



AFTERWORD

ELECTION '08

SMART POWER '09

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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 counterinsurgency, 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. ■