross-border operations into northern Iraq against the PKK. Escalating PKK violence led to a nearly unanimous vote by the Turkish parliament in October 2007 authorizing the government to launch such operations, raising fears of a wider conflict and another crisis in Ankara’s relations with Washington.

ALTERNATIVE COURSES
In the face of these growing doubts about the United States and Europe, some Turkish leaders have begun to ponder a “Eurasian option” that would downplay integration into the Euro-Atlantic community and emphasize balancing relations with the West with ties to their eastern and southern neighbors. Turkey’s alternatives could include new relationships with Iran, Syria, Russia, and China. Turkey may also seek a
Can Turkey and the West pursue a constructive future, or are we drifting apart? Turkey’s growing prosperity and political stability are linked to integration into the global economy, which puts a premium on good relations with the United States and the EU. Although Turkey’s interests are no longer as convergent with those of its NATO allies as they once were, enduring mutual interests remain in maintaining stability in the Middle East, countering terrorism and extremism, securing energy flows, and advancing the sovereignty of the states in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Pursuing this agenda will require restoring mutual trust and developing a new strategic framework for relations that allows effective pursuit of enduring mutual interests and management of policy differences.

A sound relationship with Turkey is central to advancing a broad range of U.S. interests in Eurasia and the Middle East.
During two decades of intense conflict between Serbs and Albanians over Kosovo, the disputed territory has also assumed strategic significance for Washington. The United States has invested substantial diplomatic, political, and military capital in the region and mobilized NATO in its first combat operation and subsequent peacekeeping mission. Moreover, the outcome of decisions on Kosovo’s final status will have long-term implications for America’s relations with both allies and adversaries.

The chasm between Prishtina (the capital of Kosovo) and Belgrade cannot be bridged through negotiations. While the former remains adamant about independence, the latter will not surrender its sovereignty over the territory. More than 90 percent of Kosovo’s population support independence, while the democratically elected government in Prishtina points out that Serbia de facto lost the territory when it attempted to slaughter and expel two million Albanians and was ousted from Kosovo by NATO forces in 1999.

The key strategic challenge in the Balkans is the effectiveness of U.S. leadership in determining Kosovo’s final status as a legitimate state in line with the will of
its citizens. Linked with this is the assurance of transatlantic solidarity in implementing such a decision, similar to the unity that was displayed when NATO intervened in Kosovo to prevent genocide.

Kosovo’s progress as a functioning state is vital for regional security and European stability. The current status quo or proposals to return Kosovo to Serbian jurisdiction are untenable solutions. Without independent status, political stability and economic development will be endangered and rising regional tensions could impede EU integration for the entire western Balkans. Most of Kosovo’s neighbors, other than Serbia, understand the necessity of statehood supervised by NATO and the EU so that the region can move beyond the era of ethno-territorial conflict.

Kosovo is also a test for postwar reconstruction and effective state-building. If, after a decade of direct Western involvement, this project were to fail in an aspiring state that is strongly pro-American and pro-European, then the chances for success in Iraq or Afghanistan will look distinctly dim.

The settling of Kosovo, where the majority of the population is Muslim, also remains significant for Washington’s relations with the wider Islamic world. The denial of independence for Kosovo could be widely interpreted as an anti-Islamic decision and provide fresh ammunition for radicals. By contrast, Kosovo’s statehood would be an important public relations success by demonstrating the United States’ commitment to democratic values regardless of religious tradition.

Two major impediments remain with regard to final decisions on Kosovo’s statehood—Russian resistance and European disunity. Moscow views Kosovo as a valuable boost for its global ambitions and has adeptly exploited divisions among EU capitals to its advantage. In denying Kosovo’s statehood by threatening to veto the Western plan for independence in the United Nations Security Council, the Kremlin can claim Russia is a major defender of multilateralism and international legality. Of course, Moscow would not apply the same principle to territories close to its borders, where it encourages pro-Russian and anti-Western separatism.
Kosovo forms part of a wider strategic agenda enabling Russia to elevate its international position, interject itself in Balkan developments, promote splits within the EU, aggravate weaknesses in Western decisionmaking, and claim to counterbalance U.S. hegemony.

For the Putin administration, the birth of new pro-American countries presents a long-term threat to Russia’s strategic designs. Democratic states invariably seek membership in NATO and the EU to consolidate the reform process and provide permanent security and U.S. engagement. For Moscow, such steps undercut its influences in neighboring countries and retard its ambitions as a revived superpower.

Russia capitalizes on the fact that Washington is seeking to rebuild its alliances and does not want to be depicted again as a unilateralist and hegemon. Hence, the United States is hesitant to bypass the UN Security Council in decisions about Kosovo. At the same time, several EU governments avoid acting outside the UN framework as that could undermine their own global influence and provide further unwelcome precedents.

With the deadline for current negotiations between Belgrade and Prishtina due to expire in December 2007, the White House needs to decide what strategic interests it is willing to defend over Kosovo. Unless the Alliance stands firm and united in implementing a credible plan for Kosovo’s independence under a NATO and EU umbrella, Russia will increasingly benefit from Western indecision and from escalating instability inside the EU’s doorstep. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council will remain paralyzed by the clique of ex-KGB officers who now control Russia.

Kosovo is also a test for postwar reconstruction and effective state-building.
The establishment of a new U.S. combatant command for Africa—U.S. Africa Command, or AFRICOM—announced by President Bush in February 2007 and launched on October 1, 2007, has generated considerable debate both in the United States and abroad. At the center of the controversy is the planned scope of the military command and the potential benefits and pitfalls of an expanded and more permanent U.S. military presence in Africa.

Those supportive of AFRICOM’s establishment view it as a welcome opportunity for deeper engagement on security issues that matter to both Africans and Americans. They also see it as a testing ground for a more integrated military-civilian approach to address some of the long-term, underlying causes of insecurity on the continent. Security sector reform, military professionalization, training for African peacekeepers, who are in ever-greater demand—all of these are almost universally recognized as critical components of Africa’s future democratic development that warrant greater attention and support from the international community.

Skeptics, on the other hand, argue that the Africa Command gives military authorities too great an influence in driving U.S. policies in Africa and ultimately risks subordination of long-term foreign policy investments and interests to short-term energy security and counter-terrorism priorities. In addition, some on the continent worry that the United States and China, which has grown increasingly active in Africa, are gearing up for a colonial-era competition, with negative consequences for the region.
Some of these fears could have been allayed by earlier and more systematic planning for AFRICOM by the Department of Defense and a clearer articulation of the new command’s mission. The Defense Department’s establishment of AFRICOM, although approved by President Bush, was finalized with little outside consultation. According to the president’s February announcement, AFRICOM was established to “enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa.” This and subsequent explanations of the new command’s purpose left many in Africa and in Washington with the impression that the U.S. military would be taking on humanitarian and developmental responsibilities and tasks traditionally—and more appropriately—undertaken by civilian or nongovernmental organizations. Without substantial advance discussions—with African governments and opinion leaders, nongovernmental organizations, and the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—to ease those perceptions, opposition to the new command grew.

Today, official pronouncements about AFRICOM’s mandate are more narrowly defined. As a result, AFRICOM appears to represent a much less dramatic or ambitious departure from the status quo than some may have wanted or others feared. AFRICOM’s Web site describes the new command’s role as enabling “DOD to better focus its resources to support and enhance existing U.S. initiatives that help African nations, the African Union, and the regional economic communities succeed. It also provides African nations and regional organizations with an integrated DOD coordination point to help address security and related needs.”

AFRICOM’s greatest virtue is indeed this unification of U.S. military programs for Africa. To date, those various programs and initiatives have been divided among the U.S. European Command, based in Stuttgart, Germany; the U.S. Central Command, based in Tampa, Florida; and the U.S. Pacific Command, based in Hawaii. That arrangement has left Africa at best a part-time concern for commanders whose areas of responsibility are already exceedingly broad and complex. A primary impetus for the new command has been to avoid the artificial divisions between, for example, the Horn (currently under U.S. Central Command) and the Sahel (under U.S. European Command). Further, a command devoted solely to Africa will allow commanders and staff to focus full-time on engaging African regional and national partners and understanding the continent’s complex security challenges.
Many of the new command’s activities are already well established in Africa—training programs such as International Military Education and Training, Joint Combined Exchange Training, and the Global Peace Operations Initiative; engagement in regional maritime security efforts; counterterrorism capacity-building initiatives in the Sahel, East Africa, and the Horn; support for African Union peacekeeping efforts; and even some promising military-to-military initiatives on health and HIV/AIDS. The U.S. military will of course maintain its ability to undertake targeted direct action campaigns in the Horn or the Sahel. AFRICOM’s establishment may improve the actionable intelligence to and command and control of such operations, but it will not expand the forces available. AFRICOM consists solely of nonoperational headquarters personnel and, according to plans, will have a small initial footprint—no more than 500 military and civilian personnel across the continent.

State Department and USAID officials remain wary of the Defense Department’s motives for establishing AFRICOM, but tensions have eased somewhat with the Pentagon’s scaled-back description of the command. The command structure for AFRICOM consists of a four-star commanding officer with two deputies—a senior Foreign Service Officer to oversee all assistance and development affairs and a three-star military officer charged with operational oversight. The unprecedented creation of a senior, non-Defense Department civilian official in the headquarters chain of command bears observation. It should portend better integration of defense assistance and programs with those provided by civilian agencies and improved linkages between the regional command and associated U.S. embassies.

As AFRICOM proceeds through its first year of operation, the United States will need to carefully calibrate the balance of military versus civilian presence and activities, explicitly link defense programs to African security priorities, and ensure that military initiatives are well integrated with other U.S. and African civilian-led policies. The United States must make it clear, in practice and in appearance, that the new command’s mission is subordinate to a broader, integrated, and civilian-led U.S. Africa policy. Once launched, AFRICOM will need to demonstrate quickly that the interagency process indeed works, that civilian and military lines of authority are clear, and that the endeavor enhances U.S.-African security engagement without undermining longer-term governance and development goals. Civilian policymakers, in turn, must expand and mature their own agencies’ capability and capacity to coordinate and lead U.S. activity in Africa.
The succession in power from Fidel Castro to his brother Raúl appears to be a done deal, but the evolution away from fidelismo will start only upon the death of its namesake. When that happens, Raúl Castro steps out from behind the shadow of his flamboyant sibling and the beginning of a transition process to a new order in Cuba may commence. Since 1961 the United States has pursued policies based on attempting to isolate, contain, and weaken the Castro regime through its economic embargo and by marshalling diplomatic resources to oppose it. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, support for a return to democracy and respect for fundamental rights in Cuba have been the justification for maintaining and even tightening these policies. That such efforts have had no effect on improving the condition of human and civil rights in Cuba is manifestly clear. With the coming to power of Raúl Castro it is time for the United States to chart a different course if it wants to promote a transition to democracy in Cuba.

By all indications, Fidel Castro, who provisionally handed control over the mechanisms of government to his brother on July 31, 2006, in the wake of a severe illness, will not return to power. Since that date, Raúl Castro has further consolidated his hold over the armed forces, security apparatus, and Communist Party—the key levers of control. While there is much speculation regarding what Raúl can or will do with that power, especially in terms of steering Cuba along the lines of social and economic reform, he will not be free to chart his own course until Fidel departs the scene. Eclipsed from the beginning by the force of Fidel’s presence and the
cult of personality surrounding the elder Castro, Raúl remained deeply in the background, a powerful but colorless figure—Fidel’s loyal helper and designated heir. Even now as de facto chief of state and head of government, Raúl will not have complete authority while his brother lives.

Raúl will likely have only a short time to make his mark. He is 76 years old and reportedly not in the best of health. As yet Raúl has no designated successor, though this is no doubt a top priority; but at this stage he probably does not enjoy the legitimacy or popularity to name one. His most immediate goal will be to ensure the continuity of the political system and Raúl appears to have that under control.

Most observers predict that he will not attempt a political opening but will instead look for means to loosen restrictions on economic activity, broaden the very small sector of the economy not fully controlled by the state, and begin to address the pressing need for better living conditions. Considerable pressure has built up among the Cuban people for the chance to earn, keep, and spend money. Responding to deep-seated exasperation with Cuba’s sclerotic economic system will be the focus of Raúl’s attention and the degree to which he can scale back the state sector a key measure of his success. Continuation of the economic status quo is a less likely option for Raúl than it ever was for Fidel, and nonaction would come with a higher political cost.

When Raúl finally is left alone in power, the potential for change in Cuba grows exponentially, given Fidel’s single-minded dedication to preserving Cuba as a police state with a controlled economy. But whatever glue Fidel’s persona contributed to holding the system together and generating international support will be lost to Raúl, who has neither the charisma nor the disposition to play the part of revolutionary icon.
As Raúl Castro maneuvers to distance himself from some elements of his brother’s legacy, the United States will be confronted with a policy dilemma. With Fidel in charge, a succession of U.S. administrations had little inclination to revisit the increasingly rigid policy of sanctions and restrictions. Earlier attempts by the United States at rapprochement failed utterly in the face of Fidel’s recalcitrant anti-Americanism and unwillingness to consider meaningful political or economic change. The domestic political cost of reaching out to Cuba was seen to far outweigh whatever minimal benefit might accrue to U.S. foreign policy objectives. Moreover, Cuba posed little security threat to the United States after the mid-1980s as it morphed into a political and economic museum.

With the end of Fidel, change will come to Cuba. The United States could play a positive role in helping promote both the pace and direction of such change—away from the authoritarian legacy toward a more open and democratic system. A transition toward greater respect for human and civil rights is by no means guaranteed. Important factions in Cuba will resist even economic reform, let alone attempts to dismantle the police state.

The United States should encourage Raúl to play the role of reformer—albeit if his first steps are limited to the economic and social spheres. Unfortunately, the United States has painted itself into a corner by legislation restricting executive branch discretion in dealing with Cuba, especially the 1992 and 1996 (Helms-Burton) acts, which predicate change in U.S. policy on the consolidation of a transitional government in Cuba that does not include Raúl Castro and that is committed to sweeping democratic reform. Even with these restrictions in place there is some room for policy maneuvering, but the Bush administration has publicly ruled out any thaw in relations with a Raúl Castro government.

Whatever sense adherence to a rigid policy of sanctions and restrictions on Cuba may have made while Fidel Castro was in power no longer holds weight
with Raúl in charge. Instead, it is in the national interest of the United States and of the Cuban people to encourage a peaceful transition that leads to democracy. The United States should promote dialogue with the Cuban government as well as cooperation on any issue of mutual benefit—of which there are many. It should use “soft-power” tools—academic and cultural exchanges, sports programs, technology exchange, and information outreach to begin to break the ice that has encrusted the bilateral relationship. The Cuban people hunger for a closer relationship with the United States—based on mutual respect—and Raúl may see considerable benefit to an opening. Confidence-building measures, however small, can be meaningful in helping to promote real reform in Cuba through a step-by-step approach.

The United States should work with other democracies, at the Organization of American States and in Europe, to develop a more coordinated approach toward encouraging change in Cuba. A more open-minded U.S. policy will win greater credibility for such efforts and will broaden the effectiveness of other U.S. policy initiatives in the Americas. U.S. public diplomacy should underscore a positive desire to see Cuba rejoin the community of democracies at the OAS and seek means by which that organization—in the spirit of the Inter-American Democratic Charter—can help Cuba move toward democracy.

Reaching out to a new Cuban regime by no means implies an abandonment of U.S. commitment to democracy in Cuba, but instead a more realistic and pragmatic approach toward meeting that goal. Rather than stepping back until a transitional government comes into being that meets the strict standards of the Helms-Burton legislation, the United States should engage with Cuba as a means of helping promote positive change. There is nothing to lose and much to gain by doing so.
More than 10 years ago, the international community set forth an international framework for global action through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. The United States did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol because of the widely held belief that the system would cause global economic harm while contributing little to the fight against global warming. Now the clock is ticking on the international negotiation of a post-2012 agreement governing international commitments to reduce global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The notional deadline is to complete negotiations by December 2009 to avoid a gap after the first Kyoto commitment period ends in 2012. Although the world will not reach agreement on the post-2012 climate change framework in 2008, much of what happens in 2008 will set the stage for what kind of an agreement can be reached in 2009.

Many of the countries that did sign on to the Kyoto Protocol are not on track to meet their emissions reductions, and the view is now widespread that any post-Kyoto agreement will have to be significantly different from the current Kyoto framework. However, disagreements over burden sharing, the economic effect of mandatory emissions caps, and the urgent nature of the climate threat have split the global community in their approach to global action. On the flip side, there is also growing recognition that the economic cost of delayed and fragmented action will far outweigh the cost of early action. Recently, pressure to take a more aggressive global stance to fight climate change has come from a number of new players. International organizations, local governments, and private companies are all taking actions to establish and anticipate the existence of a carbon-constrained future and are calling on the U.S. government to provide long-term policy direction to enable investment in low-carbon technology options. It is widely accepted that whatever climate treaty emerges next must have the participation of all major emitters, most notably the United States and China, to have any meaningful impact. The world is therefore anxiously watching as momentum appears to be building within the United States for mandatory measures to limit GHG emissions.

Despite a great deal of activity and dialogue on climate change in other international forums—for example, the International Energy Agency, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Security and Prosperity Partnership, and the Asia Pacific Partnership—the vehicle for negotiating a post-2012 agreement continues to be the UNFCCC, which is set to kick off negotiations on a post-Kyoto agreement at its Conference of Parties (COP) meeting in December 2007 in Bali. However, because U.S. participation is viewed as essential to a lasting global framework for dealing with climate change, the evolution of climate policy within the United States will be of increasing interest in 2008. There are three major areas to watch:
The Bush administration’s Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change: At the Group of Eight Leaders meeting in June 2007, the United States proposed to host a series of meetings among major global emitters to discuss common objectives for reducing GHG emissions. On September 27–28, 2007, the United States hosted an inaugural meeting of the so-called major economies with the goal of agreeing upon a post–2012 framework that could include a long-term global emissions reduction goal, nationally defined mid-term goals and strategies, and sector-based approaches for improving energy security and reducing GHG emissions. There will be a series of meetings over the course of the year, with plans to conclude negotiations by the end of 2008. Administration officials have stated that the process will be complementary to the ongoing UNFCCC negotiations. The meetings do not appear to signal a departure from the administration’s long-held position against mandatory emission reduction targets and in favor of a technology-based approach to emissions reduction. Parties remain hopeful, however, that engagement in this forum will be able to bring China and India on board in a way that creates more room politically for aggressive climate action within U.S. policy circles.

U.S. congressional action: No less than 15 legislative proposals have been put forth within the 110th Congress to limit GHG emissions through a carbon tax or cap-and-trade system. Although initial pieces of legislation are quite timid in their cuts and conservative with their safety valve provisions, some pieces of bipartisan legislation advocate emissions reductions of 60 percent to 80 percent by 2050—the levels broadly accepted as necessary to stabilize the earth’s atmosphere. There is both optimism and concern that both the Senate and House Democratic leadership have promised to pass climate change legislation. On one hand, it is encouraging to see the Congress actively debating climate change issues and beginning to think about and test ideas for U.S. mitigation and adaptation plans. On the other hand, it is important that Congress not act hastily or inadvertently tie the hands of the next administration.

Presidential campaign: Presumably, it is the next administration that will ultimately decide whether the United States signs onto a post–2012 international climate change agreement and that will be responsible for implementing whatever domestic and international obligations are encompassed in that agreement. As the presidential campaigns heat up over the course of 2008, the candidates’ platforms on energy and climate change will become increasingly important not only to determining the outcome of the election (as both climate change and energy are thought to be major issues for voters in 2008) but also to shaping international opinion about how to most effectively engage the next administration on climate change negotiations.

It is highly unlikely that the world will reach agreement on the post–2012 climate change framework in 2008. Much of what happens in 2008, however, will influence what kind of an agreement can be reached in 2009—if an agreement can be reached at all. The big question for 2008 is whether the United States can muster the type of leadership and public support that the long-term fight against climate change will require, in 2009 and for many years beyond. ■
The May 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, and the international response to them, are increasingly understood as watershed events in the effort to curtail the spread of nuclear weapons. Although the tests were not catalysts for subsequent events, the period before the tests was marked by progress and optimism about prospects for containing proliferation, while the period following the tests has become more problematic. The 10-year anniversary of the South Asian nuclear explosions provides leaders with an opportunity to consider how best to reenergize flagging efforts to prevent the spread and use of nuclear weapons in the years ahead.

The 1980s and 1990s now appear as a high-water mark in efforts to contain and roll back the nuclear dangers than dominated the Cold War era. The demise of the Soviet Union and the implementation of both intermediate (INF) and long-range (START I) nuclear arms control agreements, the decisions by South Africa and, later, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to give up the nuclear weapons in their possession, the abandonment of nuclear efforts by South Korea and Taiwan, the negotiated agreement with North Korea to end its nuclear ambitions, the United Nations–led effort to end Iraq’s pre-1991 nuclear efforts, the completion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
(CTBT) in 1996, and the unequivocal commitment to disarmament by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in 2000 were all important steps in ensuring that nuclear weapons would play a less prominent role in the post–Cold War era. These moves were all signs that the opportunity offered by the end of the Cold War to reduce nuclear dangers was being taken seriously.

As the number of states possessing nuclear weapons declined, so too did the number of weapons in national arsenals. Unfortunately, the infrastructure of nuclear deterrence proved more flexible than the mind-sets that governed nuclear doctrines or that dominated how nuclear weapons were viewed internationally.

All of the momentum built in the 1980s and 1990s was lost when the long-standing effort to keep India and Pakistan from openly declaring their nuclear programs failed in 1998. While not all of the progress before 1998 would have ensured continued success in nonproliferation and counterproliferation efforts, the tests and the failed international response to them demonstrated that proliferation not only was possible but, in many cases, made sense. Isolated sanctions were applied against Pakistan and India, but fear of an economic collapse in Pakistan led the United States to quickly relax financial constraints, and the halfhearted effort to reinforce the nonproliferation norm quickly gave way to other security and economic realities. The international community’s bluff had been called, and there was little, if any, price to be paid for crossing the nuclear threshold. Now, 10 years later, India has been offered nuclear equality by the United States despite never having joined the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and Pakistan is treated as a major non-NATO ally by Washington. Both now arguably enjoy increased international status and prestige as a result of their nuclear acquisitions.

Since 1998, the nonproliferation trends have been decidedly negative. The U.S. Senate’s refusal to ratify the CTBT, the collapse of the 1994 nuclear agreement with North Korea, the maturation of Iran’s nuclear weapon ambitions, North Korea’s 2006 nuclear test, the Iraq weapons-of-mass-destruction fiasco and its lingering implications for U.S. credibility and capa-

What is required now, more than ever before, is a renewed recognition that nuclear weapons present a real and growing danger to international peace and security and that greater efforts are required to address the risks of nuclear weapons in all of their forms.
bilities, and the increasing interest in nuclear hedge programs in the Middle East and elsewhere threaten a new wave of proliferation in the decades to come. The risk that multiple nuclear states could face each other in volatile regions of the world, with festering economic, territorial, and ethnic disputes, threatens to create spirals of crisis and insecurity. The role played and prestige garnered by nuclear weapons is high and increasing, and hopes for containing their spread and preventing their use are diminishing.

Compounding these dangers is the growing risk of nuclear terrorism. Any country’s nuclear program provides a potential source of materials for nuclear terrorism. Nuclear materials in Russia and the states of the former Soviet Union suffer from inadequate security, but other states also fail to meet even basic international standards for protection of these dangerous assets. Even if only a handful of groups possess the desire and resources to carry out a nuclear attack, the widespread availability of materials and technology present an unacceptable threat, given the consequences of a nuclear terrorist event. Civil commerce in weapons-grade uranium makes the problem more real and less manageable.

To be sure, the last decade has not been devoid of good news. Libya’s decision to abandon its nuclear weapon efforts and North Korea’s decision to reengage in a negotiated settlement of its nuclear program are positive developments. The continued, if somewhat anemic, arms “reduction” process between the United States and Russia also keeps the process of negotiated reductions alive, even if the content and impact of such agreements have been reduced. The continued nuclear test moratorium among the UN Security Council’s permanent members and the three non-NPT nuclear states (India, Israel, and Pakistan) provide some hope of reinforcing the nuclear taboo in the future.

What is required now, more than ever before, is renewed recognition that nuclear weapons present a real and growing danger to international peace and security and that greater efforts are required to address the risks of nuclear weapons in all of their forms. Reducing the number of nuclear weapons in existing arsenals under strict and effective international verification must be complemented by a decision to reduce the role played by nuclear weapons in security calculations. Efforts to confront Iran’s nuclear ambitions cannot take place in a vacuum; they must be pursued with an eye to the dynamics of regional security as well as global nuclear conditions. Improving the security of all nuclear-weapon usable materials and eliminating weapon-grade uranium from civil commerce must receive as high a priority as the broader military effort to combat terrorism in all of its forms.

The 10-year anniversary of South Asia’s nuclear tests offers a point of reflection and warning. Failing to deal with the root causes of proliferation and to more aggressively reduce the role played by nuclear weapons in the immediate post-Cold War period opened the door to the nuclear tests of 1998. Failure to properly handle the aftermath of those tests demonstrated once again that the rhetorical emphasis on nonproliferation was not matched by the actions of leading states. Working now to have our actions match the strength of our words is the key to preventing the increasingly dangerous nuclear future that stretches out before us. Failure to do so all but ensures that it will come to pass.
Iraq’s refugees tell heartbreaking tales of suffering, displacement, and shattered dreams, but these refugees represent more than mere human interest stories. Collectively, the outpouring of millions of Iraqi refugees into just a few neighboring countries poses a dramatic security threat to the Middle East, and there is no sign that the threat is going away.

In the lead-up to the Iraq War, most of the U.S. government discussion about refugees assumed that refugee flows would be sudden, massive, and brief. When more than a million Kurds fled Iraq into Turkey and Iran in 1991 to avoid Saddam’s wrath, camps were set up within days. The U.S. military dropped food and supplies and provided protection for those trapped within Iraq’s borders. A few months later, the crisis was over, and refugees returned to their homes.

Iraq’s refugees now are not like the refugees then. They have fled slowly, not suddenly. They live in capital cities such as Damascus and Amman, not in open fields or encampments. And they are not peasants or
laborers who can eke out a living on meager resources; they are white-collar workers with education and training but little future in their homeland.

Iraq’s refugees show little sign of returning home, and it is no wonder why. Iraq continues to unravel, and life is especially dangerous for the cosmopolitan petit bourgeoisie whom many assumed would inherit post-Saddam Iraq. Today’s Iraq is no place for a doctor or a professor, especially one with a young family. Sectarianism plays a role as well. Perhaps half of the refugees are Sunni Arabs, a group that represents about a fifth of the Iraqi population but had been the backbone of Saddam’s regime. They see their country sliding not only into Shi’a control, but into rule by a Shi’a mob that is bent on revenge.

In many ways, however, fleeing the country provides only a brief respite. Few refugees are allowed to work in their new homes, and savings are running out. Children are sometimes barred from school, and others go to schools bursting at the seams. Health care, when it is available, is often expensive. The refugee flow has dramatically boosted housing prices, raising costs for the new émigrés but also squeezing the young and the working class in countries such as Syria and Jordan who see affordable housing sliding beyond their grasp.

The refugee flows are massive, and they are squeezed into a small number of countries. Syria alone claims to have more than 1.5 million Iraqi refugees—representing about 8 percent of its population—mostly concentrated in the Damascus area. Syria’s pan-Arab conceits meant that many new arrivals never had to show passports upon entry because they were fellow Arabs who were merely from another part of the “single Arab nation.” The Syrian economy is far from booming: foreign subsidies have dried up, the country’s small oil reserves are fast depleting, and foreign investors balk at penetrating a government bureaucracy that is slowly reforming but remains profoundly opaque. Some Iraqis maintain businesses back home while living in the safety of Damascus, but despera-
tion forces many more into prostitution and other crimes. Syria periodically raises the possibility of cutting off the refugee flow or pushing Iraqis out, but doing so would require a dramatic shift in the ruling party’s pan-Arab ideology. The government seems caught yet determined to muddle through.

Difficult as Syria’s problems are, Jordan’s are even more dire. Jordan has accepted 750,000 Iraqis, who now constitute more than 10 percent of its population. When combined with the 60 percent of Jordanians of Palestinian origin, the ruling Hashemites and their East Bank Jordanian allies have become an even smaller minority in their own country. Jordan had always been more homogenous than Syria, but the influx of hundreds of thousands of Shi’a Arabs has put an end to that.

Jordan’s problem is that it not only has to manage the influx of Iraqis, but has to do so with a crisis brewing on its western border. With the rise of Hamas in the Palestinian territories and the determination of the Fatah-led government to squelch it, instability there leaches into Jordan’s majority Palestinian community. The peril increases as U.S. policymakers and others push for deepening Jordan’s connections to the West Bank as a way of improving conditions in Palestine and supporting Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas against Palestinian hardliners. It may all work out well, but the danger is that Jordan falls prey to seething crises on its eastern and western borders.

Other countries have taken smaller numbers of Iraq’s refugees—Egypt reportedly has 100,000, which has little impact on a population of 80 million, while Lebanese worry that the few thousand they have accepted could upset the fragile sectarian balance in the country. But many countries have taken few refugees or none. It is here, perhaps, that the United States is leading by example. The United States accepts 70,000 refugees per year worldwide, and only a small fraction have been from Iraq. Post-September 11 security concerns are partly in play, but more important is a reluctance to admit the magnitude of problems in Iraq and the likely permanence of refugees’ displacement.

For too long, the Iraqi refugee problem has been seen merely as a humanitarian problem. It is that, but it is also a strategic one. Hundreds of thousands of increasingly desperate, unassimilated refugees can do dramatic things, and among them is threatening the stability of their new homes. Assimilating these populations has its own challenges, especially in essentially authoritarian systems with limited resources and existing patronage networks.

For the United States, the strategic implications of Jordanian instability are clear, so deep is the military, intelligence, and diplomatic cooperation with that country and so important is Jordan’s role in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. Instability in Syria is feared less, although it could make that country even more hostile to U.S. interests. In addition, few have contemplated the long-term impact of violent extremists mixed into these refugee populations, networked throughout the region and representing a new and virulent threat to their host societies.

No amount of money or time will make this problem go away. It is an international problem, and it will require international cooperation. More refugees will need to be absorbed outside of the Middle East, and lives will need to be put back together. There will need to be extensive screening of migrants and robust intelligence cooperation. Making all of this work will require leadership, and the United States has not led nearly as much as it needs to.
The most important event of 2008 for the future of the United States is the November presidential election. Whoever wins that race, regardless of political party, will inherit a nation weary but determined after seven years of war and hungry for a new vision for American leadership at home and abroad. Unlike many previous U.S. elections, foreign policy is likely to loom large in the 2008 campaign, and the successful candidate will be the one who offers the American people an approach that balances their desire for protection at home with a wiser internationalism that goes beyond Iraq and the war on terror.

We believe that the United States must become a smarter power by reinvesting in the global good—providing things people and governments in all quarters of the world want but cannot attain in the absence of U.S. leadership. Providing for the global good helps America reconcile its overwhelming power with the rest of the world’s interests, values, and aspirations. It is not charity. It is effective foreign policy.
Specifically, the United States should focus on five critical areas:

- **Alliances, partnerships, and institutions:** Rebuilding the foundation to deal with global challenges.
- **Global development:** Putting people first, starting with public health.
- **Public diplomacy:** Improving access to international knowledge and learning.
- **Economic integration:** Increasing the benefits of trade for all people.
- **Technology and innovation:** Mitigating against climate change and energy insecurity.

By complementing U.S. military and economic might—our hard power—with greater investments in America’s ability to influence through its attraction and inspiration—our soft power—the United States can build the framework it needs to tackle tough global challenges. We call this *smart power*.

A number of challenges exist to implementing a smart power strategy. Diplomatic tools and foreign assistance are often directed toward states, which increasingly compete for power with nonstate actors within their borders. In addition, diplomacy and foreign assistance are often underfunded and neglected, in part because of the difficulty of demonstrating their short-term impact on critical challenges. Wielding soft power is complex because many of America’s soft power resources exist in its bilateral alliances, or through its participation in multilateral institutions, or outside of government in the private sector and civil society.

Furthermore, U.S. foreign policy institutions today are fractured and compartmentalized. Civil-military coordination, where there is any, happens at a relatively low level or else at the very highest levels of government—and, no matter what level, typically in a crisis setting that impedes long-range planning. Institutional cultures are stovepiped and inhibit joint action.

More thought must be put into sequencing and integrating hard power and soft power instruments, particularly in the same operating theater. Some of this thinking is already occurring with regard to counter-insurgency, nation-building, and counterterrorism operations—tasks that depend, but only partially, on hard power. We have done this in the past, using...
hard power to help win World War II and soft power to rebuild Japan and Europe with the Marshall Plan and establish the institutions and norms that have become the core of the international system.

**EXPORTING HOPE, NOT FEAR**

Since its founding, the United States has been willing to fight for universal ideals of liberty, equality, and justice. This higher purpose, sustained by military and economic might, attracted people and governments to our side through two world wars and five decades of a cold war. Allies accepted that American interests might not always align entirely with their own, but U.S. leadership was still critical to realizing a more peaceful and prosperous world.

There have been times, however, when America’s sense of purpose has fallen out of step with the world. Since 9/11, the United States has been exporting fear and anger rather than our more traditional values of hope and optimism.

Terrorism is a real threat, one that is likely to be with us for decades, and we must stay on the offensive in countering terrorist aims abroad. On this, there is no debate. However, we must take care not to overrespond to the provocations of extremists such that we do more damage to ourselves than the terrorists ever could.

Success in battling terrorism and restoring America’s greatness depends on finding a new central premise for U.S. foreign policy to replace the war on terror. A U.S. commitment to providing for the global good—a commitment derived from American values and also supporting our interests and making us safer—should be America’s narrative in the twenty-first century.

The next president of the United States will have a moment of opportunity in early 2009 to offer a vision of a smarter, more secure America, one that can rediscover its greatness as a source of inspiring ideas and practical solutions for people in all corners of the world. The world will be listening, and the next president’s words and actions will surely shape the global forecast for 2009 and beyond.
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