

Capacity and Resolve

FOREIGN ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER



Editor
Craig S. Cohen

Foreword
John J. Hamre

Authors
Jon B. Alterman
Ernest Z. Bower
Victor D. Cha
Heather A. Conley
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Center for Strategic and International Studies
1800 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006
Tel: (202) 887-0200
Fax: (202) 775-3199
Web: www.csis.org



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FOREWORD

John J. Hamre

Five years ago, CSIS launched a Commission on Smart Power to propose an optimistic vision for revitalizing U.S. global leadership. The perception at the time was that the United States had turned an angry face to the world, lost its moral authority, and relied too heavily on hard military power.

This perception began to change in the closing years of the Bush administration and with the changeover to the Obama team, but the ensuing economic crisis exposed two great structural challenges facing the United States. First, in a globalized world, vectors of prosperity quickly become vectors of insecurity. And, second, the center of gravity in world affairs is shifting to Asia.

During the past two years we have heard a steady chorus predicting, and in some places celebrating, America's decline. I never believed this for a simple reason. Every serious problem in the world still requires American involvement. But the chorus keeps singing, and it has started to shape people's perceptions at home and abroad.

At the time of this writing, the United States has weathered the near-term dangers of the economic crisis, but the long-term prognosis for America's fiscal health and subsequently our forward presence around the world remains in some question. The feeling is that if we cannot get our own house in order we have no business leading on the world stage.

How the rest of the world sees the continuing capacity and relevance of U.S. leadership is at the heart of this excellent volume. The specific question under investigation is how certain pivotal countries view U.S. power at this moment in time. Debates about U.S. primacy and decline tend to be inward looking and academic in nature. And yet the decisions our allies and adversaries make depend in part on their assessments of the trajectory of American power. Foreign assessments have real-world implications for U.S. policy.

My view of how the international system has changed in the past in response to global trends and challenges shapes what I see happening now. In order to place the country assessments that follow in context and to try to understand their significance, I would like to outline some thoughts along these lines and suggest what it may mean for the stability and durability of the current international system over the next decade.

We have had only three truly global international systems in human history. The first was the international system that developed between the years 1648 and 1945. Before that time, there were only regional powers and regional systems. This era saw the emergence of the first truly global international system. It was centered in Europe and based on empires. The modality of operation of this international system was a shifting balance of power among competing nation-states.

This first international system was unstable. Peaceful equilibrium broke down frequently into conflict. But it proved to be a highly durable international system, lasting nearly 300 years. This epoch was brought to an end by World War II, which effectively broke the back of the great European empires. The collapse of the empires started after World War I, but World War II brought it to a crashing conclusion.

The second epoch—which for lack of a better term we will label the Cold War era—began in the years 1946–1948 and lasted until 1989–1990, when the Berlin Wall collapsed, the Warsaw Pact collapsed, and the Soviet Union finally dissolved. This epoch was characterized by a static competition between two great blocks divided fundamentally on the ideas of how man, society, and the state should be organized. It was more of an ideological competition than it was a resource competition.

The Cold War period was relatively stable. There were numerous conflicts as former colonies struggled into independence, and there were proxy conflicts where the two superpowers invested interest and resources in opposing paladins. But the two great superpowers—the Soviet Union and the United States—avoided direct conflict with each other, largely because of fear that conflict would lead to an uncontrollable escalation that would ultimately result in nuclear warfare. So this international system was largely stable. But it was not durable, largely because the Soviet Union could not sustain its domestic power base and hold together an alliance.

We are now entering the third decade of a new international system—let me call it the post-Cold War era. This international system is unique in that it comprises a single global superpower—the United States—but with a number of regional powers, several of which operate beyond the boundaries of their regions.

Brazil is South America's indisputable power. India dominates South Asia. In Europe we see for the first time the emergence of the supranational state of the European Union—an economic superpower to be sure, but not yet a diplomatic or military superpower. But this will emerge. Europe also has the phenomenon of Russia—a remaining military superpower (largely because of nuclear weapons), but not an economic superpower.

In West Asia there is an uneasy balance among Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and a rising Turkey. In East Asia we have two superpowers—China and Japan. Both are now economic superpowers, and China is certainly a military superpower. Japan's military alliance with the United States rounds out its economic power base although it is still recovering from the terrible recent events following the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear spillage.

For this third international epoch, I pose the same questions we asked of the earlier epochs. Is this a stable international system—that is, will it be prone to resolve differences among the power centers through peaceful means or violent means—and is it a durable system?

First, on the question of stability, I believe that a careful analysis will reveal it is an inherently stable system. The global superpower has no incentive to enter conflict with a regional superpower because, although it might win that military exchange, it would sap all its energies doing so and permit other regional superpowers to fill the vacuum. No regional superpower would conceivably find it advantageous to go to war with the global superpower.

And except for a few significant instances—East Asia is certainly one—there is little basis for regional superpowers to come into conflict with each other. It is not conceivable that the South

American superpower would come into conflict with the East Asian superpowers, for example, in ways that would lead to military conflict.

We should spend a minute, though, examining the geostrategic situation of both East Asia and the Middle East, as these regions present a higher chance for significant conflict.

In East Asia there certainly is opportunity for conflict. North Korea's sinking of the South Korean patrol craft *Cheonan* in March 2010 reminds us that the political situation on the Korean Peninsula is unresolved. North Korea's actions have, in a sense, strengthened the political divisions of East Asia along traditional Cold War lines. This will likely be the situation for several years to come.

In recent years cross-strait tensions have abated. While miscalculation could indeed lead to violence, I personally think this is not likely to happen. The primary trajectory set more than 30 years ago—with Taipei and Beijing finding a peaceful way to resolve their political differences together—seems to again be on track and in everyone's interests.

In recent years, there has been increasing tension between American and Chinese naval forces in the South China Sea. China considers this area to be analogous to the Caribbean Sea. America has always had a special interest in political developments in the Caribbean region even though it comprises independent sovereign states in international waters. China thinks of the South China Sea in a similar way.

America sees the South China Sea as purely international waters for which America provides a useful stabilizing military presence. This difference is significant and could be problematic in years to come. One cannot rule out accidents or miscalculations, and we know that in geopolitics small incidents can cause consequential ripples. But a rational calculus would suggest to me that there is little reason why China or the United States would choose to go to war with each other to resolve this or other political differences.

There was a time a few years back when tensions were rising (worryingly) between Japan and China over Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. It reminds us that Asia's painful history remains fresh in people's memories. But it does not seem likely that a government led by either the Democratic Party of Japan or the Liberal Democratic Party will repeat this activity any time soon.

In the Middle East, we have seen a growing "populism contagion" that is reshaping the region. The political landscape has been frozen for more than three decades, so when the earth suddenly moved, the political changes were massive and profound. It is too early to know at the time of this writing how durable these uprisings will be, but on one level it is a familiar picture. Popular revolts in one country trigger a broader upwelling of unhappiness with the legitimacy of government in other countries. While the phenomenon is familiar, its spread to other countries is accelerated by modern communication tools under the general umbrella term "social networking." This is a uniquely modern occurrence.

The United States again finds itself walking a fine line. Publicly, we support the calls of citizens for more representative government wherever they occur. Our "national DNA" causes us to turn a sympathetic eye to citizens who call for more accountable and effective government. But, as during the Cold War, we temper our historic bias toward democracy with an overarching need for stability during times of crisis.

What does this mean for the geostrategic picture of the region? It is difficult to say at this early stage. Turkey and Iran remain natural powers on account of their size, geography, and historic role, while Israel commands a unique military capability in the region. Turkey remains an important ally, but it sees the world through a different prism than during the Cold War when it anchored NATO's southeastern flank. We continue to see Iran behaving in dangerous ways, even as talk of a U.S.-led military strike wanes.

Neither Iran nor Turkey seems the clear beneficiary of the current unrest. To date, the protests in Egypt or Tunisia have not exhibited a strong religious quality although commentaries left and right worry about "Islamic fundamentalism" gaining control of new countries. This does not look like the Islamic revolution we saw in Iran in 1979. In fact, what might emerge in a country like Egypt may look more like Turkey where the military, Islamist, and progressive forces all reach accommodation, even if at times this is unsteady.

What is particularly interesting is that Turkey's new policy of "zero problems toward its neighbors" has actually brought it closer with Iran in recent years. This raises the possibility of a new regional alignment given the two countries' common economic interests and strained relations with the West. I gauge this to be unlikely, as such a development would have to overcome major hurdles, but it could prove difficult to U.S. interests in Iraq and Afghanistan, with regard to Israel, and on energy.

What we see, even at a time of such turbulence, is a continuing role for the United States in the region. These uprisings have not been about us—for the first time in decades, Arab populations feel genuine pride in their own accomplishments. But neither are they aimed at driving out American influence. The most important decisions are surely still in front of us, but there is nothing to indicate to me that the U.S.-led order in the Middle East is likely to fundamentally erode any time soon, even if countries go through the painful process of opening political space.

So, on balance, I conclude that this international system, in the abstract, is stable. And although there are certainly hot spots in East Asia and Southwest Asia that could devolve into significant violence, I personally judge these possibilities to be remote.

So we turn to the second question. Is this a durable international system? Here our judgment is understandably affected by the current bitter experience of the global recession. America has been diminished during this recession, as has Europe. China, India, and Brazil have weathered it well and seem on a trajectory of growth again. The United States is also still entangled in debilitating wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which has caused considerable strain on its military establishment.

Acknowledging all this, I think it is still quite likely that America will remain a global superpower for decades to come. First, its demographic base is still growing (albeit slowly). In the next two decades, Europe's and Russia's demographic foundations will decline and China's will plateau. India's population base will continue to rise, but ironically that is also perpetuating its poverty.

Second, the United States retains an astounding foundation of intellectual talent and idea generation that is actually improving during this recession. America's universities remain strong, and research and development spending (the highest in the world) is still increasing as a percentage of GNP. It is widely felt in America that during this time of recession, we should spend more on research and development, not less.

Third, while America's military is badly strained after almost ten years of warfare, it is still a formidable force. America puts more military ships to sea every day than the rest of the world's

navies combined. It now has an officer corps that has fought a clever enemy for nearly a decade's time. We have never had such a fine officer corps in our history. We have pioneered remarkable new collaborative mechanisms between the intelligence community and the military establishment. And although we are entering a period when the public will demand reduced federal spending, defense expenditures total only 3.5 percent of GDP, and there is a robust consensus to sustain roughly this level of force indefinitely.

I relay all this to say that America is likely to retain its fundamental foundation for hard power for at least the next two to three decades. Certainly America's "soft power" was eroded because of the way we responded in anger and fear after 9/11. But President Obama has substantially corrected this perception.

America's leading role as the global superpower is likely to remain, but the regional superpowers in the world are gaining strength. So America's relative dominance will decline. This is inevitable. And because I think this is largely a stable international system, a more prosperous world in general is a good thing for America's specific national interests.

Several key questions, however, remain unsolved and merit discussion. First, how should we institutionalize this international system? The current international structures reflect the power balance that emerged after World War II. The UN Security Council has five permanent members—three of which are European (counting Russia as a European state). Three regional superpowers—India, Brazil, and Japan—are not permanent members and in my mind should be. Yet it seems impossible to structure a reform effort.

The Group of Eight appears to be waning, with the Group of 20 rising to replace it. While the G-20 has the advantage of being more representative of economic and demographic power, it is an unwieldy size and currently has plausibility only on economic matters. It is hard to see how the G-20 would have anything meaningful to say or do on security questions.

Second, we have an uneven basis of interest or commitment to maintain the current international system. I think it is the dominant perception in America that China is prepared to operate within the current international system but not take ownership of it or responsibility for sustaining it. Rising India clearly feels that the current international system is skewed toward the Euro-Atlantic community. Regional superpowers to varying degrees feel the current international system largely rewards America's dominance.

Yet I do not see a great ideological challenge to the current international order. President Chavez in Venezuela, for example, has quite vocally challenged the international system that he believes is skewed by American values and interests. But I don't see a wide or influential following to his philosophy. So there is no great philosophical divide in the world over how to organize the international system and around what values. Yet America is increasingly fatigued by its role as lead manager of the current international system and is increasingly ambivalent about the current international institutions. How will a commitment to sustain or amend this international system arise? And what alternatives are there to it?

My perspective on our current international system has grown out of years of travel overseas and ongoing conversations I continue to have with a wide variety of stakeholders. My perspective has benefited greatly from the in-depth and insightful country studies found in this volume. We are living in a remarkable period where the entire international system is potentially at an inflection point. The way other countries perceive American power today will shape the order that emerges in the years ahead.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study looks at foreign assessments of U.S. power over the next ten years, the primary drivers of such views, and the implications of these assessments for sustained U.S. leadership in the coming era.

Most see the United States in decline relative to rising powers like China but do not see a fundamentally new order emerging in the next decade. Foreign expectations of U.S. power remain great. Over the long term, the main worry is not U.S. capacity, but U.S. resolve and competency.

- In Asia, this study examines Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, and Indian views of U.S. power. The United States is in a strong position in Asia although this is not assured. Countries are watching carefully the U.S. capacity for economic regeneration and Washington's enduring commitment to the region. Regional demands on U.S. power are only likely to increase during this period of increasing limitations and constraints.
- In the Middle East, this study looked at Israeli and Gulf views of U.S. power. The study finds that a powerful United States that deemphasizes the region could cause profound realignment, but a diminished United States committed to the region could shape order for decades to come. It is too early to know whether Washington's management of the Arab Spring, NATO's engagement in Libya, or the Israel-Palestinian conflict will dislodge Iraq and Iran as the main tests of U.S. power.
- In Eurasia, this study looked at Russian, Turkish, and German views of U.S. power. The alliance politics of the Cold War are clearly over. Germans and Turks have diminished faith in U.S. leadership. They do not deny U.S. capabilities, but they are more willing to challenge U.S. policy, which they view as misaligned with national objectives. Russians have tempered their pessimistic views of U.S. power and look more cautiously now at multipolarity. In Eurasia, U.S. policy is seen as the critical independent variable.

Few consulted for this study saw great likelihood in regional powers bandwagoning successfully against the United States in the next decade or a single regional power confronting the United States in a "Suez moment" in which U.S. power is shown to be lacking. China and Iran create their own antibodies, which push neighbors closer into Washington's orbit.

The risks to the U.S. position associated with the rise of regional powers may thus be somewhat overstated. Similarly, few believed nonstate actors had the potential to erode U.S. primacy on their own in the next decade.

Recent events demonstrate, however, that the current order is not static or easily managed. Despite this turbulence, the world is still largely welcoming of U.S. leadership. It expects it, and it is afraid to lose it. The greatest challenge may thus come not from external forces, but from a divided, insular, less confident United States.



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On January 21, 2011, CSIS hosted a 50-person, day-long workshop entitled "Perceptions of U.S. Primacy: Drivers and Implications." The workshop included current and former senior U.S. government officials. CSIS owes significant gratitude to NIC chairman Christopher Kojm for introducing the workshop, former deputy director and former acting director of the CIA John McLaughlin for providing an excellent keynote talk, and *New York Times* columnist David Brooks and *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius for leading a fascinating lunchtime discussion. Insights from the workshop are found throughout the country studies and the introduction.

We owe thanks as well to the CSIS regional scholars who contributed chapters to this volume and did the bulk of the work: Bonnie Glaser, Michael Green, Victor Cha, Ernest Bower, Teresita Schaffer, Jon Alterman, Haim Malka, Stephen Flanagan, Heather Conley, and Andrew Kuchins. The depth of their experience and soundness of their judgment make this volume what it is. Thanks also to CSIS scholars James Lewis, who heads our Technology and Public Policy Program, and Maren Leed, who runs the New Defense Approaches Project, both of whom provided consistently wise advice from start to finish. This volume benefited greatly from the publication expertise of James Dunton and editorial assistance of Mary Marik, and overall leadership of Andrew Schwartz who runs CSIS's external relations department. Thanks also to Josie Gabel, John Schaus, and Sarah Guthrie for help in countless ways.

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INTRODUCTION

Craig S. Cohen

Perceptions matter. When Washington acts—whether to bolster an ally, eliminate a safe haven, or remove a terrorist leader or dictator—the stakes are high. The fruits of success or pains of failure are not limited to a single policy objective. With the United States, there is always a demonstration effect, a global reverberation that shapes views of American power abroad. This phenomenon is not limited to U.S. engagement overseas. Other nations watch U.S. domestic politics almost as closely as they watch their own.

The rest of the world knows that the United States is entering a period of intense fiscal pressure. Even defense spending has entered a period of greater scrutiny. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates remarked in Abilene, Kansas, in 2010, “the gusher has been turned off,” not to be turned on again for some time.¹ U.S. technological leadership may be assured for the near future, but there is an increasing feeling that the scientific foundation critical to U.S. economic and national security is eroding at a time when that of other nations is gaining strength.²

How the world interprets this new period has the potential to affect U.S. relations and standing in the world for decades to come. If other nations anticipate that U.S. power will be constrained in coming years, a new and potentially more dangerous strategic landscape could emerge for the United States. For example, if regional powers judge the United States to be weakened, they will be less willing to compromise on issues of importance to Washington. Similarly, there could be serious consequences to the United States if long-standing allies in Europe, Asia, or the Middle East begin to question America’s security guarantees or if they judge Washington to be unable or unwilling to solve regional or global problems.³

This volume looks at how tightening budgets and other key influencers on U.S. power could damage U.S. interests in the years ahead. How do foreigners perceive the likely trajectory of U.S. power over the next ten years, and what are their primary reasons for such views? The ten chapters that follow focus on how changes in thinking about the United States today could lead to changes in foreign behavior tomorrow in three critical regions. Given these changes, do we have the insight

1. Robert M. Gates (speech at Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas, May 8, 2010).

2. The most comprehensive argument to this effect remains Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century and Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, *Rising above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future* (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2007).

3. Brent Scowcroft discusses these possibilities in “Foreign Policy in an Age of Austerity: A Conversation with Brent Scowcroft,” *American Interest* 5, no. 3 (January–February 2010).

and skill to use our military, diplomatic, and economic capabilities to manage this turbulent period? How can Washington credibly signal strength in a time of greater austerity?⁴

Writing about foreign assessments of U.S. power is a difficult exercise given Washington's global reach and the constant challenge of determining the significance of events to others. At the time of this writing, NATO planes are bombing Libya. Uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria continue at various stages of success. The Middle East peace process looks stalled. Japan is reeling from March's tsunami, still struggling to contain the nuclear radiation from its damaged reactors. European allies are financially weakened, and powers like China are on the rise. Despite the killing of Osama bin Laden, the Taliban and al Qaeda fight on, prolonging the U.S. commitment in Afghanistan. Washington teetered for months on the verge of a government shutdown, seemingly unable to reconcile necessary long-term austerity measures with near-term politics. For those looking for tests of U.S. capacity and resolve, one need not search far and wide.

In fact, the United States has been engaged in a robust debate since the end of the Cold War on the limits and uses of U.S. power.⁵ The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the preeminent power, but it strangely was also a time of deep worry about U.S. decline.⁶ By the late 1990s, the nature of the current order had begun to take shape. The National Intelligence Council's first Global Trends report, issued in 1996 to forecast trends up to 2010, is illustrative of this period; it concluded that between 1996 and 2010 "no country, no ideology, and no movement will emerge on a global scale to threaten U.S. interests or to build and sustain an anti-Western coalition."⁷ As the 1990s continued and the United States began to be perceived as the lone superpower, America attracted antibodies that were difficult at first to detect.

The Bush administration took office debating what to do with American primacy. U.S. allies were concerned that the United States would become less engaged globally, ironic considering the image of U.S. "hyperpower" that would come to dominate.⁸ Al Qaeda's attacks on September 11, 2001, fundamentally changed the equation. America's response to these attacks—including the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the global war on terror—threw in sharp relief the unipolarity of the current system and intensified the debate over U.S. power. At first, the quick toppling of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein's regime in the face of international opposition led to a rush of triumphalism and belief in America's unfettered empire.⁹ This quickly receded as Iraqis responded to the U.S. intervention with a violent insurgency.

4. There are many recent efforts inside and outside of government looking at the implications of the financial crisis on U.S. power and international order, including the symposium at Princeton's Center for International Security Studies in May 2010 and a workshop hosted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in October 2009, among numerous others.

5. For a first-rate historical look at this recent period, see Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008).

6. Charles Krauthammer saw U.S. preeminence more clearly than most in "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (Winter 1990–1991).

7. See National Intelligence Council (NIC), *Global Trends 2010*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: NIC, November 1997). This report stands in contrast with NIC, *Mapping the Global Future: Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project* (Washington, D.C.: NIC, 2004), which predicted coming multipolarity.

8. French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine used this term to refer to a United States "dominant in all categories" and less interested in multilateralism.

9. Niall Ferguson captured this sentiment with *Colossus: the Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

The war in Iraq became a turning point in how the world saw the United States.¹⁰ The run-up to the war left allies with the impression that the United States would not be bound by rules it created. The execution of the postwar period made enemies aware of the susceptibility of American military power to asymmetric threats. The pictures emerging from Abu Ghraib damaged Washington's moral authority that had been built up over decades. The intensity of focus on Iraq left other parts of the world feeling neglected or else free to act without American concert.¹¹ And yet, efforts to gauge global attitudes toward the United States prior to the surge in Iraq in 2007 when things were at their darkest demonstrated that much of the world viewed U.S. power through their regional interests rather than through the lens of Iraq.¹²

Today, the burden to define and demonstrate American leadership remains great because it appears so frequently in question. It is common to hear from policy, academic, and media that the United States is overextended abroad and indebted at home and that U.S. primacy is receding as we move toward a multipolar world. In absolute terms, the evidence is mixed.¹³ Understandably, President Obama rejects this narrative, arguing frequently that the U.S. economy, military, and diplomacy as well as the ideational power of the American dream remain unmatched globally.¹⁴ Few politicians want to be associated with managing U.S. decline. To accept this fate risks charges of defeatism: forecasting U.S. decline tends to be characterized by opponents as a self-fulfilling prophecy.¹⁵

Members of the Obama administration came to power believing the biggest problem they faced was this idea that the United States was no longer leading internationally.¹⁶ James Steinberg, the first deputy secretary of state in the Obama administration, said, "Our credibility and leadership were shot, either because we were too unilateral or we weren't dealing with what we needed to deal with."¹⁷ Obama's team has actively sought to counter this idea, stressing its "different

10. Aaron L. Friedberg makes this argument in "Same Old Songs: What the Declinists (and Triumphalists) Miss," *American Interest* 5, no. 2 (November–December 2009).

11. A review of polling during the Bush years supports these claims.

12. This was demonstrated by CSIS's Commission on Smart Power, cochaired by Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye (2007). CSIS regional scholars conducted analyses of U.S. standing around the world, drawing on quantitative and qualitative sources. For an additional reading on U.S. power and influence in the middle of the last decade, see Stanley R. Sloan, Robert G. Sutter, and Casimir A. Yost, *The Use of U.S. Power: Implications for U.S. Interests* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 2004).

13. Charles Wolf Jr., "The Facts about American 'Decline,'" *Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 2011.

14. One recent example is Barack Obama (State of the Union address, "Winning the Future," January 25, 2011).

15. See Eric S. Edelman, *Understanding America's Contested Primacy* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010), www.csbaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/2010.10.21-Understanding-Americas-Contested-Supremacy.pdf, for an interesting discussion of this and the robustness of the "decline" debate writ large.

16. According to most of the major polls, global views of the United States improved after the election of Barack Obama and have continued on a positive trend. For one uniquely thoughtful analysis, see *U.S. Standing in the World: Causes, Consequences, and the Future: Long Report of the Task Force on U.S. Standing in World Affairs* (American Political Science Association, September 2009), www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/APSA_TF_USStanding_Long_Report.pdf.

17. Quoted in Elise Labott's "Can Clinton Remake U.S. Diplomacy?" CNN Politics, February 16, 2011, www.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/02/16/clinton.sweep/index.html?iref=allsearch.

conception of U.S. leadership . . . [that] leadership should galvanize an international response, not rely on a unilateral U.S. response.”¹⁸ Critics have dubbed this “leading from behind.”¹⁹

The extraordinary events in the Middle East in 2011 have only reenergized this debate on the character, capacity, and limitations of American leadership. Both parties have tried over the past two decades to use the fear of U.S. decline to argue for their own distinct policy preferences. There is historical precedent to this. Political leaders made similar arguments after Sputnik’s launch and during Japan’s economic success of the 1980s. Nothing sparks national ambition like the fear of falling behind. In this way, the United States is not facing anything new. But as former secretary of state Colin Powell has said, it is unprecedented that “a developing nation is now the financier of the richest nation on earth. That doesn’t mean we’re in decline, but it’s probably not a good thing either.”²⁰ At such a unique and dynamic time, it is important to critically reexamine how we understand and anticipate events abroad, including the trajectory of certain key countries and their views and expectations of U.S. power.

Methodology

CSIS scholars conducted research for this study primarily during the second half of 2010 and concluded writing their chapters in early 2011. Current and former senior U.S. officials discussed scholars’ initial findings at a workshop in Washington in late January 2011. Discussion focused on how certain key allies and competitors see the trajectory of U.S. power in the coming decade.

Historically, state power has been measured by such criteria as size and territory, natural resources, economic strength, military force, and social stability.²¹ The traditional indicators of state power have thus been gross domestic product, population size, and defense spending. These are aggregate measures that provide some comparative basis, but they also fail to capture the full range of dimensions that determine a country’s power. How, for instance, to account for a country’s investments in research and development, decisionmaking ability, and “soft” or attractive power that proved so important for the United States during the Cold War? There is no broad consensus on a single framework for understanding and assessing state power.²² Some have even argued that the very nature of power has changed in today’s world.²³

Furthermore, the value of any objective assessment of state power is inherently limited. Leaders make decisions based in part on their perceptions of how power compares between countries. These perceptions may be shaped by objective measures, but they are also undoubtedly shaped—

18. Quoted in Scott Wilson’s “On Libya, Obama Willing to Let Allies Take the Lead,” *Washington Post*, March 10, 2011, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/09/AR2011030905672.html.

19. Charles Krauthammer, “The Obama Doctrine: Leading from Behind,” *Washington Post*, April 28, 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-obama-doctrine-leading-from-behind/2011/04/28/AFBCy18E_story.html

20. See “A Conversation with Colin Powell,” *American Interest* 5, no. 4 (March–April 2010).

21. Joseph S. Nye Jr. has an excellent discussion of state power in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

22. Two RAND reports are particularly useful for drawing this conclusion: Ashley J. Tellis, Janice Bially, Christopher Layne, and Melissa McPherson, *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2000); and Gregory F. Treverton and Seth G. Jones, *Measuring National Power* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2005).

23. See Anne-Marie Slaughter’s “America’s Edge: Power in the Networked Century,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 1 (January–February 2009).

rightly or wrongly—by historical legacies, by their own national politics and interests, and by which dimensions of power they and their countrymen value and which they do not. Leaders have different methods for assessing power, often predicated on views of their own national strengths. Chinese, for instance, measure “comprehensive national power,” while Indians prioritize the ability to convert innovation to productive capacity. Israelis view multilateralism as weakness, while Germany’s history makes it uncomfortable discussing concepts of national power. Domestic politics abroad are inextricably linked to views of U.S. power.²⁴

Although this volume is based on foreign perceptions, it is not a polling effort. Plenty of good polling already exists and provides a valuable picture of how the United States is perceived abroad today and over time,²⁵ and much of this analysis has been incorporated into country-level analysis in individual chapters. Instead, this study is meant to investigate in greater depth how foreign stakeholders assess U.S. power in all its dimensions—its relative strength or weakness as well as its character—and what its trajectory over the next decade is likely to be.

To conduct research for this effort, CSIS regional experts relied most heavily on interviews with a broad spectrum of foreign stakeholders, focused primarily on elites. As with mass polling, official government statements in some instances proved to be instructive, but because this study relied entirely on open source information, there were limits to knowing official foreign government views. Furthermore, recent events in the Middle East have reinforced the importance of tracking events and perceptions outside traditional corridors of power, and the chapter authors made efforts to reach beyond “elites” in the traditional sense of that word.

The countries studied in this volume were chosen on the basis of three main criteria. First, we were interested in states important to U.S. interests, their region, and international security. Second, we looked at states whose relations with Washington might be prone to change over the next decade. Excluded were countries currently hosting large-scale U.S. military operations, both because of the level of U.S. government focus already on these countries and also because of the potential distortion effect of a massive influx of resources from Washington. Finally, we looked for countries that could be clustered to permit regional analysis. Certainly there are countries such as Brazil that are regional powers with reach outside their regions that ought to be included in any future study.

The report focuses on three primary geographic groupings: an Asia group made up of chapters on China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, and India; a Middle East group that comprises a Persian Gulf chapter encompassing Iran and three Gulf Arab states—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait—as well as a chapter on Israel; and finally, a Eurasia group comprising chapters on Russia, Turkey, and Germany. When there were important connections between countries in different groupings—such as for Turkey—chapter authors sought to bring in this cross-regional perspective.

Three main questions drove the country studies. First, how are foreign views of U.S. power changing? Second, what are the main drivers of these shifts? And third, what are the main implications for the United States? Rarely was there a consensus view within a country on the answers to any of these questions. Chapter authors provided their best judgment without losing sight of the inevitable diversity of views on a topic as complex as the nature and significance of U.S. power.

24. The country studies in this volume discuss which dimensions of state power each country’s elites prioritize and which they do not.

25. The leading example continues to be the Pew Global Attitudes project, <http://pewglobal.org/>.

Findings

What will readers find in this volume? Although most foreigners see the United States in decline relative to rising powers like China, there is significant variance between and within regions in how they judge the significance of this phenomenon. Most do not see a fundamentally new order emerging during the next decade. In fact, foreign expectations of U.S. power remain great indeed. Over the long term, the main worry is not U.S. capacity, but U.S. resolve and competence.

Asia

In Asia, Koreans and Indians are most confident in American leadership in the face of a more assertive China. Those in Japan and Indonesia see the United States losing ground to China but don't believe this will fundamentally upset the current order. Chinese are less certain if the current order will hold. They believe a multipolar world is emerging, although there is no coherent view on the speed of this shift. Koreans, Japanese, and Indonesians all raised serious concerns about America's enduring commitment to the region.

Where do these views of American power come from? In Asia, the main drivers of perceptions were largely tied to America's capacity for economic regeneration. Those who believe in U.S. innovation and productive capacity are most optimistic about the future role of the United States. There is no denying, however, the pull of China's economy in the region. Economic dependency worries those uncertain of China's trajectory, even as America's forward military presence tempers this worry for now.

What do these findings mean for U.S. policy over the next decade? The good news in Asia is that China's neighbors are committed to U.S. primacy. The catch is that demands on U.S. power are only likely to increase during this period. The key question Washington faces is how to credibly signal strength in a time of austerity without overplaying its hand. Asians outside China saw Secretary of State Clinton striking just the right note at the ASEAN meeting in Hanoi in July 2010 when the secretary spoke out on freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.²⁶

The United States currently finds itself in a strong position in Asia. There are risks to this position, though. The following events could fundamentally change this calculus: if China returns to its charm offensive and regains influence in the region; if North Korea implodes; if new leadership in Washington at the Departments of State and Defense deemphasize Asia; if U.S. resources are constrained to the point that the U.S. forward presence in the region is weakened; if the United States cannot develop a regional trade and economic strategy, particularly for Southeast Asia; if Afghanistan and Pakistan deteriorate further, owing to either U.S. action or inaction; or if the erosion of Japan's capacity post-tsunami leads to a significantly diminished ally in the region. Some of these events are within U.S. control and some are not. No single item on the above list would have great effect, but the convergence of four or five could be significant.

26. See Jay Solomon's "U.S. Takes on Maritime Spats," *Wall Street Journal*, July 24, 2010, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703294904575384561458251130.html>, for a discussion of Secretary Clinton's speech.

Middle East

This study finds that citizens of countries of the Middle East are more apt to expect a weakened United States over the next decade. But there is also still a sense that the United States is the only actor with the ability to play the role of external guarantor of security for the region. It is the Israelis who question America's will most sharply, as they believe that U.S. power plays an existential rather than merely a utilitarian role in their country's future.

Until the current uprisings, Middle Eastern views of U.S. power were still largely tied to Iraq and Iran: how the United States struggled to shape Iraq's future over the past decade, and whether the United States would be willing to deter Iran's regional ambitions over the next. While Iran will likely remain the single greatest test of U.S. power in the region, it will be important to see whether the way Washington manages the "Arab spring," the Middle East peace process, and NATO's military engagement in Libya will eventually weigh more heavily than memories of Iraq or fears of Iran.

Iran sees U.S. influence in the region in decline and continues to look for opportunities to exploit this. It is too early to know the extent to which the uprisings may provide opportunity for Iran to exert influence as well as the extent to which the protests are potentially destabilizing to Tehran's clerical regime. Although Arab governments' concerns about Iran remain quite high, public perceptions of the Iranian threat are low by comparison. To the extent the uprisings produce more democratic governments, this development might eventually alter regional threat perceptions in ways that could favor the United States or, in some circumstances, engender greater suspicion of American power.

Elites in the Middle East believe that demonstrations of U.S. commitment remain the critical factor. When President Obama explained the March bombing of Libya from the Oval Office by stating, "So for those who doubted our capacity to carry out this operation, I want to be clear: the United States of America has done what we said we would do," he was speaking directly to those in the region who have diminished expectations of U.S. power and are distrustful of Washington's willingness to use its power for objectives the region prioritizes. Middle Easterners believe that a powerful United States that deemphasizes the region could cause profound realignment. In contrast, a diminished United States committed to the region could still shape order for decades to come.

Eurasia

In Eurasia, the alliance politics of the Cold War are clearly over. Germans and Turks have diminished faith in U.S. power. There is no denying U.S. capabilities, but Turks find them misaligned with Turkish interests and decreasing relative to Turkey's rise. Germans anticipate a decade of U.S. decline vis-à-vis China and are ambivalent about U.S. leadership, particularly on economics but increasingly on peace and security issues as well. Russians have tempered their views of U.S. power since Putin's famous 2007 speech in Munich in which he welcomed the coming of a multipolar world.²⁷ Russians look more cautiously now at multipolarity.

27. See Oliver Rolof, "A Breeze of Cold War," Munich Security Conference, n.d., for a summary of the Putin's speech, www.securityconference.de/Putin-s-speech.381.0.html?&L=1.

In Eurasia, U.S. policy is seen as the critical independent variable. The Russian reset has had a positive effect. Turks remain skeptical of U.S. policy toward Iran and the Middle East. Germans question their role as a U.S. ally. The economic crisis seemed to influence Russian and German views of American power in opposite directions, drawing Russians closer and pushing Germans further away. Turks see the United States unable to accept a world where rising powers have a say in regional and global affairs. In Eurasia, Russia, Turkey, and Germany are all quite willing to challenge U.S. policy. And, although there is a fair amount of cooperation with the United States, there is uncertainty over the durability of this cooperation over the next decade.

Conclusion

These findings offer a very brief snapshot of the rich analysis that is to be found in the subsequent chapters. Readers may be surprised to find very little in this volume on the threat posed by al Qaeda and affiliated groups, although this remains of massive daily concern throughout the U.S. government. Despite the shift in rhetoric away from the war on terror, the Obama administration is still massively engaged in stopping this threat, as the recent bold action against Osama bin Laden has made clear. Military and civilian agencies remain mobilized for large-scale stability operations in Afghanistan and maintain a large footprint in Iraq. Counterterrorism assistance to uncertain allies like Pakistan and Yemen continues at high levels. In addition to the places we hear about every day in the news, a network of partnerships has been built by the United States in lesser-known countries to eliminate safe havens and secure allies in the fight against violent Islamist extremism. It is undeniable that relatively weak nonstate actors have had great effect on the actions of a great power like the United States. It is worth noting, however, that few of the foreigners consulted for this study believed these groups have the potential on their own to erode U.S. primacy. To these observers, this may be the age of asymmetry, but conventional means of power are still dominant.

Similarly, the risks to the current order associated with the rise of regional powers may be overstated, despite all the hand-wringing that goes on when countries deviate from traditional patterns. Power is certainly shifting toward regional powers that will likely defer less to the United States in the years ahead. But few consulted for this study see great likelihood of powers bandwagoning successfully against the United States or a single regional power confronting the United States in a “Suez moment” in which U.S. power is shown to be lacking. The main future competitors to the current order—China in Asia and Iran in the Gulf—create their own antibodies in their regions, which push neighbors closer into Washington’s orbit.

This is not to say that the current order will be static or easily managed. Recent events in the Middle East come quickly to mind. Movement in the direction of multipolarity is bound to be messy. The challenge facing the United States may just be to avoid allowing the “messiness” to devolve into “nastiness”—in other words, to keep any of the current onset of problems from spinning out of control. What this volume will show is that the world is still welcoming of U.S. leadership. It expects it, and it is afraid to lose it. In this context, the greatest challenge to U.S. leadership may come not from the outside, but from within the United States—from a divided, insular, less confident United States that loses its openness, its innovative capacity, and its identity, which since its founding has been firmly grounded both in its economic success and its moral purpose.

PART 1: ASIA

1

A SHIFTING BALANCE

CHINESE ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Bonnie S. Glaser

Beijing's assessment of the global balance of power, especially American power and the position of China vis-à-vis the United States, is a critical factor in Chinese foreign policy decisionmaking. As long as Chinese leaders perceive a long-lasting American preeminence—even in the face of a temporary decline—averting open confrontation with the United States will likely continue to define Chinese foreign policy. However, if Beijing were to conclude that the gap between Chinese and U.S. power was rapidly narrowing and represented a more enduring geopolitical shift, Chinese leaders might begin to challenge the United States more aggressively in order to take advantage of the opening and make gains on securing their core interests.

China's Dominant Security Paradigm: Defined by U.S. Power

For several decades the Chinese have characterized the international system as “one superpower, many major powers” (*yi chao, duo qiang*). This expression connotes Beijing's consensus position that there is a substantial disparity between the level of the United States as the sole superpower and that of other major powers, including China, and that this is an enduring and defining feature of the security environment.¹ Although this is still considered basically valid, the Chinese have also observed a *relative* U.S. decline that began with the rapid rise of other powers in the international system and accelerated with the global financial crisis and U.S. military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. The critical questions for Beijing are how long this trend will last and whether it will fundamentally shift the security environment into another phase.

Chinese researchers have in fact speculated on a U.S. decline for several decades but have repeatedly been compelled to reevaluate their assessment or the time frame for the emergence of a multipolar global order. Even before the end of the Cold War, scholars characterized the world as being in a “new era” of transition that would last several decades. During this period, they predicted, great rivalries would emerge and many local wars would be fought as a “re-division of spheres of influence” and a struggle for world leadership ensues.² The final outcome, they predicted, would be a “multipolar” world that prevents the United States from achieving world dominance.

1. Liao Yonghe, “The Right and Wrong of the ‘America in Decline’ Theory,” *Dangdai Shijie* 3 (1995).

2. Michael Pillsbury, *China Debates the Future Security Environment* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, January 2000), chap. 1.



After the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe, Chinese experts engaged in a thorough reinvestigation of the international security environment. The emergence of Japan and Germany as powerful competitors of the United States in high technology seemed to reinforce the view that a multipolar world order was materializing. This new world order would be characterized by a greater balance among major powers, increasing resistance toward Western values, and a new emphasis globally on economic and diplomatic approaches over military might.³ These predictions proved overly optimistic, however. The Gulf War (1991) and other high-tech conflicts in the Balkans (1996) and Kosovo (1999) underscored the salience of military power and highlighted the gap between U.S. and Chinese military capabilities. Moreover, the U.S. proportion of the world's economy increased from 25 percent in the early 1990s to nearly 32 percent at the end of the decade. Beijing subsequently concluded as the new millennium dawned that the United States would maintain its sole-superpower status for the next 15 to 20 years, if not longer.⁴

Chinese security analysts today continue to scrupulously analyze the international situation to identify the slightest shifts in the global balance of power. The role of these scholars is critically important; many of them are housed in government- and party-affiliated think tanks that provide research, analysis, and policy advice to the Chinese leadership. There is no institution that is analogous to the politically independent or nonpartisan think tanks that exist in the United States; all major Chinese research institutions are funded and overseen by the Communist Party or State Council at some level. Moreover, the published writings and views of key Chinese security experts are significant because they often influence and sometimes reflect the judgments of higher-level

3. Ibid.

4. David M. Finkelstein, *China Reconsiders Its National Security: "The Great Peace and Development Debate of 1999"* (Alexandria, Va.: CNA Corporation, December 2000).

officials. Debates among scholars have occasionally provided advance warning of new directions in Chinese foreign policy.

Analysts are not simply parroting the views expressed by party officials, however. There is considerable diversity of opinion among Chinese scholars, and even those who agree on a general line of analysis may disagree on implications or on the appropriate policy response. The “party line”—official thinking established by the senior leadership—still has a role in shaping scholars’ views but is more likely to define the scope of the debate on a given issue than the conclusion. Although it must be acknowledged that even prominent scholars influence day-to-day policymaking less than bureaucratic institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the International Department, the senior leadership has concluded that it needs access to a genuine diversity of opinion in order to properly formulate long-term strategy.

Foreign-policy experts assess the current balance of power on the basis of sophisticated qualitative and quantitative measurements of comprehensive national power (CNP), a concept that includes the sum total of the strengths of a country in economy, military, science and technology, education, resources, and soft power.⁵ Various methodologies of calculating the CNP of the major and emerging powers in recent years have continued to identify the United States as considerably more powerful than any other country, with China sixth or seventh in the pecking order.⁶ China’s rapid economic growth has boosted its regional and global clout, but the Chinese are keenly aware that their country continues to lag far behind the United States in most indices of national power, including military capabilities and soft power. Moreover, China’s internal challenges are daunting: many believe that if such problems as environmental degradation, water shortages, internal income disparity, and corruption are not addressed, they could pose insurmountable obstacles to China’s reemergence as a great power sometime in this century.

Security Experts: Split on U.S. Downturn

The global financial crisis and China’s relatively strong economic performance in its wake—along with prolonged U.S. engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan—have rekindled discussion among Chinese security analysts about the sustainability of a U.S.-dominated international structure.⁷ A close reading of recent articles by leading Chinese experts and discussions with advisers to senior Chinese policymakers suggest an ongoing debate about U.S. power, the contours of the international system, and the implications for Chinese foreign policy. Chinese experts generally agree that the financial crisis has weakened U.S. power and constrained the ability of the United States to unilaterally achieve its regional and global objectives—and that these problems are a result of its own mismanagement. They also hold a common view that the strength of other countries—including China—is on the rise and thus the United States is in relative decline. A recent article

5. China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, *Global Strategic Pattern—International Environment of China in the New Century* (Beijing: Shishi Press, 2000); Huang Shuofeng, *New Theory on CNP: CNP of China* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1999).

6. *Yellow Book of Global Politics and Security* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2010); see also Lei Xiaoxun, “Yellow Book Ranks China 7th in Overall Strength,” *China Daily Online*, December 25, 2009.

7. This section draws on Bonnie Glaser and Lyle Morris, “Chinese Perceptions of U.S. Decline and Power,” *China Brief* 9, no. 14 (July 9, 2009); see also Michael A. Glosny, “China and the BRICs: A Real (but Limited) Partnership in a Unipolar World,” *Polity* 42, no. 1 (January 2010): pp. 100–129.

published in the journal of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) characterizes the mainstream view in describing the change in the balance of power following the financial crisis:

In terms of the strength of the major strategic forces, the comprehensive strength of the United States remains such that it is still the sole superpower, while the combined strength of the other world powers is increasing, and power is tending to be more evenly distributed. The gap in comprehensive strength between the only superpower and the other powers is steadily narrowing.⁸

Analysts differ, however, over the resiliency of the United States and the prospects for a near-term shift from a system of one superpower and many major powers to a true multipolar world. One view foresees the rapid decline of U.S. power and the concomitant rise of developing countries such as Brazil, Russia, and India, which, along with China, compose the grouping known as the BRICs. Proponents of this view predict that current trends will inexorably lead to the disappearance of U.S. hegemony and the emergence, perhaps within a few decades, of a world in which there are a number of nations of equivalent strengths. For these experts, the financial crisis sounded the death knell of unfettered U.S. economic predominance and accelerated the emergence of a more inclusive and fair multipolar system. This U.S. economic downturn compounded an earlier blow to U.S. power that was delivered in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States—which, according to Ma Xiaojun, a leading foreign policy analyst at the Central Party School, rendered “the most powerful super-hegemony that has ever emerged unable to deal with global and indeed regional problems by depending on its own strength,” and with “no choice but to depend for support on other relatively weak international forces.”⁹

Li Hongmei, editor and columnist for *People’s Daily*, the official mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, in early 2009 predicted an “unambiguous end to the U.S. unipolar system after the global financial crisis.” He argued that the financial crisis caused U.S. hegemony to be “pushed to the brink of collapse as a result of its inherent structural contradictions and unbridled capitalist structure” and that “as a result of this decline, the international order will be reshuffled toward multipolarity with an emphasis on developing economies like China, Russia and Brazil.”¹⁰ Gong Li, director of the Institute for International Studies at China’s Central Party School, likewise noted that the U.S. stake in the world economy fell from 32 percent at the beginning of this century to approximately 24 percent in 2009—reversing the gains of the 1990s. He estimated that the “serious recession” in the United States would continue for a long time and the proportion of the U.S. economy in the world economy would further decline. “America’s economic capabilities to maintain its hegemony has been seriously undermined, and subsequently, its capabilities to manipulate the international situation is declining as well,” Gong wrote.¹¹

8. Gao Zugui and Liu Yu, “The Great Financial Crisis Catalyzes Great Transformations and Adjustments,” *Contemporary International Relations* 20, no. 2 (March/April 2010): p. 27.

9. Ma Xiaojun, “Comment: China and the World Amid Changes in International Relations,” *Xuexi Shibao Online*, January 29, 2010, available in Open Source Center (OSC), document no. CPP20100104011001.

10. Li Hongmei, “U.S. Hegemony Ends, Era of Global Multipolarity Begins,” *People’s Daily Online*, February 24, 2009, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20090224701001.

11. Gong Li, “International Financial Crisis and the Change of International Order,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, April 20, 2009, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20090812671004.

In addition, this group of experts maintains that the domestic and global challenges facing the United States—including mounting U.S. debt, economic recovery, terrorism, proliferation, and climate change—have shifted the “balance of need” in U.S.-China relations that has prevailed for decades. In other words, Washington’s need for good relations with Beijing is now greater than China’s requirement for cooperative ties with the United States. Gong Li voiced this view in a February 2010 interview with *Wen Wei Po*:

. . . as China’s national strength grows, China and the United States are gradually moving toward balance in the power status pattern, and China’s initiative has increased. In fact, the United States is encumbered by its current problems; domestic unemployment, deficit, toxic assets and other economic problems await solution, while in the international field it is still mired in the Iraq and Afghan wars, and also requires China’s cooperation in the DPRK and Iranian nuclear issues; it can be said that the United States needs China more than China needs the United States.¹²

Other Chinese experts, however, reject the assessment that the United States is in fundamental, irreversible decline, and contend that the gap between U.S. power and Chinese power is enormous—and will remain so for a long time to come. Moreover, they warn that basing Chinese policy on such a judgment would be dangerous. One leading skeptic of the near-term emergence of a multipolar system is Wang Jisi, dean of Beijing University’s School of International Studies and China’s most prominent specialist on the United States. Wang argued in 2008 that “there really is no reliable basis for saying at this point that the United States has experienced a setback from which it cannot recover.” While acknowledging that the invasion of Iraq damaged U.S. soft power and legitimacy abroad, Wang maintained that he did not see any fundamental change to the global balance of power. “To date,” Wang said, “no country has been able to constitute a comprehensive challenge to the United States, and the current international power structure of ‘one superpower and many great powers’ will continue for the foreseeable future.”¹³ In 2010, Wang similarly noted that in the early days of the Cold War, the United States had feared being eclipsed by the Soviet Union—but had channeled that angst into forging an ideological consensus that produced breakthroughs in education, transportation, science, and technology, and ultimately led to U.S. victory.¹⁴

Discussing the overall effect of the 9/11 attacks, Central Party School professor Zhao Lei assessed that the U.S. response demonstrated the enduring power of U.S. influence:

On the one hand, terrorism displayed its force presence in the most effective way, as they attacked the United States, regarded as the safest country in the world; on the other hand, the United States displayed its own power in the most effective way . . . only after the United States was attacked did the combat against terrorism formally become the main content of world security affairs. It is evident that the United States, relying on its mighty power, turned its own will into the common global will.¹⁵

12. Yang Fan, “Experts: Sino-US Ties Expected to Shed Their Difficulties in Second Half of the Year” *Wen Wei Po Online*, February 18, 2010.

13. Wang Jisi, “Roundtable on U.S.-China Relations,” *Nanfeng Chuang*, October 20, 2008.

14. Wang Jisi, “Public Outrage No Recourse to US Criticisms,” *Global Times Online*, March 28, 2010, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20100329722007.

15. Zhao Lei, “Comment: China and the World Amid Changes in International Relations,” *Xuexi Shibao Online*, January 29, 2010, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20100104011001.

Yuan Peng, director of the American Studies Institute at CICIR, acknowledges that the power gap between the United States and China is narrowing and describes this process as “irreversible.” He cautions, however, that this process is “absolutely not a short-term one.” Yuan notes that it took the United States nearly half a century to develop from the world’s largest economic power to the largest power in overall national strength. “Even if China develops at the same rate as it did over the past 30 years, it will take China decades to surpass the United States in terms of the aggregate economy. It would take an even longer time to catch up with the United States in the S&T and military areas,” he concludes.¹⁶ Citing the Obama administration’s strategies of “smart power” and “multi-partner programs,” Qinghua University professor Liu Jianguo likewise admonishes the Chinese government to not underestimate the U.S. ability of “social readjustment” and “self-resilience.” “We must not exaggerate the extent of change in the comparison of power between China and the United States, and should be cool-headed in sizing up and handling Sino-US relations and act within our capacity.”¹⁷

Economists, Business: Increasingly Confident in Chinese Model

There is considerably less debate among Chinese economists and business leaders about the current level and trend of U.S. influence in the global economy. During the past two years, the mainstream has viewed U.S. economic influence as waning and expressed growing confidence in China’s economic development model. Previously, the stability of the U.S. financial system, new markets gained following the Asian financial crisis, and the U.S. economic boom led the Chinese government to invest significant amounts of export-driven profits into U.S. financial markets and U.S. Treasury instruments. Many Chinese reforms of the economic and financial sector were modeled on the U.S. system—which meant that the U.S. institutional collapses in late 2008 and early 2009 were greeted with alarm in Beijing. At Davos during the 2009 World Economic Forum, Premier Wen Jiabao likely voiced the consensus view when he stated that the U.S. system was culpable for the global financial crisis owing to an “excessive expansion of financial institutions in blind pursuit of profit, inadequate government oversight of the financial sector and an unsustainable model of development characterized by prolonged low savings and high consumption.”¹⁸ Among the elites in the finance and corporate sectors in China, the financial crisis has eroded the last vestiges of support and admiration for the “Washington consensus” and U.S.-driven international economic architecture. Reflecting this viewpoint, CICIR vice president Wang Zaibang wrote in early 2009:

The financial crisis is also pushing the international community . . . to profoundly review defects of the US-style neoliberal market economic model, and to review government oversight, regulation and control. The fact that developed countries—including the United States—ally

16. Yuan Peng, “Shifts in International System, China’s Strategic Options,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, November 20, 2009.

17. Liu Jianguo, “Developed Countries’ Rise Has Changed Times, World Framework,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, November 20, 2009, available in OSC, doc no. CPP20100126671001.

18. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao (keynote speech at World Economic Forum, Davos Switzerland, January 28, 2009); see also Jason Dean, James T. Areddy, and Serena Ng, “Chinese Premier Blames Recession on U.S. Actions,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 29, 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123318934318826787.html>.

with one another to bail out the market has already bid farewell to the Washington consensus from the domestic perspective.¹⁹

Chinese economists now generally believe that a Chinese model of development based on “state-directed capitalism” makes U.S. economic lessons less relevant. As Vice Premier Wang Qishan pointed out in December 2008, speaking to a forum of U.S. business and government leaders in the midst of the financial crisis: “We have learned that our teacher has some problems.”²⁰ However, even as Chinese economic growth has rapidly resumed and once again approaches double-digit GDP growth levels, Chinese commentators have downplayed the significance of China passing Japan as the world’s second-largest economy. Highlighting its position as a developing economy along with the substantial gap between China and the leading developed economies in per capita GDP, they argue that U.S. overall economic strength will continue to outstrip China’s for many decades.²¹

The Chinese Public: Complex Views of U.S. Power

The Chinese public today is keenly aware of the perceived shift in the international order, and it has a vested interest in believing that this will lead to a multipolar world—with China as one of the poles. However, Chinese attitudes toward U.S. power are complex. Recent statistics show a high and possibly increasing level of admiration for soft-power factors such as U.S. values, culture, policies, and institutions. The Pew Global Attitudes Project found that the percentage of Chinese responding with an overall favorable view of the United States stood at 58 percent in 2010—the highest in the six years of polling and comparable with results from countries such as Spain, Indonesia, and Mexico.²² Likewise, an impressive 76 percent of respondents averred that the United States considered China’s interests “a great deal” or “a fair amount” in making international policy decisions, from a low a few years earlier of 44 percent.²³ The biggest jump was in regard to how much confidence respondents had that the U.S. president would “do the right thing” regarding world affairs—from 30 percent to 62 percent with the election of Barack Obama in 2008.²⁴ Taken together, these would seem to indicate a renewed confidence in the reputation and influence of the United States within the international system.

But perhaps the more dramatic—and relevant—statistics are related to public views of China’s own power. A nearly perfect 97 percent of respondents said they had a “favorable” view of their own country,²⁵ while 87 percent were satisfied with China’s overall direction—an expression of

19. Wang Zaibang, “Historical Change Shows That Systematic Adjustment Is Urgent—Review of and Thoughts on the 2008 International Situation,” *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, January 20, 2009, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20090513702014.

20. David Ignatius, “Economic Optimism for Australia’s Prime Minister,” *Washington Post*, March 22, 2009, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/20/AR2009032002772.html.

21. Li Hong, “After China Becomes Second Largest Economy,” *People’s Daily Online*, August 16, 2010.

22. Pew Research Center, Pew Global Attitudes Project: Opinion of the United States, <http://pewglobal.org/database>. The results of a BBC World Service poll also broadly support this upturn in perspective; see BBC World Service, “Global Views of United States Improve While Other Countries Decline,” April 18, 2010.

23. Pew Research Center, <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=4&country=45>.

24. Pew Research Center, <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=6&country=45>.

25. Pew Research Center, <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=24&country=45>. A BBC World Service Poll showed similar results, with 81 percent having a “mainly positive” view of China’s influence; see

self-confidence not matched or even approached in any other country.²⁶ Chinese respondents expressed similar enthusiasm about their overall economic situation and the benefits of trade.²⁷ When asked which country is the world's leading economic power, 45 percent responded "United States"—roughly comparable with previous years—but in 2010, 36 percent responded "China," up from 21 percent in 2008.²⁸ A 2009 poll by the Lowy Institute found that of five countries, the United States was still considered the greatest threat to China's security—respondents cited diverse factors such as U.S. backing for separatist elements, support for Taiwan, and regional alliances with Japan and Korea.²⁹ At the same time, most Chinese placed domestic and regional concerns—such as environmental issues, food and water shortages, and the prospect of Japan acquiring nuclear weapons—as greater overall threats to China's security than the actions of the United States.³⁰ Here we see the other side of the picture: a confidence in China's rapid growth and influence, tempered by a concern for serious and unresolved problems close to home.

There are valid reasons to be skeptical of Chinese polling—government-owned media are as much propaganda arms as news services—but those polls that have been conducted in China reflect similar trends. In 2005, the government-owned newspaper, *Huanqiu Shibao* (Global Times) conducted one of the first rigorous surveys measuring how ordinary (urban) Chinese view the United States. Respondents were roughly split between seeing America as a rival and as a partner.³¹ More than half (57 percent) believed that the United States was using its power to "contain" China, even as 70 percent expressed satisfaction with overall Sino-U.S. relations.³² Respondents expressed admiration for America's culture, science and technology, legal system, and affluence, but many also believed that the true purpose of U.S. engagement on human rights was to destabilize or "demonize" China.³³ Chinese researchers involved with the project characterized the results as demonstrating a complex "love-hate" perspective toward the United States, with stronger affection toward U.S. people, culture, and economic engagement than toward U.S. foreign policy.³⁴

Recurring surveys in 2006 and 2007 revealed similar sentiments: despite lingering perceptions of the United States as a rival, most held favorable views of the country and were optimistic about the future of U.S.-China relations. Two trends are worth noting, however. Between 2005 and 2007, the percentage who believed the United States and China would engage in conflict over Taiwan rose 20 points to over 70 percent, while only 16 percent expressed that the United States would continue to maintain its long-term status as a superpower (down from 28 percent).³⁵ Chinese analysts interpret these seemingly contradictory results as reflecting greater confidence in China's

BBC World Service, "Global Views of United States Improve While Other Countries Decline."

26. Pew Research Center, <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=3&response=Satisfied>. Other regional powers such as Brazil and India come in at 50 percent and 45 percent, respectively.

27. Pew Research Center, <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=5&mode=chart>, <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=16&mode=chart>.

28. Pew Research Center, <http://pewglobal.org/database/?indicator=17&country=45&response=China>.

29. Fergus Hanson and Andrew Shearer, "The Lowy Institute China Poll 2009: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," www.lowyinstitute.org/Publication.asp?pid=1305.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Cheng Gang and Xie Xiang, "Results of Public Opinion Poll on Chinese People's Attitudes toward U.S [in Chinese]," *Renmin Wang*, March 2, 2005, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20050303000073.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. "PRC Journal: Opinion Survey Shows Public Giving High Score to Sino-US Relations." From Cheng Gang on *Huanqiu Shibao*, in Chinese, March 30, 2007, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20070410710005.

own power, along with a corresponding optimism about Beijing's ability to achieve gains within the U.S.-China relationship.³⁶ Researcher Ni Feng opined that the Chinese population still holds a basically pragmatic view: a perception of enduring U.S. hard power along with an overall decline in soft power—particularly its “rallying” or “problem-solving” abilities—as a result of problems in Iraq.³⁷ Reading between the lines, we can see an enduring belief in the “one superpower, many major powers” framework: China's success calls for a more equitable relationship, but China is not yet eclipsing the United States. (No survey results for later years have been recorded.)

Advocates of a more aggressive or critical line can certainly be found, however—and although they are not broadly representative, these voices do signify an important movement within the Chinese public consciousness. Particularly on the Internet—where mostly younger Chinese netizens debate political topics with less decorum and more strident nationalism—a vibrant undercurrent of anger and resentment toward China's “submissive” posture with the United States is evident. In October 2009, for instance, *Huanqiu Shibao* reported that 78 percent of those polled in an online survey believed that trade friction with the United States would extend into the future, and 89 percent advocated a policy of “strike back firmly” (versus 10 percent supporting negotiation) when they were questioned about how the Chinese government should respond to U.S. trade protectionism.³⁸ Similar sentiments are expressed about the need for Beijing to more aggressively protect its “core interests”—including on issues of territorial integrity such as Tibet and Taiwan.³⁹

As riveting as such discussions may be, one must be cautious in concluding that they represent broad Chinese public opinion or strongly influence Chinese policy. First, chat rooms and Internet discussions are frequently monitored and controlled; anything considered excessively critical of China or the Chinese Communist Party is often removed, and state-employed “monitors” frequently intervene to shape the discussion.⁴⁰ Second, the Communist Party has been known to court nationalist sentiment in an effort to bolster its own legitimacy, substituting patriotic fervor for party loyalty. Third, the loudest or most extreme position attracts the most attention but is not necessarily the most representative; just as in the United States, netizens in China are likely to be more critical and express their views more strongly online than in person. Finally, there is sufficient diversity of opinion on the measure and significance of U.S. power in these discussions to conclude that no single view predominates amid China's online community.

Nevertheless, decisionmakers in China are said to be paying greater attention to public opinion as it is expressed in Internet forums and chat rooms. Xinhua is tasked to inform China's top leaders daily of the topics that are being hotly debated by netizens.⁴¹ In addition, says a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), new nonofficial actors are successfully vying for influence through informal channels such as personal relationships, Internet media,

36. “PRC Opinion Poll on Sino-US Relations Reveals More Positive Feelings Towards US.” From Cheng Gang on *Huanqiu Shibao*, in Chinese, March 17, 2006, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20060412455001.

37. “PRC Journal: Opinion Survey Shows Public Giving High Score to Sino-US Relations.”

38. “*Global Times* Survey: 60 Percent PRC Netizens Support Current China Trade Policy,” *Global Times Online*, October 30, 2009, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20091103722006.

39. Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, “New Foreign Policy Actors in China,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), September 2010.

40. A recent *Global Times* article admitted that even private Chinese companies are using “online pushers” to shape opinion on the Internet; see “*Global Times* Report: Invisible Hands Spin Online Opinion,” December 23, 2009, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20091223722011.

41. Linda Jakobson made this point at a CSIS event on October 8, 2010, that was held to discuss the report she coauthored with Dean Knox, “New Foreign Policy Actors in China.”

and institutional lobbying.⁴² Chinese officials at every level insist that public opinion is factored into foreign policy decisionmaking, hinting that the party's legitimacy could be weakened if public concerns are ignored. It remains unclear, however, how this process takes place and the extent to which public opinion is truly taken into consideration by Chinese leaders. It also must be acknowledged that the top leadership seeks to shape as well as measure public opinion through the party's propaganda system—which, while far from omniscient, can be described as quietly effective in dictating what the broad majority hears, sees, and considers.

Scholarly Debate over Chinese Foreign Policy

Within the top party leadership, consideration of foreign policy or security doctrine is generally restricted to a small nuclear core: very likely only three or four out of the nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) are regularly consulted on strategic foreign policy discussions. Historically, strategic guidance has been the prerogative of the top leader; Mao Zedong dictated nearly all foreign policy shifts during his time, and Deng Xiaoping similarly set the tone or direction during his era after he consolidated power. This role is somewhat less today, and Hu Jintao likely consults with select party leaders, retired cadre, strategic advisers, and substantive experts before bringing a major foreign policy decision to the PBSC for discussion and approval.

The patterns of scholarly debate indicate differences of opinion within the central leadership about how China should seek to secure its interests in the face of a rapid adjustment in global balance of power, and particularly how China should deal with the United States. Among Chinese scholars, a minority continues to advocate that China adhere strictly to Deng Xiaoping's strategic guideline issued in the early 1990s to "keep a low profile" (*taoguang yanghui*) and "never claim leadership" (*bu dang tou*). Special importance is placed on avoiding confrontation with the United States; China's focus on promoting domestic development while avoiding entanglement in regional and international problems has served Chinese interests well. Older-generation specialists on the United States and other Western countries along with diplomats make up most in this camp.

Most foreign policy experts do not favor completely abandoning this traditional and risk-averse approach to foreign policy; instead they seek to gradually and selectively adopt a more proactive stance in the international arena—emphasizing another of Deng's maxims that encourages China "to get something accomplished." Proponents for the most part do not advocate directly confronting the United States and do not challenge the view that foreign policy should primarily serve China's economic development. Instead, they espouse that Beijing be more assertive on specific issues on which China has both capability and clout—such as shaping a new international financial system—perhaps as a way to test the reaction of other nations to a more assertive China.

Those who favor a more proactive foreign policy are divided over the goal that a more proactive foreign policy should serve. Some analysts argue that China should be tougher in defending its interests, especially to counter perceived U.S. efforts to contain Chinese influence and constrain China's rise. They make the case that the new situation provides China with leverage over the United States that can be employed to more assertively defend Chinese territorial integrity and sovereignty and other "core interests."⁴³ In addition, the shifting balance of power is seen as en-

42. Jakobson and Knox, "New Foreign Policy Actors in China."

43. In his remarks at the close of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in July 2009, State Councilor Dai Bingguo defined China's "core interests" as safeguarding the basic system and national security, national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and sustained and stable economic and social develop-

abling China to reshape the international order in a way that is more beneficial to China and other emerging powers.⁴⁴ Other analysts propose that Beijing adopt a more proactive foreign policy that seeks to cooperate with the United States and other nations as well as provide more public goods, with the primary goal of reassuring other nations that China will emerge as a responsible country and will not pose a destabilizing threat to the international system.

Scholarly support for continuing to observe the conservative advice of Deng Xiaoping while also defending China's core interests, contributing to international society, and improving China's international image was demonstrated at the spring 2010 annual meeting of China's International Relations Association in Lanzhou, which issued the following consensual conclusion:

. . . do not confront the United States; do not challenge the international system in general; do not use ideology to guide foreign policy; do not be the chief of the "anti-Western camp"; do not conflict with the majority of countries, even when we are right; learn to make compromises and concessions, and learn the game of reciprocal interests; do not compromise China's core interests concerning unification of the country; provide public goods in needed areas of international affairs; and change China's international image by taking advantage of important global events.⁴⁵

Central Leadership Testing a More Assertive Approach

Chinese leaders have tended to be conservative and risk averse. Until recently, they resisted both domestic pressure to pursue a more proactive foreign policy to safeguard Chinese interests and pressure from foreign nations to assume greater responsibility regionally and globally. At the 2006 Foreign Affairs Work Conference, an important national high-level Chinese Communist Party conclave where foreign policy guidelines were discussed, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao hewed closely to Deng Xiaoping's strategic admonition to avoid getting entangled in commitments overseas. In a rebuke of the view that China was rapidly increasing its national strength and should be more proactive in its foreign policy, Wen declared that China would remain in the initial stage of socialism for a long time to come and would persist in "not raising the banner and not taking the lead on the international scene."⁴⁶ This pronouncement was based on the assessment that U.S. regional and global preeminence would endure for a protracted period, as evidenced by Hu Jintao's description of the path toward multipolarity as "tortuous."⁴⁷

ment; see "Closing Remarks for U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue," July 28, 2009, www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/july/126599.htm.

44. See, for example, People's Daily Online, "Opening New Visual Angles of International Relations Theory," *Renmin Ribao*, February 13, 2010, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20100218702001; Jiang Lingfei, "In Order for China To Become Powerful, It Should Dare To Take Risks," *Huanqiu Shibao*, January 5, 2010, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20100112710010.

45. "Zhongguo Guoji Guanxi Xuehui 2010 nian nianhui zai Lanzhou zhaokai" [China's international relations society 2010 annual meeting in Lanzhou Review], *Waijiao Pinglun* 4 (2010): p. 157.

46. Wen Jiabao, "Several Questions in the Historic Tasks of the Initial Stage of Socialism and China's Foreign Policy," *Renmin Ribao*, February 27, 2007; Bonnie Glaser, "Ensuring the 'Go Abroad' Policy Serves China's Domestic Priorities," *China Brief* 7, no. 5 (March 8, 2007).

47. "Central Foreign Affairs Conference Takes Place in Beijing," Xinhua Domestic Service, in Chinese, August 23, 2006, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20060823308001.

In 2009, however, the leadership's message was revised. At the 11th Ambassadorial Conference—a meeting convened every five years to discuss the prevailing international environment and the future direction of China's foreign relations and diplomatic strategy—Hu Jintao enunciated a modified estimation of the global balance of power. He maintained the prospect of global multipolarization had become “clearer” and suggested that damage to the U.S. reputation globally was proving helpful in promoting multipolarity.⁴⁸ In addition, Hu urged adopting a more proactive diplomatic posture by stepping up efforts to exert “more influential power in politics, more competitiveness in the economic field, more affinity in its image, and more appealing morality.” Of even greater significance, Hu issued a new formulation for Chinese foreign policy. While continuing to “uphold” Deng Xiaoping's guideline to “keep a low profile” in international affairs, he called for China to “*actively* get something accomplished (emphasis added).” The perceived relative decline in the power of the United States as a result of being battered by the financial crisis and overextended in two wars in the Middle East boosted China's confidence and served as the basis for top-level support for a more vigorous foreign policy.⁴⁹ At the same time, however, Hu did not completely reject the traditional course of caution and risk aversion. He warned against getting too deeply mired in overseas commitments, emphasizing that China's priority remains focused on developments within its borders. Moreover, Hu stressed that maintaining a stable relationship with the United States remained critically important to Chinese interests.

A succession of events since early 2009 suggests that Beijing has been testing the hypothesis that the relative decline in U.S. power and China's growing strength have provided Beijing with increased leverage over the United States. Although China denies an intention to directly challenge U.S. interests, it has shown a willingness to more assertively defend what it sees as Chinese core national interests. In addition, the definition of China's core national interests appears to be in flux and may be expanding.⁵⁰ Although safeguarding Chinese national sovereignty and territorial integrity has always been the essence, previously Chinese attention was paid principally to Tibet, Xinjiang, and Taiwan. In the spring of 2010, in conversations with U.S. counterparts, senior Chinese officials referred to the South China Sea as one of China's core national interests although they have not articulated this position publicly. It is also unclear whether such a stance, if embraced officially, would include only China's territorial claims and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) derived from those claims, or would encompass the entire South China Sea. It is possible that as China grows stronger—and requires more resources from abroad to sustain its march toward superpower status—its list of core interests will grow accordingly.

Evidence of China's growing assertiveness in areas linked to its core interests can be seen in its rhetoric and behavior in several instances:

- *Beijing's reaction to the January 2010 \$6.4 billion arms sales package to Taiwan.* In keeping with past practice, China suspended bilateral U.S.-Chinese military exchanges and planned dialogues on nonproliferation and international security. This time, however, China also threatened to impose sanctions on U.S. companies that sell arms to Taiwan, although this was not enforced through legal measures. China also rebuffed a visit by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in June 2010 although subsequently received the Secretary Gates in January 2011.

48. Bonnie Glaser and Benjamin Dooley, “China's 11th Ambassadorial Conference Signals Continuity and Change in Foreign Policy,” *China Brief* 9, no. 22 (November 4, 2009).

49. Chinese official, discussion in Washington D.C., September 8, 2009.

50. Willy Lam, “Hawks vs. Doves: Beijing Debates ‘Core Interests’ and Sino-U.S. Relations,” *China Brief* 10, no. 17 (August 19, 2010).

- *Chinese harassment of U.S. ocean surveillance ships operating in China's EEZs in the South China Sea and Yellow Sea in the spring of 2009.* In a series of incidents, Chinese naval and patrol vessels engaged in dangerous maneuvers in an effort to impede the passage of the USNS *Impeccable* and the USNS *Victorious*. China denied U.S. charges and also dismissed U.S. statements that there was no legal basis for restricting activities by other nations' naval vessels in a country's EEZ and U.S. protests that Chinese actions violated the requirement under international law to operate with due regard for the rights and safety of other lawful users of the ocean.
- *Chinese warnings in response to planned U.S.-Republic of Korea joint naval exercises in the Yellow Sea and Sea of Japan following the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan.* Prior to an official announcement declaring the timing, location, and participating ships in military drills in the waters off the Korean Peninsula, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman stated, "We firmly oppose foreign warships and military aircraft entering the Yellow Sea and other coastal waters of China to engage in activities affecting China's security and interests."⁵¹
- *Chinese actions to slow the delivery of cargo, including rare earths, being shipped from Chinese ports to Japan after the Japanese arrested and detained the captain of a Chinese fishing vessel that was fishing in waters claimed by Japan near the Senkaku (Diaoyutai) Islands.* Although Beijing denied imposing an embargo on the exports of rare earths to Japan, Chinese officials admitted reinforcing customs inspections, ostensibly to counter smuggling.⁵² The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman rejected Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's statement to Japan's foreign minister, Seiji Maehara, that the islands fall within the scope of the U.S.-Japan security treaty.
- *Chinese response to the statements made by Secretary of State Clinton and representatives from eleven other nations regarding the South China Sea at the ASEAN Regional Forum in Hanoi in July 2010* Beijing viewed the statements as interference in the territorial dispute, which China prefers to manage bilaterally with the various claimants. China's foreign minister Yang Jiechi warned regional actors against collaborating with outside powers in dealing with the South China Sea territorial disputes. Participants in the meeting reported that Yang told the meeting: "China is a big country and other countries are small countries, and that's just a fact."
- *Chinese actions following the announcement that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, who is imprisoned in China.* Beijing threatened negative consequences for countries whose representatives attended the award ceremony, suspended talks on a free trade agreement with Norway, and canceled two meetings with a senior official from Norwegian Fisheries and Coastal Affairs.

There is insufficient evidence to conclude, however, that new strategic calculations based on an assessment that the balance of power is tilting in Beijing's favor are behind China's more assertive pattern of behavior. Other domestic political factors could be at play, including Hu Jintao's position amid intensified jockeying for power in the run-up to the 2012 leadership succession, tension in civil-military relations, and an insecure leadership unsure of how to react to growing domestic pressure to safeguard Chinese security interests.

51. Xinhua, in English, July 10, 2010, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20100721968190.

52. "China to Normalize Stagnant Rare Earth Exports to Japan Soon," Kyoto World Service, November 13, 2010, available in OSC, doc. no. JPP20101113969107.

Analyzing the U.S. Response

If Chinese assessments of a shift in the balance of power are at least partly responsible for China's new assertiveness, it is possible that a firm U.S. response will prompt a recalibration of Chinese policy. Beijing appreciates the more enduring elements of U.S. power, and the Chinese are closely observing U.S. steps to strengthen its alliances in Asia and the Pacific, participate more actively in institution building and architecture, and enhance its influence in the South China Sea. For example, Secretary of State Clinton enunciated a new U.S. policy at the ASEAN Regional Forum in July 2010, encouraging ASEAN and China to reach agreement on a binding code of conduct in the South China Sea and offering to facilitate discussion of confidence-building measures. Clinton also stated, "The United States has a national interest in the continued peace and stability, freedom of navigation, open access to Asia's maritime commons, and respect for international law in the South China Sea." On October 28, 2010, Secretary Clinton reiterated that the Senkakus fall within the scope of Article 5 of the 1960 U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and indicated that the Obama administration would attach priority to ratifying the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in 2011.⁵³ The perception of a renewed commitment on the part of the United States to assert its presence in the region could temper internal support for a bolder Chinese foreign policy. Chinese leaders are also acutely aware of growing wariness in China's neighborhood about Beijing's intentions, which has led to efforts by some nations to forge coalitions to defend against Chinese pressure that could undermine China's decades-long policy of reassuring the region that China's rise would not have negative consequences.

In what may signal an attempt to revert Chinese foreign policy to its prior emphasis on reassurance, an essay penned by State Councilor Dai Bingguo in October 2010 reaffirmed China's strategy of "peaceful development" and pledged to never seek world domination. Dai offered this authoritative interpretation of Deng Xiaoping's guideline: "China should remain humble and cautious as well as refrain from taking the lead, from waving the flag, from seeking expansion, and from claiming hegemony." But Dai conspicuously avoided indicating whether Deng's maxim serves as a guideline for current Chinese foreign policy, noting only that it "is consistent with the idea of taking the path of peaceful development."⁵⁴

It is also possible, however, that this adjustment of Chinese foreign policy is merely rhetorical or tactical. On the basis of judgments that China is rapidly closing the power gap with the United States and that the development of a multipolar world is accelerating, China may continue to pursue a more proactive and assertive foreign policy. Over time, Beijing's growing confidence could result in China acting more openly in ways that are not always consistent with U.S. interests. Especially if there is a perception that the United States is challenging China's core interests, how-

53. "Briefing by Secretary Clinton, Japanese Foreign Minister Maehara," U.S. Department of State, October 28, 2010, www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/October/20101028123524su0.6718823.html; "Remarks on Innovation and American Leadership to the Commonwealth Club: Remarks: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State," U.S. Department of State, October 15, 2010, www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/10/149542.htm.

54. Dai's article was first published as "zhonggongzhongyangguanyuzhidingguominjingjiheshuifazhandeshiergewunianguihuade jianyi" [Suggestion from the central government to make the twelfth five-year plan on the national economic and social development], People's Publishing House, October 1, 2010. On December 6, 2010, it was published in *People's Daily* and posted on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website under the title, "Persisting with Taking the Path of Peaceful Development," available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20101207004001.

ever they are defined, Chinese behavior could become more aggressive in the future. In addition to showing greater assertiveness on issues that Beijing defines as its core interests, China can be expected to seek to use its growing economic weight, financial resources, and geopolitical influence to expand its say in shaping a new international financial system. Even Wang Jisi—traditionally a proponent of U.S. power—recently postulated that as its power grows China will demand to change the state of affairs and strive for the initiative more often. “In the Sino-US game,” Wang writes, “China is keeping control of the ball for longer, and the ball will more and more frequently be kicked into the American half of the field.”⁵⁵

This suggests a central policy dilemma for the United States: the United States needs to show robust strength and sustained commitment to the region to preempt a Chinese judgment that the United States is in decline, but actions that the United States might take to remind Beijing of its resiliency could well be seen by the Chinese as a challenge to their core national interests. This outcome could significantly increase U.S.-Chinese tensions and, in turn, heighten the anxiety of regional states that don’t want to be compelled to take sides. The United States must therefore be careful to demonstrate its power in ways that do not antagonize China but instead provide incentives for Beijing to cooperate. The existence of a zero-sum competition between the United States and China in Asia should be avoided at all costs.

Regardless of China’s short-term assessments and policies, it remains Beijing’s long-term objective to increase its comprehensive national power and reinstate the country as a great power. As China’s military and economic power grows, it is likely that over time Chinese leaders will conclude that adhering to the strategic guideline of keeping a low profile in international affairs no longer serves Chinese interests. Chinese foreign policy will almost certainly become more vigorous and assertive. It remains to be seen, however, whether China uses its growing clout to protect the global commons, provide global public goods, and generally strengthen the existing international system, or whether it attempts to enhance Chinese security interests at the expense of other nations and seeks to modify the international system in ways that run contrary to the interests of the United States, its allies, and partners.

For at least the next five to ten years, Beijing likely will seek assiduously to preserve good relations with the United States. Economic ties between the United States and China run deep. China’s economic growth model relies intensively on exports, and the U.S. market is (with the European Union) critical in that regard. China is so deeply invested in U.S. securities that any disruption to the value of the dollar would deal a severe blow to its own financial position. Avoiding a military confrontation with the United States that could quickly escalate and would likely set back China’s modernization efforts will remain a key Chinese concern. Even against the background of a relative decline in U.S. power, the United States will likely remain the only global superpower and the leader of the Western world for the next decade, and China will be engaged in limited cooperation with the United States in areas deemed important to U.S. interests and will manage differences so that bilateral tensions remain under control. Above all, Beijing will seek to ensure that the United States remains relatively friendly and does not view China as an immediate adversary, which could result in a policy that aims to inhibit China’s rise and even to undermine Chinese stability and Chinese Communist Party rule.

55. Wang Jisi, “It Will Be Difficult to Avoid a Major Strategic Trial of Strength between China and the United States,” *Guoji Xianqu Daobao Online*, August 9, 2010, available in OSC, doc. no. CPP20100830671002.

Implications for U.S. Policy

The high rate of growth forecast for China and several other emerging economies and the slow pace of U.S. economic growth have made it inevitable that the U.S. position in the balance of power will decline relatively. The challenge for the United States is ensuring that China and other nations in Asia do not prematurely conclude that a relative decline in U.S. power means a weakened United States that is no longer able to maintain a forward-deployed military presence and can no longer be the ultimate guarantor of regional peace and stability. The emergence of a multipolar world in a gradual and managed way can play to the advantage of the United States and its allies, as well as China, and there need not be a zero-sum competition between the United States and China.

Preserving a leadership role for the United States in Asia is key to ensuring that China's rise is peaceful and accomplished with as little damage to U.S. interests as possible. The majority of countries in the region want the United States to maintain a strong and active presence in the Asia-Pacific region, in part as a hedge against the possibility that China's rise will pose a threat to their interests. Yet at the same time they are doubtful about the ability of the United States to maintain a high level of attention and commitment to the region. Mitigating the concerns of U.S. allies and friends in Asia while averting Chinese fears that the United States is seeking to strategically encircle and contain China will be challenging tasks for U.S. policymakers. At the same time the United States strengthens and broadens its alliances, builds new partnerships, and enhances the capacity of multilateral organizations in the region, it must continue to encourage China's peaceful integration into the international system, even as China's clout in that system inevitably increases.

Although maintaining U.S. military power and presence is essential, placing excessive emphasis on hard power would be a mistake. The United States should continue to employ a combination of hard and soft power, often referred to as "smart power," to advance its interests. Countries in the region want U.S. military power to be present, but not menacing. Now that fears that the United States and China would co-manage the world in a Group of Two arrangement have largely dissipated, they could quickly be replaced by worries of U.S.-Chinese confrontation.

Military power and the attractiveness of U.S. values are unlikely on their own to maintain a primary role for the United States in the greater Asian region. China's potential bullying may be a source of concern to the ASEAN countries, but regional economic integration with China—including through China's active negotiation of attractive trade agreements—is driving the region farther from the United States and closer to China. Without a trade and investment strategy that draws Asian countries to the United States, this trend can only continue. It may be difficult to command U.S. domestic political support for liberalizing trade policies, but without these policies U.S. primacy in Asia is in serious question. The United States should develop a comprehensive interagency trade and investment strategy and policy for the Asia-Pacific region. This will not only benefit U.S. exporters and investors, but will also strengthen relationships with other Asian states that want to trade with the United States, including China. Such relationships will serve to develop greater comity and deepen interdependence in the region. Ratifying the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, imbuing the Trans-Pacific Partnership process with genuine political capital, and completing the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement with Taiwan are three concrete steps the United States could take to enhance its position in the region over the next five years.

The keys to maintaining peace and stability in Asia and securing U.S. interests are sustaining U.S. leadership and bolstering regional confidence in U.S. staying power. Whether addressing

terrorist threats, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, or poverty, the United States must play an active role in helping the countries of the region enhance their capacity to succeed. By doing so, the United States can counter perceptions of a U.S. decline that could lead to a new arms race in Asia, heightened mistrust among regional states, and even possible miscalculation.

2

REASSURING PRESENCE JAPANESE ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Michael J. Green

Japan has historically been highly attuned to the distribution of power in the international system. For almost two millennia, Japanese strategy has been to bandwagon with the world's leading power while seeking greater freedom of maneuver within Asia. Until the eighteenth century that power was China. As the Qing Empire was collapsing at the end of the nineteenth century, Japan aligned with Great Britain in a bilateral alliance from 1902 to 1922. From 1940 to 1945 Japanese strategic thinkers mistakenly assumed that the world's leading power in the West would be Nazi Germany. Since World War II, Japan has aligned with and accommodated to U.S. global power.

Japanese debates about U.S. power in the postwar period are therefore fundamentally debates about the orientation of Japanese foreign policy itself. Assessments of U.S. power pass through two other prisms in Japanese political discourse as a result. The first prism is the entrapment-versus-abandonment dilemma faced by smaller alliance partners since the time of Thucydides: namely, how can Japan avoid becoming so close to the United States that Washington dictates its foreign and economic policies, but avoid becoming so separated from U.S. power that it loses the benefits of protection by the United States. The second prism is Japan's conflicted identity between East and West—is Japan an Asian power trying to influence the international system . . . a Western power trying to influence Asia . . . or a bridge between East and West? Japanese assessments of U.S. power are frequently articulated in ways that reflect the observers' perspectives on these questions. Conclusions drawn about U.S. power shape the outcome of these secondary debates and the balance of power among different schools of thought within Japan.

Expectations of American Power

The 2009 CSIS survey of strategic elites in nine nations in Asia and the Pacific provided one useful snapshot of Japanese expectations about the future of U.S. power. When asked which nation would be most powerful in Asia in ten years, 73 percent of the Japanese respondents answered "China" and only 23 percent answered "United States." However, when asked which nation would be most important to Japan in ten years, 57 percent of the Japanese respondents answered "United States" while only 34 percent chose "China." The reason was obvious in subsequent questions in which 59 percent said that in ten years the United States would still be the greatest force for peace and stability in Asia, and 51 percent said that China would be the greatest threat to peace and stability in the region. When asked what they expected the most effective deterrent against attack on their country to be in ten years, 54 percent of the Japanese respondents chose the "alliance with the



United States,” while only 19 percent answered “Japan’s own military power,” and a paltry 3 percent pointed to regional multilateral institutions.¹

In summary, the view of Japan’s strategic elite and general public appears to be that U.S. power is in relative decline—but not as rapidly as Japan’s own power—and, because China remains a major source of uncertainty, Japan is becoming more dependent on U.S. power, not less so, even as the Japanese economy becomes more dependent on China for growth.

This growing security dependence on the United States and economic dependence on China are deeply discomfiting for a nation that has struggled for decades with the entrapment-versus-abandonment dilemma and the identity conflict between East and West. The new Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) government tried under the cabinet of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama (2008–2009) to tap into this discomfort with a populist political narrative that emphasized movement toward China to counterbalance the United States. Hatoyama’s vision turned out to be a complete political disaster for the DPJ, however, because it was out of line with the underlying realism of the Japanese public. In Japanese government polls taken in 2009, for example, 66.6 percent of respondents said that they did not feel close to China, and 71.9 percent rejected the idea of an alliance with Beijing. In the same poll, 73 percent said that they felt close to the United States, and 76.4 percent said that the U.S.-Japan alliance was useful for Japan.² Favorable attitudes

1. Bates Gill, Michael Green, Kiyoto Tsuji, and William Watts, *Strategic Views on Asian Regionalism: Survey Results and Analysis* (Washington: D.C.: CSIS, 2009).

2. See “Kenpo kaisei ‘sansei’ 51.6 percent, futatabi tasuu simeru, Yomiuri Yoron Chosa [51.6 percent says “yes” for constitutional revision: Majority favors it, Yomiuri opinion poll],” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 3, 2009, www.yomiuri.co.jp/politics/news/20090403-OYT1T00006.htm.

about the United States in Japan even increased in 2010, as shown in polling by Pew and other organizations.³ In January 2011 polls taken by *Yomiuri* and Gallup, an unprecedented 87 percent of Japanese say that they “do not trust China.”⁴

Elite commentary in the Japanese media also tends to acknowledge the decline of U.S. relative power in the international system. Many mainstream commentators also point out, however, that the United States retains unique strengths in terms of military power, technology, and political openness and that China or other rising powers will not be able to replicate those strengths.⁵

Measures of American Power

Japanese scholarly work, government reports, and feature articles in the leading media tend to measure U.S. power in four broad categories:

Statecraft

Stewardship of international institutions. Japan’s international position relies heavily on U.S. leadership in international organizations. It was U.S. sponsorship that led Japan from being an enemy of the United Nations to being the UN’s second-largest financial supporter and the second-ranked power in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The U.S. commitment to international organizations also provides an avenue for Japanese “binding” of U.S. power. The prevailing view in Japan is that the democratization of global institutions (such as the shift from the Group of Seven [G-7] to the Group of 20 [G-20]) is both inevitable and bad for Japan’s own influence. In recent years, Japan has hewn more closely to the U.S. position within the G-7, World Bank, and IMF on key issues such as the millennium challenge goals and expansion of Asian membership. Commentators generally give the Bush and Obama administrations high marks for managing the G-7 and G-20 meetings but are pessimistic about the ability of the United States to maintain control over the agenda and shape positive outcomes in the longer term.⁶

Managing the balance of power in Asia. Japanese strategic elites are also highly sensitive to perceived changes in U.S. grand strategy in Asia. They are most at ease with a U.S. approach that emphasizes cooperation with the maritime democracies and maintenance of the balance of power, and they are most apprehensive about U.S. strategies that shift to continental powers or a concert of power with China at Japan’s expense. The phrase “Japan-passing,” coined after President Bill Clinton flew over Japan in 1998 for a ten-day visit to China, is now part of the vernacular in the

3. “Nicchu Kankei ‘Yoi’ Nihon 45 percent, Chugoku 50 percent,” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 8, 2009, www.yomiuri.co.jp/world/news/20091208-OYT1T00061.htm.

4. “40% Consider Japan-U.S. Ties ‘Poor,’” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, December 23, 2010, www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T101222005020.htm.

5. See, for example, Kitaoka Shinichi, “Shuyou Kokukan Kyougi no Jidai ni okeru Nihon no Sekum [Japan’s obligation in an age of multilateral cooperation],” *Chuokoron*, February 2009; Nakanishi Hiroshi, “Kokusai Shakai wo Mochiukeru Kinkou to Atsureki no Hanseiki [The next half century of balance of power politics facing the international society],” *Chuokoron*, February 2009; Kato Ryoza, “Kawarikyuku Amerika to Nichibei Gaiko no Yukue [A changing America and the direction of U.S.-Japan foreign relations],” *Ronza*, October 2008.

6. See, for example, Tanaka Hitoshi, “The Crisis of Global Governance and the Rise of East Asia,” *East Asian Insights* 2, no. 4 (September 2008).

Japanese language. In other words, the U.S. ability to maintain a favorable strategic equilibrium in Asia through statecraft is seen as an instrument of U.S. power, while pursuit of a concert of power or bipolar condominium with China is seen as a sign of relative U.S. weakness. There is, of course, a point at which overly aggressive U.S. balancing behavior can provoke Japanese concern about entrapment, but in recent years most of Japan's concern has been about abandonment.

Military Power

Conventional forward presence. To Japanese observers in the national security realm, U.S. forward military presence constitutes the most visible demonstration of U.S. power in the Pacific. The Japan Ministry of Defense has declared that U.S. aircraft carriers are the core capability of importance to Japan,⁷ reflecting Japan's heavy dependence on open sea lanes of communication. The prospect of ballistic missile capabilities of the People's Liberation Army threatening U.S. carriers has begun to creep into the discussions of senior uniformed and civilian officials, as has concern that the U.S. Navy could be reduced from its current level of 282 ships to somewhere closer to 250 ships in the coming years. U.S. Air Force assets in Japan also constitute an important measurement of U.S. power, and it is clear that Japanese officials up to the level of prime minister have noted the qualitative leap in capabilities represented by fifth-generation fighters like the F-22 and F-35. There are concerns, however, that air assets can be more easily diverted from the western Pacific. There is less agreement among the strategic elite or the public with respect to the utility of the U.S. Marine Corps presence in Okinawa, but the mainstream view among officials, uniformed officers, and increasingly the DPJ leadership is that withdrawal of the Marines at this point would undermine deterrence.

Nuclear weapons and extended deterrence. Japanese scholars and officials are focused increasingly on U.S. declaratory policy, will power, and capabilities with respect to nuclear weapons and extended deterrence.⁸ As the U.S. government prepared for the 2010 nuclear posture review (NPR), there was significant anxiety among Japanese scholars, politicians, and officials about U.S. views on the decreasing importance of nuclear weapons in the overall approach to extended deterrence. Much of that anxiety has subsided, in large part because of effective bilateral U.S.-Japan coordination during the NPR. Now, however, the U.S. nuclear arsenal is a focus of scholarly and official attention in Japan and is seen as one important measure of U.S. power and commitment in a way that was true for only the smallest handful of Japanese officials during the Cold War. For similar reasons, Japanese scholars, officials, and politicians are focusing on the effectiveness of missile defense, in terms of both technical capabilities and U.S. commitment to programmatic development. It should be noted, of course, that even as key Japanese officials and political leaders focus with increasing intensity on the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence, the vast majority of the Japanese public continues to hold strong views against nuclear weapons and aspires to a nuclear-free world.

Iraq and Afghanistan. After the forward conventional presence and the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrence, the area on which Japanese strategic elites appear to focus most in measuring

7. Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2009), p. 246.

8. For more, see Michael J. Green and Katsuhisa Furukawa, "Japan: New Nuclear Realism," in *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21st Century Asia*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); also see Okada Katsuya, foreign minister of Japan (testimony to Foreign Affairs Committee, April 14, 2010; testimony before Diet Accounting Committee, April 12, 2010).

U.S. military power would be combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq seem less immediate to most of the Japanese public, but among the core group of strategic elites in the Foreign Ministry and Japan's Ministry of Defense and at senior political levels there is an understanding that U.S. setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan would weaken overall U.S. leadership in the international system to Japan's detriment.⁹ This is one reason why Japan remains the second-largest contributor of aid to both Afghanistan and Iraq (the other being a desire to retain U.S. support for security challenges in East Asia). That said, there is surprisingly little commentary even among national security realists about the strategic implications for Japan of U.S. success in Iraq and Afghanistan, beyond the immediate and obvious fact that the conflicts divert U.S. resources and attention from Asia. When politicians discuss the merits of economic assistance in those conflicts, it is usually phrased in vague terms about making an appropriate "international contribution."

Korean Peninsula. For centuries Japanese strategy has been shaped by developments on the Korean Peninsula, which the Meiji leader Yamagata Aritomo famously called a "dagger aimed at the heart of Japan." Japanese expansion before the Second World War was driven primarily by the desire to gain a line of "maximum advantage" over the peninsula, and Japan's postwar policy toward the United States has focused on ensuring a strong U.S. military presence in the Republic of Korea (ROK). The withdrawal of one combat brigade from the Second Infantry Division in 2004 evinced surprisingly little Japanese reaction, however, in spite of the fact that it coincided with increasing hostility between Tokyo and Pyongyang. In contrast, the robust schedule of U.S.-ROK military exercises that followed the North Korean sinking of the South Korean corvette *Cheonan* in 2010 was well received by the Japanese government and media. Overall, U.S. concessions toward Pyongyang are often replayed within Japanese elite circles as evidence of a flagging U.S. commitment to security in Asia (and as evidence of abandonment).

Intentions over capabilities? Publicly available Japanese strategic assessments of U.S. military power in the Pacific are striking in that most of the focus is on U.S. intentions and not capabilities per se (except to the extent that U.S. policy outcomes seem to reflect resource shortcomings). For example, the declaratory policy in the NPR ultimately proved more important to reassuring Japanese observers about the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence than did the actual weapons modernization plans for nuclear warheads or decisions on specific systems. Similarly, the robust exercise schedule after the *Cheonan* incident appears to have made more of an impression than reports about the likely size of the U.S. Navy.

Economic Power

Hegemony of the dollar. Japanese Finance Ministry officials came to the view in the 1990s that Japan could solve its entrapment-versus-abandonment dilemma by lessening Japanese dependence on the dollar. Those visions have dimmed but have not died with the weakening of the Japanese economy. Today there is both a broad consensus among experts in Japan that the dollar's position is under threat and a division about the durability of dollar hegemony. On one side economists argue that (1) there is no viable alternative to the dollar in Europe or Asia, (2) U.S. military dominance will underpin the dollar's security well into the future, and (3) the U.S. economy can

9. See, for example, National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review 2010* (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2010), pp. 230–231.

revive through dollar depreciation.¹⁰ On the other side of the debate, the argument runs that U.S. fiscal deficits will lead to a crisis in the dollar and constrain the ability of policymakers to inject huge stimulus spending into the economy next time around. The alternative or hedge in this line of reasoning would be to establish special drawing rights (SDRs) backed by the IMF.¹¹

Underlying competitiveness of the U.S. economy. In the 2009 survey by the Pew Global Attitudes Project the Japanese public gave the Obama administration's response to the financial crisis a far better assessment than Americans did, with 62 percent of Japanese respondents approving the Obama economic policies. However, there is also a broad view among Japanese economic experts in the public domain that the U.S. economic policies of low interest rates and Keynesian-style stimulus packages will not work as effectively as the U.S. government expects. The Cabinet Office put it politely by stating in its 2010 white paper that the government had "concerns" about the health of the U.S. economy after the major effects of the stimulus package wear off. The government assessment also noted that since the 1970s the growth of disposable income has not matched the growth of housing, medical, and educational expenses in the United States. Japanese economists have focused more concretely in their public writings on the high level of household debt in the United States and the weakness of the underlying U.S. economy without the bubble of the financial services sector.¹² Optimists are part of this mix as well, of course, and they note that the United States will be positioned to maintain its top economic position because it is an open, democratic, multiethnic, and resource-rich country with unmatched capacity for innovation in the information technology sector.

Trade. Japan was acutely sensitive to possible U.S. protectionist trends through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Today there is strikingly less concern about protectionism or interest in the topic because Japanese multinational corporations now have major production networks already inside the United States and are looking to Asia for future growth opportunities. In terms of free trade negotiations, this has meant that the Japanese business community has had more interest in free trade agreements (FTAs) with Europe, where tariffs still remain a problem, or with South-east Asia, where FTAs would help resolve behind-the-border barriers to further Japanese exports

10. See, for example, Iwai Katuhito, "Kahei Keizai to Sabu Puraimu Mondai no Honshitsu [The reality of the monetary system and the subprime crisis]," *Economisto*, September 9, 2008, pp. 22–23; Kobayashi Keiichiro, "Lehman Brothers Hatan jo, Beikoku Kinyu Kiki to Kijiku Tsuka Sisutem no Yukue [The Lehman Brothers collapse and the future of the currency system after the financial crisis]," Research Institute on Economics, Trade, and Industry (RIETI), September 18, 2008; Gyohten Toyoo, "Interview," *Toyo Keizai*, August 9, 2008.

11. See, for example, Mizuno Kazuo, "Beikoku no Rakujitsu, Yagate Kuru Doru Kiki [The decline of the United States—Coming of age of the dollar crisis]," *Economisto*, September 23, 2008, pp. 24–77; Mizuno Kazuo, "Bei Toushi Ginko no Hatan Wa Doru Honi Sei no Houkai wo Imi Suru [The collapse of U.S. investment banks means the end of the dollar-centered monetary system]," *Economisto*, December 2, 2008, pp. 28–29; Date Katsuhito, "Shin no Doru Kiki Wa Mada Saki [The real dollar crisis has yet to come]," *Nikkei Business*, January 26, 2009, pp. 82–84.

12. See, for example, Fujita Masahisa and Kobayashi Keiichiro, "Bei Keizai mo Balance Sheet no Wana ni [The U.S. economy is also trapped by balance sheet impairment]," *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, January 30, 2010; Obata Seki, "Obama no Sekkyoku Zaisei de Kiki Ha Ichidan to Fukumaru [Obama's aggressive stimulus package will deepen the crisis]," *Toyo Keizai*, February 14, 2009; Takada Hajime, "Beikoku no Kozo Chosei ha Chokika—Choki Kinri Niha Nao Teika Yochi [The restructuring of the U.S. economy will take more time—Long-term interest rates might decline even more]," *Toyo Keizai*, October 3, 2009, pp. 26–27; Shirakawa Horimichi, "Kinyu Baburu naki Beikoku Seicho Ryoku no Danka [U.S. potential economic growth will be slowed without the bubble in the financial sector]," *Economisto*, January 5, 2010, pp. 23–24.

and investment. There is some interest in a U.S.-Japan bilateral economic partnership agreement (EPA) and also in joining with the United States in negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), but primarily these are viewed as necessary strategic underpinnings to the alliance and a trans-Pacific open trading architecture in the future. Japanese leaders have been less outspoken on the need for U.S. leadership in formulating a trade architecture in Asia than have Australian, Korean, or Singaporean leaders. In part this also reflects Japanese politicians' ambivalence about any pressure to open their own agricultural markets.

Soft Power

Japanese intellectuals have been intrigued by the concept of soft power, as one might expect in a nation where traditional military power instruments are constrained and economic instruments are less effective. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs 2008 survey on soft power in Asia found that the Japanese public rates U.S. soft power the highest in Asia, at 0.69 (on a 0 to 1 scale) compared with 0.56 for Korea and 0.51 for China. U.S. cultural influence was seen as the strongest of any country in the world in the same survey, and 83 percent of Japanese thought U.S. cultural influence was positive.¹³

Hedging Strategies

Japan has hedged against the possibility of entrapment or abandonment by the United States since the occupation of Japan began in August 1945. The unique feature of Japanese hedging behavior today is that it is directed against three variables: the relative decline of U.S. power, the more accelerated relative decline of Japanese power, and the increase in Chinese power. Most Japanese hedging behavior remains at the margins of a core foreign policy alignment with the United States. Significant departures in these hedging strategies would indicate a pronounced loss of confidence in U.S. power.

Multilateralism

Japan has relied on international organizations such as the UN and the World Trade Organization both to constrain U.S. unilateral action and to contribute to the U.S.-led international order from a more independent stance. That said, a collapse of U.S. power would render these international organizations far less effective and not much use as a hedge. Japan has also embraced East Asian regionalism during the past 15 years in the hopes of shaping and constraining both Chinese and American behavior. However, the 2009 CSIS survey of strategic elites in Japan suggested there is declining confidence that the region's nascent institutional architecture would provide much in the way of public goods or real security.¹⁴

13. Christopher B. Whitney and David Shambaugh, *Soft Power in Asia: Results of a 2008 Multinational Survey of Public Opinion* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2009); for more on Japanese views of soft power, see U.S.-Japan Conference in Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), Fulbright Japan, Japan Foundation, and Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, *Japan & US Soft Power: Addressing Global Challenges* (Tokyo: Japan CULCON Secretariat, The Japan Foundation, June 12, 2009), www.jpfc.go.jp/culcon/fulbright-culcon/dl/softpower_report.pdf.

14. Gill et al., *Strategic Views on Asian Regionalism*.

Moreover, the decision by the Naoto Kan government in November 2009 to embrace the TPP as the centerpiece of its international economic strategy revealed how fleeting Hatoyama's flirtation with Asian-only architecture really was. Participation in TPP would link Japan to the United States, Australia, and other advanced economies through a high-level FTA (resulting in tariff reductions of more than 90 percent) and would position Japan to engage in trade negotiations with China together with other Asian member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.¹⁵

Bandwagoning with China

Japan's historic default position is to bandwagon with the leading global hegemonic power. China is not likely to achieve that status for many decades to come, if ever, and Japanese strategic elites recognize this fact. For this reason, there is little evidence of Japanese bandwagoning behavior toward China in Asia. Even the Hatoyama government's political narrative about moving closer to China was aimed (in a misguided way) at counterbalancing U.S. influence on Japan, and not bandwagoning with China for safety against Chinese attack. If Japan began ceding territorial claims in the East China Sea or limiting U.S. basing rights in order to appease Beijing—that would be a different matter. In the wake of the September 2010 Sino-Japanese collision over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands, that bandwagoning scenario seems highly unlikely for the foreseeable future.

External Balancing

One straightforward hedge against declining Japanese and U.S. power and increasing Chinese power is external balancing with other states concerned about the shifting strategic equilibrium. During the past decade, Japanese elites have rediscovered the great game and have signed security cooperation agreements with Australia and India, although closer alignment with Korea remains mired in historic animosities and complex domestic politics. Of these potential external strategic partners, Korea is the most important in terms of managing the threat to Japan from both Beijing and Pyongyang. Japan-Korea relations have been plagued by disputes over territorial issues (the Tokdo/Takeshima Islands) and interpretations of history (every spring new textbooks are published in Japan, and inevitably some downplay Japan's annexation of Korea, sparking strong reactions in Seoul). Despite these irritants, polls in both countries have shown steadily improving bilateral views as Japanese and Korean views of China and North Korea have deteriorated.

Counterstrike Capabilities

Retaining or developing unilateral counterstrike capability is another often explored hedge in Japan. Japan retains a latent nuclear deterrent, and during the past decade government declaratory policy has slowly eroded the legal constraints posed by the constitution (for example, determining that preemptive strikes against enemy missile bases as a last resort before being attacked would legally constitute "self-defense"). That said, there is no pronounced change in Japanese procurement or defense planning that would suggest any serious operational push for an independent counter-

15. The government of Japan had intended to make a final decision on TPP participation by June 2011, but that has been postponed in the wake of the Tohoku earthquake.

strike capability. If anything, the government has redoubled its focus on interoperability with the United States in the wake of the disastrous tenure of Prime Minister Hatoyama.

Economic Hedging Strategies

Japanese corporations—like their U.S. counterparts—have been hedging against a slower U.S. market for years by moving to China, India, and other Asian economies despite the fact that the North American and European economies remain politically stable and reliable profit centers even as growth is shifting away from North America. Some Japanese economic nationalists have pushed for new SDRs in the IMF or increased currency swaps among Asian economies, but as a practical matter the Bank of Japan, the Ministry of Finance, and Japanese corporations continue trading in dollars and viewing the dollar as a safe investment. China’s embargo of rare earth metals to Japan during the Sino-Japanese confrontation over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands in September 2010 reinforced the diversification strategy of Japanese businesses away from investment in China. Thus, while Japanese business leaders continue seeing China as the market with the greatest growth potential, they also spend far more time devising hedging strategies to deal with protectionism or collapse in China than they do hedging against the United States.

Impact of the “3-11” Tohoku Earthquake

Although analysts have just begun to examine the strategic implications of the earthquake, tsunami, and subsequent nuclear disaster that struck northeastern Japan on March 11, 2011, there is some evidence that the speed and scope of U.S. military relief efforts and Operation Tomodachi (Japanese for “friend”)—the largest bilateral humanitarian relief mission in the history of the alliance—have reaffirmed positive perceptions of U.S. power.¹⁶ Bilateral coordination on humanitarian assistance and disaster response also serves to demonstrate the value of the alliance as a public good and could further enhance initiatives promoting interoperability and jointness across a broad range of operations. The presumed emphasis of the central government on reconstruction and economic recovery in the near term would suggest little progress on the impasse over the relocation of a U.S. Marine base on Okinawa—an irritant in the alliance—but the trend post-March 11 generally points to the benefits of Japan’s security dependence on the United States.

Japan’s relationships with other states in the region stand to improve in the short term as Chinese and South Korean offers of assistance could result in a temporary respite from the tensions that animate their respective bilateral relationships with Japan. However, the short-lived thaw in Sino-Japanese relations after the earthquake quickly melted with news that Chinese naval forces were aggressively maneuvering near Japanese vessels in the contested East China Sea. Prospects for changes in relations with Russia seem more enduring as both Tokyo and Moscow appear ready to temporarily set aside the Northern Territories dispute to promote liquefied natural gas exports as a potential substitute for nuclear power. Nonetheless, Japan’s long-standing issues with neighboring countries that have heretofore complicated regional diplomacy will likely resurface, and fundamental changes in Japanese strategic calculations with respect to U.S. power appear unlikely.

16. See, for example, Martin Fackler, “Rebuilding Lives and American Ties to Japan,” *New York Times*, March 22, 2011; also “Jieitai Haken: Gyōsei to Renkeishi Kōkateki Shienwo [Self Defense Forces dispatch: effective support through administration and coordination],” *Yomiuri Shimbun*, March 22, 2011.

Conclusion: Much Attention to U.S. Power, but Little Change in Behavior—So Far

The bottom line is that Japanese elites remain highly attuned to the instruments of U.S. power and concerned about America's relative decline in power. But Japan is fundamentally a status quo power. If anything, Japanese foreign policy behavior has aimed to uphold the U.S.-led neoliberal order as the United States has faced mounting challenges; Japan has not tried to defect from that order. Moreover, assessments of U.S. *commitment* and *intentions* still appear to be at least as important to Japanese calculations as any absolute measures of U.S. economic, military, diplomatic, or soft power.

There are two conceivable “game changers” to this trend. The first would be pronounced U.S. accommodation to Chinese power in Asia. If the United States conceded maritime control over the “second island chain”¹⁷ to China (through operational changes or formal agreement with respect to Taiwan's status or freedom of navigation for the U.S. Navy), Japanese strategy could move in a pronounced direction toward either bandwagoning with China or development of unilateral deterrence capabilities. This scenario would be inconsistent with 70 years of U.S. military and diplomatic strategy, and only the most provocative and nonmainstream Japanese observers predict this will happen.

The second game changer would be a further collapse of the Japanese economy. There is a broad consensus in the Diet that Japan needs to enact tax reform in order to deal with the looming fiscal and demographic crises, agricultural reform to engage in FTAs and expand exports, regulatory reform to revitalize competitiveness, and defense policy reform to remove anachronistic constraints on the Self-Defense Forces in an age of declining defense budgets. The good news in Japan—that the nation has a lot of wealth and high technology—serves as a disincentive for drastic reform. The unstable structure of Japan's current party politics and the weakness of its prime ministers also perversely motivate politicians to take populist stands and put off difficult decisions (with which they often agree). Without action, Japan will eventually run out of the domestic savings pool it relies on to service the nation's massive debt. The impact of such a fiscal meltdown would be difficult to predict. It could result in bold new leadership, demoralization and further insularity, or demagoguery and hypernationalism.

The historical pattern has been for Japanese elites to postpone serious institutional change until it is unavoidable and then embrace the change in order to restore national power and preserve the national polity against dangerous outside influences. For now, continued U.S. preeminence postpones those difficult decisions. Should a crisis strike Japan, the credibility of U.S. power and the U.S.-Japan alliance could prove the most important variables in determining what emerges in the next chapter of Japanese political history.

17. The second island chain is the strategic defense line that runs from the Ogasawara Islands south to Guam, beyond the East China Sea. The first island chain runs from the Japanese archipelago to the South China Sea via Okinawa Prefecture and Taiwan.

3

FUNDAMENTAL REALISM KOREAN ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Victor D. Cha

Despite the global recession, Koreans will continue to have positive views of U.S. leadership, the resiliency of American hard and soft power, and an appreciation of the critical role the United States plays in the region, given the rise of China. Koreans will hold a nuanced understanding of some of the domestic constraints on U.S. foreign policy, which does not reduce their anxiety about perceived negative trends in U.S. behavior. Although there has been a degree of hedging in ROK thinking about the United States and China influenced by past South Korean liberal administrations, current and future thinking is likely to remain strongly aligned with the United States. According to policy elites, China's behavior in the aftermath of the *Cheonan* sinking, the North Korean enriched uranium revelations, and the Yeonpyeong Island shelling has shifted the core strategic calculations of South Koreans, who now view a fundamental conflict of interest with China regarding North Korea and potential unification even as Seoul continues to seek economic opportunities in China. This recent turn of events will only increase ROK appreciation of the alliance with the United States as the cornerstone of its strategy.

Key Concepts

U.S. Power

- South Koreans will continue to hold a fundamentally realist appreciation of U.S. power. They will still view the most proximate indicator of U.S. military capabilities—U.S. troops in Korea—as the greatest guarantor of national security.
- South Koreans will retain core fears of U.S. abandonment even when alliance relations are good. Even conservative, pro-alliance stalwarts harbor unspoken fears that the United States might abandon the alliance with South Korea (for example, enter into a separate Korean War peace treaty or withdraw troops) in order to secure the denuclearization of North Korea.¹
- Though never stated in polling data or in editorial pages explicitly, these South Korean views of the United States are informed by a fundamental attribution error—that is, South Koreans tend to interpret “good” actions by the United States in alliance policy as “situational” (in other words, the Americans were “nice” because the situation dictated such behavior) and exagger-

The author thanks D. Alex Bartlett, Soo Kook Kim, and Nick Anderson for research assistance.

1. For example, see “Are Seoul and Washington Being Completely Frank?” *Chosun Ilbo*, October 23, 2009, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/10/23/2009102300843.html.



ate “bad” actions in U.S. alliance policy as “dispositional” (as being representative of the true intentions or disposition of the United States). This sort of attribution error contributes to the constant fears of abandonment even if relations with the United States are in a good patch.

U.S. Values

- South Koreans will continue to admire U.S. values represented in its political system as a model to emulate.
- South Koreans will have a nuanced and empathetic understanding of the constraints that domestic priorities place on foreign policy. This will not make Koreans any less uneasy about trends they perceive in the United States, but there is a baseline of understanding.

U.S. Economy

- South Koreans still view, by a wide margin, the United States as the leading economic power despite the global recession. They will carefully watch the U.S. economic recovery and draw direct links between U.S. stimulus packages and the fate of Korea’s exports.

Future Geostrategy

- South Koreans will continue to hold a hardened “realist” view of the balance of power in Asia. Despite rhetoric and policies that seek to create institutional rules and interdependent economic ties, there will continue to be a core understanding or concern that relations among the great powers (such as between the United States and China) play a critical role in determining Korea’s fate.

- South Koreans, like many other players in the international system, will fuel the catch-22 regarding demands on U.S. hard power—the single most important determinant of U.S. standing is whether it is perceived to continue to provide public and private goods to the target country. Currently, that is still the case. The irony is that as U.S. power is perceived to decline in the future this will only increase, not decrease, demands on U.S. power.
- South Korea’s geostrategic tilt toward the United States after the *Cheonan* sinking and the Yeonpyeong shelling still leaves unanswered the question of how much the long-term economic interaction with China might affect ROK strategic outlooks. More study of this topic is still required.

Methodology

The arguments in this report are supported by interviews in the field with policy elites (in the Blue House, Foreign Ministry, Unification Ministry, Defense Ministry), think tank specialists, journalists, and scholars. Additional information was collected from polling data (Korean and international) and primary source materials including editorials from major Korean newspapers, conference papers, and journal articles. Relevant polls have been gathered from Pew Research, Institute for Peace and Unification Studies at Seoul National University, *JoongAng Daily*, Institute for National Security Strategy (INSS in Korea), National Strategy Institute (NSI), Korea Institute for Defense Analysis (KIDA), and the ASAN Institute for Policy Studies (AIPS in Korea). Editorials are chiefly gathered from three major newspapers in Korea: *Chosun Ilbo*, *JoongAng Daily*, and *Dong-A Ilbo*.

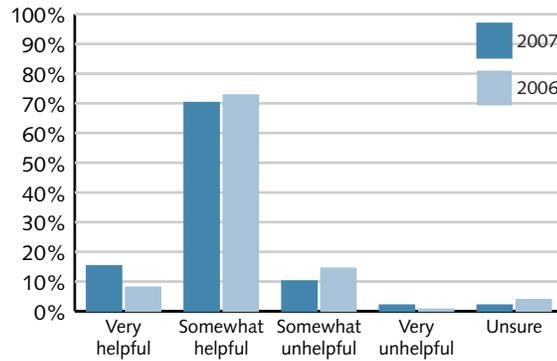
Views of Traditional Sources of American Power

Military Power

Future Korean views of American power will remain grounded in fundamentally “defensive realist” thinking. This means a full appreciation for U.S. hard-power capabilities and for the role those capabilities play in Korean national security; but it also means occasional objections to the use of U.S. hard power, particularly if it is unilateralist or revisionist in nature. Koreans generally will adhere closely to administrations that hold status quo views of the world and seek to use U.S. hard power only to maintain the peaceful status quo rather than to overturn it (for example, opposition to Iraq invasion). As figure 1 shows, the overwhelming majority of Koreans (80–90 percent) will continue to hold the core belief that U.S. military power is critical to national security, even as they might oppose certain military policies of U.S. administrations. A telling sign is that even among those who have unfavorable views of the United States, a strong majority (72 percent) still perceives the continuation of the U.S.-ROK alliance as necessary.² Likely spurred by the fact that few (25 percent) think the South can deter the North without the United States, and even

2. Chaibong Hahm et al., “AIPS Opinion Survey 2010: Report on Korean Attitudes toward the United States” (presentation by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, Seoul, 2010), http://www.asaninst.org/sys_gita/down_eng.php?folder=Ym9hcmRfZmlsZXM=&file_name=ZmlsZTNfMTEwLnBkZg==&real_file=MTAxOV9wcmVzZW50YXRpb25fc2xpZGVfYXNhbW5wZGY%3D

Figure 1. Koreans' Views on the U.S.-Korea Alliance and Security, 2006 and 2007



Source: Dohk Goh Soon et al., "National Survey of Defense," Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA), December 2007.

fewer (23 percent) believe that South Korea alone would be victorious in an inter-Korean war, the vast majority (87 percent) of South Koreans see the U.S.-ROK alliance as a necessity in the future.³

Policy elites in Korea understand that the United States, as a global power, has a broad agenda and therefore must have military capabilities that span the world. But even as realists, they view limits to how much the United States can accomplish with unilateral military power. Figures 2 and 3 show that Koreans can simultaneously favor relations with the United States (93 percent), strongly oppose the invasion of Iraq (85 percent), and view the United States as an international pariah (81 percent).

Koreans will remain concerned about future unilateral uses of U.S. power. They overwhelmingly expect the United States to seek international approval and multilateralism when it uses military force. In the past, close to two-thirds of South Koreans (65 percent) expected the U.S. president to seek international approval for any use of force.⁴ Despite the multidecade alliance, only a moderate majority (60.1 percent) agree that the United States and South Korea have common interests, and of those a mere 5.8 percent strongly agree.⁵ Where policy elites in Seoul confide that they worry about such use most in the future is vis-à-vis Iran. Koreans generally oppose the use of military force as an instrument for counterproliferation in Iran, presumably fearing the use of force on the Korean Peninsula under the similar conditions. Previous polls support this view; they show that only 44 percent support military action against a developing nuclear program.⁶

Bottom line: Despite these caveats, South Koreans will continue to view a stable U.S.-Korea strategic alliance as critical to their future over the next ten years, with China a distant second (see figure 4, which depicts a survey taken in Korea in 2007, before the sinking of the *Cheonan*).⁷

3. Ibid.

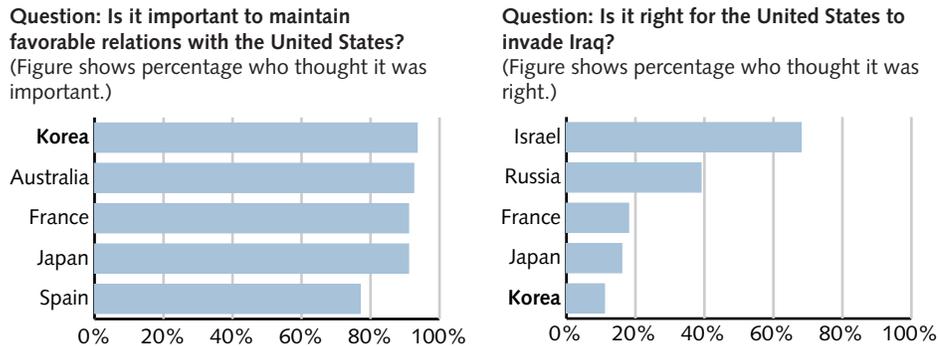
4. J. M. Horowitz, "Obama Popular in Japan, China and South Korea: But Only Modest Improvements in U.S. Image," Pew Global Attitudes Project, November 12, 2009, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1409/obama-asia-trip-popular-japan-china-south-korea>.

5. Hahm et al., "AIPS Opinion Survey 2010." »

6. A. Kohut, "Restoring America's Reputation in the World," Pew Global Attitudes Project, March 4, 2010, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1512/restoring-americas-reputation-globally-gains-may-be-fragile>

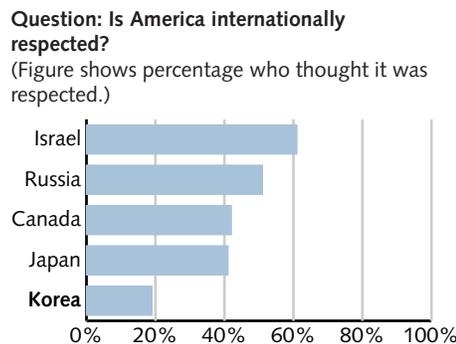
7. S. Dokgo et al. "National Survey of Defense," Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA), December 2007.

Figure 2. Koreans' Views (Compared with Other Selected Countries) on Relations with the United States, 2007



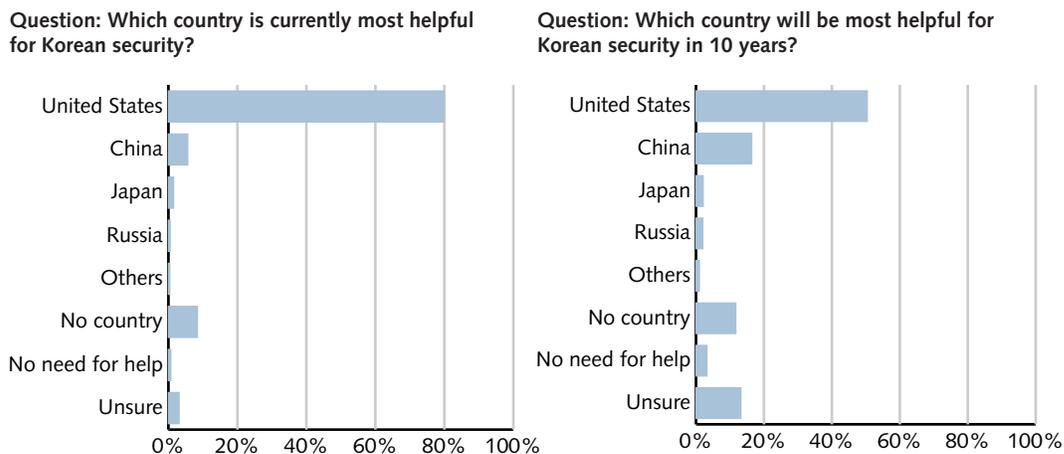
Source: Dohk Goh Soon et al., "National Survey of Defense," Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA), December 2007.

Figure 3. Koreans' Views (Compared with Other Selected Countries) on Respect for the United States, 2004



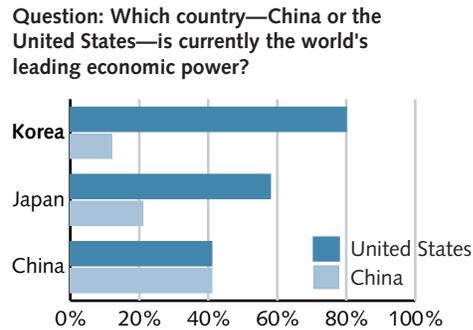
Source: "Public Perception of the United States in 10 Countries," *JoongAng Daily*, October 14, 2004.

Figure 4. Koreans' Views on Most Important Security Guarantor Currently and in 2017



Source: Dohk Goh Soon et al., "National Survey of Defense," Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA), December 2007.

Figure 5. Respondents Views in Selected Countries about World's Leading Economic Power, 2009



Source: J. M. Horowitz, "Obama Popular in Japan, China and South Korea: But Only Modest Improvements in U.S. Image," Pew Global Attitudes Project, November 12, 2009.

Note: Respondents were asked to choose among the United States, China, Japan, and the European Union.

Economic Capabilities

Among major Asian economies, South Korea will consistently continue to name the United States as the world's leading economic power. There are, and will be, constant concerns about the periodic rise of protectionist sentiment in the United States and about being tied too closely to the U.S. economy. But Koreans still broadly want the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) passed, even as it ties the two economies even closer together.

The U.S. economic model and capabilities have long been emulated and admired by Koreans. The United States is still seen as the leading economy by South Koreans (80 percent) and by a significant percentage more than by Japanese or Chinese (see figure 5).⁸

Hypothetically, there are two variables that could change the perception of U.S. economic power: the global recession and rising protectionist sentiment in the United States. Regarding the global recession, the current situation has not led Koreans toward dumping the U.S. model. Compared with other Asian countries, Korea was actually the country that held the most positive expectations for the longevity of the U.S. model. Korea registered a decrease in the percentage of people who viewed U.S. economic influence as growing more negative between 2008 and 2009. China, Japan, and India scored higher relative to Korea (table 1).⁹

Regarding protectionist sentiment, interviews with policy elites, editorial content, and public opinion polls suggest that Koreans will remain deeply concerned about a tide of protectionism in the United States, even with the successful negotiation of the KORUS FTA in 2010. Policy elites' concerns stem not just from parochial interests. They draw a direct link between the U.S. position on free trade and broader U.S. leadership in Asia.

Koreans will always have a better understanding than most in the region of the constraints on U.S. policy because of a rather nuanced and sophisticated view of how democracies operate. But this does not alleviate anxieties. In this regard, there is no overestimating the importance of the

8. Horowitz, "Obama Popular in Japan, China and South Korea,"

9. "Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image Around the World," Pew Global Attitudes Project, July 23, 2009, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1289/global-attitudes-survey-2009-obama-lifts-america-image>.

Table 1. Respondents in Selected Countries Who Viewed U.S. Economic Influence as Negative, 2009

Country	2008	2009	Change
	%	%	
Canada	—	78	—
China	18	27	+9
India	25	23	-2
Indonesia	37	27	-10
Japan	63	67	+4
Pakistan	30	40	+10
South Korea	41	37	-4

Source: "Confidence in Obama Lifts U.S. Image around the World," Pew Global Attitudes Project, July 23, 2009.

Note: Table shows the percentage of the total sample saying the U.S. economic influence is negative. The question was asked only of those who said the U.S. economy has a great deal or a fair amount of influence.

KORUS FTA as a major bellwether of future U.S. leadership in Asia in the eyes of Koreans (and arguably other Asian trading nations). Korean policy elites in Washington and in Seoul view the ratification of the KORUS FTA not just as a trade issue but as an alliance strengthener in the face of North Korean threats and a rising China.

Korean views of U.S. technology and products will remain strong on the whole, and research has found that neither the beef controversy nor the unresolved disagreement over U.S. automobiles has shaken that basic perception.

Bottom line: The Washington model (as opposed to the Beijing model) will continue to be favored among Koreans. The U.S. market will still be seen as an opportunity to continue export-led growth and deepen relations, but this enthusiasm will be tempered by concern that deeper integration with the United States also exposes Korea to future U.S. recessions. This translates into a marginal degree of self-reflection on the need to diversify the South Korean economy away from excessive reliance on exports.

Ideas and Values

The United States and Korea will forever be tied together as two prominent liberal democracies in Asia. It is therefore unsurprising that Koreans in general have positive views of U.S. ideational power. Koreans view themselves as a model example of the U.S. Cold War experiment—emergence from a war-torn society into a global economic power with an open political system. This is a powerful lesson that has been replicated in only a few other cases in modern international relations. This will continue to inform admiration for U.S. ideas and culture, as well as politics, even if troubling trends surface.

According to a Pew poll in 2007, sizable majorities in South Korea continue to express positive views of the U.S. approach to democracy, and more than one-third of Koreans have a favorable

Table 2. Views of Respondents in Selected Countries about U.S. Intellectual Exports, 2007

Country	Positive views of:		
	U.S. movies, music, and television	U.S. science and technology	Spread of U.S. ideas
	%	%	%
Pakistan	4	36	4
India	23	64	29
China	42	80	38
Bangladesh	14	81	25
Japan	70	81	42
Malaysia	54	83	16
Indonesia	50	84	11
Korea	49	85	38

Source: “Global Unease with Major World Powers—Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 27, 2007.

image of the spread of U.S. ideas in Korea.¹⁰ Particularly, they have positive impressions of American education and science and technology. Among South Koreans, 49 percent have a positive view on American movies and music, and 85 percent on U.S. science and technology (see table 2).¹¹

Koreans have unusual admiration for the perceived ability of U.S. politicians to engage in civil debate and to reach out across party lines. A March 2010 editorial in *Dong-A Ilbo* said: “The [U.S.] Republicans are the minority in both the Senate and House, but did not resort to physical resistance at the vote or street rallies in collaboration with external forces. . . . Why Korean politicians have no intent to show the same image remains a mystery.”¹² The editorials reveal that the Korean perception of U.S. politics has been influenced by President Barack Obama’s efforts to strike a bipartisan tone, but they also reflect the vulgar level of partisan rancor in the Korean polity.

Assessments of American Power

Government

The popular view is that the key variable in determining future ROK government views of the United States is the ideological leaning of the party in power in Seoul. This is only partially correct. The algorithm must also include the issue of North Korea. Contrary to conventional wisdom, neither liberal nor conservative ROK governments have major disagreements with U.S.

10. “Global Unease with Major World Powers—Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 27, 2007, <http://pewglobal.org/2007/06/27/global-unease-with-major-world-powers/>.

11. *Ibid.*

12. “Mature Democratic Behavior,” *Dong-A Ilbo*, March 23, 2010, <http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?bicode=080000&biid=2010032336328>.

administrations on domestic policy, economic policy, and the global agenda. There is substantial political overlap of the political center in Korea with that in the United States. Thus, a liberal ROK government (Roh Moo-hyun) will send troops to Iraq, just as a conservative one (Lee Myung-bak) sent troops to Afghanistan.

Assessments do vary on North Korea, however, where policy disagreements over the level of engagement can affect perceptions and the overall tone of relations. The Roh Moo-hyun National Security Council once commented in private that despite the ideological differences with President George W. Bush, Seoul and Washington agreed on almost every issue except North Korea. This dynamic is likely to repeat itself under future liberal governments in Seoul.

Elites

Korean policy elites generally divide along two lines. One group comprises the older, Korean War generation of elites (now in their 50s–70s), many of whom have done graduate study in the United States, taught at the elite Korean universities, and served in the Korean government. This group of opinion leaders will continue to have generally positive views of U.S. power and presence. They value the alliance as a normative good and see America as key to Korea’s and the region’s stability. There is a younger generation (in their 30s–40s) of policy elite, largely the post–Korean War generation, also educated at top universities in the United States and in Korea, who appreciate the role of the United States in Korea’s development and security but hold slightly more critical views of the United States. This latter group and future generations that will follow it are very important in that they hold views unbiased by the “U.S. savior role” of the Korean War. They will be extremely critical of the United States if it acts unilaterally, but they will also see benefits to the alliance and to the continued U.S. presence in Asia.

Population

The standard interpretation is that popular views on the United States break down along generational lines. The Korean War generation tends to hold more conservative, pro-Western views. The 3-8-6 generation (30-something in the 1990s, college-educated in the 1980s, and born in the 1960s) is more critical of the United States given that their formative experiences centered on the struggle for democracy and perceived U.S. complicity in the Kwangju massacre. But the most interesting recent trend in popular views in Korea centers on the 20-somethings. This is a non-ideological, materialist, apolitical generation by Korean standards. And yet, the young generation in their 20s has recently become more pro-American than both the generation of people in their 30s, and the general perception as a whole, as shown in table 3. What is interesting is that members of this age group travel as much to China as they do to the United States for language study and recreation.

Defense, Intelligence, Diplomats

One of the more troubling trends to watch for is political “redirection” of the ministries when power changes hands in Seoul. During the past decade we have seen some Korean ministries under the direction of new political leaderships shift their attitudes toward the United States. Specifically, the period of liberal rule in Korea coincided with a marked shift in the agenda vis-à-vis North Korea. Defense and intelligence officials played down the threat from the North. ROK

**Table 3. Korean Respondents' Answers to the 2008 Survey Question:
"How positive or negative an influence do you think the United States has had on the
change of Korean society since its establishment?"**

Characteristics of respondents	Total sample	Very positive	Slightly positive	Slightly negative	Very negative	Do not know/ no response	Total
	No.	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	724	26.9	53.8	14.0	3.2	2.0	100.0
Gender							
Male	358	34.4	50.1	12.3	2.3	0.8	100.0
Female	366	19.5	57.5	15.7	4.1	3.2	100.0
Age							
From 19 to 29	154	12.6	64.4	17.4	4.0	1.6	100.0
From 30 to 39	166	12.7	60.5	20.5	5.7	0.7	100.0
From 40 to 49	163	28.2	55.3	13.5	2.9	0.0	100.0
Over 50	241	44.8	41.5	7.8	1.2	4.6	100.0
Educational background							
Middle school or lower	78	32.1	50.8	7.7	2.0	7.3	100.0
High school	225	30.0	49.9	14.1	3.1	2.9	100.0
College or higher	421	24.2	56.5	15.2	3.5	0.6	100.0
Occupation							
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	26	42.0	32.5	21.9	3.6	0.0	100.0
Self-employed	77	28.1	54.5	15.6	0.9	0.8	100.0
Blue collar	73	14.2	66.7	15.2	3.1	0.8	100.0
White collar	190	29.8	48.5	16.0	4.3	1.5	100.0
Full-time housewife	197	25.3	55.2	12.1	2.8	4.6	100.0
Student	93	14.7	66.8	13.1	5.4	0.0	100.0
Unemployed and other	68	46.4	40.8	9.4	0.9	2.6	100.0

Source: "Chosun Ilbo March 2008 Opinion Poll Commemorating 60th Anniversary of Korea," *Chosun Ilbo*, March 5, 2008; available in the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation database (P08-03).

intelligence officials confided that they were not allowed to cable that the Americans were unhappy with a particular ROK position because Seoul responded that the bureaucrats were "not doing their job" to convince Americans otherwise. Bilateral intelligence exchanges, which had been frequent, became much less fluid. The one ministry that tended to navigate a central path despite these political forces was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry that showed the widest variation was the Ministry of Unification, with the defense and intelligence ministries falling in between. In the future, this will be an important variable that can dramatically affect the level of bilateral cooperation.

Table 4. Broad Views of the United States and the Republic of Korea toward Each Other

	U.S. liberal government	U.S. conservative government
ROK liberal government	(I) positive	(II) negative
ROK conservative government	(III) negative	(IV) positive

Source: Author's concept.

Business

The business sector generally retains favorable views of the United States. Members of this sector support free trade (although there are concerns about “green protectionism” in Congress) and foreign direct investment; however, the key variable that the business sector watches with regard to the United States is the security alliance and U.S. commitment. How the United States is viewed in terms of its level of security commitment to Asia is a key benchmark for market confidence and acts as the offset to the famed “North Korea discount” (the undervaluation of ROK publicly traded companies).

Possible Causes of Dynamism

The key variables that affect volatility in views of the United States are North Korea policy, democratic maturation (in the ROK), and the perceived capacity to provide public and private goods (by the United States).

Table 4 generally encapsulates the views of the United States with regard to North Korea policy.

There are variations to the simple algorithm in table 4. For example, at the end of the George W. Bush administration, engagement policies coincided with those of a liberal Roh Moo-hyun government (which would make quadrant II positive). But the point is that Korean governments will continue to see North Korea policy as all consuming, which means that disagreements with the United States (for which North Korea policy is at best a policy distraction) will affect the overall tenor of relations.

Fundamental Attribution Error

This asymmetry in views of a critical issue for Koreans is exacerbated by basic cognition errors to which the United States must be attentive. Policy elites tend to assign dispositional qualities to any U.S. behavior that appears negative (for example, “bad” American behavior manifests the true U.S. disposition toward Korea). Conversely elites assign situational qualities to any positive U.S. behavior (for example, “good” U.S. behavior is not dispositional but is temporarily dictated by the situation). Thus, if the United States talks about future drawdowns of forces on the peninsula, Koreans will see this as dispositional rather than situational. On the contrary, strong U.S. statements of support for Korea will register as situational. These attribution errors are less prevalent when overall U.S.-ROK relations are good (as with the current Obama-Lee ties), but they will be exacerbated when relations are bad.

Scholars often argue that “unforeseen events” is a key variable that disrupts U.S.-ROK relations. The Highway 56 incident in 2002,¹³ the debate on the abolition of the National Security Law in 2004, the issue of moving a U.S. military base to Pyeongtaek, the KORUS FTA in 2006, and the controversy over importing U.S. beef in 2008 have been major sources of provocation.

But this is only partially correct. Two deeper dynamics are at work: democratic maturation and consolidation in Korea, and the U.S. capacity to provide public and private goods to Koreans.

First, although younger generations of Koreans have more discriminating and critical views of the United States, this is not anti-Americanism. This same generation has critical views of itself and of its own government. But what is emerging in Korea is a democratic maturation process by which political swings to the left or to the right become more moderate over time. We witnessed dynamic changes because of the political shift to the left under Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, but the likelihood of future left-of-center governments taking similar pro-China positions or anti-U.S. ones is smaller. Similarly, future conservative governments will not adopt containment approaches to North Korea but will seek some form of conditional engagement. This does not guarantee against negative views of the United States, but it does reduce the variability described in the table 4.

Second, the longer-term core cause of dynamism in Korean views in the future will be the perceived U.S. capacity to provide public or private goods to Korea and the region. This project as well as another one undertaken by the American Political Science Association found that the single most important determinant of positive or negative views of the United States was the degree to which the United States is providing private or public goods. This might be interpreted in popular contexts as policy disagreement, but the fundamental question is deeper—that is, whether the United States is still seen as having the capacity to lead globally and in the region as demonstrated by continuing military commitments, commitments to free trade, and other specific agreements. Thus, a disagreement over beef imports—while creating “noise” in the relationship—is not a fundamental determinant of ROK views; at most it creates some marginal views about the quality of U.S. products. An inability to ratify the KORUS FTA or a perceived unfair agreement on missiles, by contrast, has serious implications for views of whether the alliance continues to provide private goods to Korea.

Emergence of New Rhetoric or Behavior Based on New Strategic Calculations

The two most significant changes in strategic calculations do not directly focus on the United States, but they are intimately tied to the alliance.

China

The first is the longer-term view of China. Policy elites at the highest levels in Seoul are now openly wary of China’s intentions. After Chinese students in Seoul started riots against Korean protestors during the Olympic torch procession before the 2008 Olympic Games, a former Blue House official called me (purposefully on an open line, it seems) to berate China’s audacity, saying “They cannot treat Asian neighbors like tributary states.” In the aftermath of the *Cheonan*,

13. Two Korean schoolchildren were killed by a U.S. military vehicle.

members of the national security team in Seoul claimed that “China has now shown its true face.” A senior Foreign Ministry official visiting Washington after the *Cheonan* sinking openly stated that Korea’s core strategic calculations on China have changed. What Koreans previously viewed as a positive-sum game with China when it came to North Korea is now seen in very cautious terms. Korean policy elites view China as obstructionist on North Korea and view unification as something opposed by Beijing. This trend has been accelerated by the *Cheonan*, but it has deeper roots going back to the 2008 torch relay, the Koguryo history controversy, the “garlic wars,” and the cumulative experience of doing business with China for 18 years since normalization in 1992. This trend, moreover, is not event specific and transitory. Many scholars in Korea see the current trend as a natural outgrowth of dealing with a large nondemocracy on Korea’s border. In other words, dissimilar political values are a critical driver of future China-ROK relations.

Unification

The second new trend regards unification. After one decade of not discussing unification and simply discounting it as too expensive and too dangerous (hence the policy justification for the “sunshine” or soft-landing engagement approach), Koreans are talking more openly about it. This trend grows out of concerns about Kim Jong-il’s severe health problems as well as a view that 20-plus years of negotiation have not led to the end of the nuclear and conventional military threats. The current government in Seoul has put resources behind this effort, basically utilizing the Unification Ministry’s budget (previously reserved for handouts to North Korea) to carry out a massive campaign aimed at preparing and socializing the Korean population and the world to the possibility of unification. Several major international forums were held in Seoul on unification in 2010 and more are to come. Lee Myung-bak raised the issue of a unification tax to prepare for this eventuality, which sets the stage for a national discussion on preparation for unification.

Both of these trends have obvious implications for the United States. We want to foster an environment that encourages Korean alignment but not one that causes Seoul to hesitate at becoming entrapped in a containment strategy against China, which would not be beneficial for U.S. or Asian interests. Regarding unification, the perception of U.S. support both politically and materially for unification, without appearing interventionist, will be hugely important for future views of the United States. Whether the United States has the economic capabilities to help is an important unanswered question, particularly given China’s currency reserves.

Future Direction of the Bilateral Relationship with the United States

A decent reservoir of goodwill exists in Korea, and the United States will be able to draw on it. Agreements during the past eight years, including the visa waiver, WEST,¹⁴ NATO-plus-three status, and the KORUS FTA have all been seen by Koreans as providing valued private goods to the relationship that puts the United States in good stead.

14. WEST refers to the “Work, English Study, and Travel” program, which grew out of a bilateral agreement signed by the governments of the United States and the ROK. It is part of the U.S. J-1 Exchange Visitor program that allows university students and recent graduates from Korea to combine language instruction, work experience, and travel in the United States for up to 18 months.

There are three issues over the next two to four years, however, that have the potential for creating fissures.

The first is the failure to ratify the KORUS FTA in both countries' legislatures. This would send several messages: (1) the United States is so bogged down in domestic politics that it cannot afford to invest in the long-term future of the alliance, (2) the U.S. position on trade in Asia is revisionist, and (3) the failure to ratify the KORUS FTA would send the message that U.S. leadership more broadly will be questioned once it turns toward protectionism.

The second and third issues are the bilateral missile agreement and the 1-2-3 nuclear agreement. In these cases, the source of tensions will not be whether Korea gets all that it desires in these negotiations (it won't). Instead, the key metric will be how these agreements play politically because some politicians (in the opposition) will be tempted to link these with sovereignty issues. This would again link to longer-term fundamental perceptions of whether the alliance continues to provide private goods to Seoul.

Three Most Important Decisions the United States Could Make to Improve Its Position in the Region

- **Free trade.** A positive and proactive position on free trade is critical to Korean and regional perceptions of sustained U.S. leadership in Asia in the face of a rising China. Koreans and Asians are watching very closely the fate of the KORUS FTA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. U.S. support for free trade is a public good in Asia.
- **Reassurance.** As tedious as it might be, the United States must continually “tend the garden” in terms of alliance relations, paying attention to details and to public face. Because of attribution errors that get exacerbated in difficult times, it becomes even more critical that Washington be aware of demonstrating commitment and reassurance. Pronounce U.S. commitments, restate them, and then reassure regarding these commitments.
- **Avoid unilateralism.** Whether this pertains to North Korea policy, Afghanistan, or China, Koreans respect the importance of U.S. consultation with allies and react badly to acts of unilateralism.

4

GREAT, BUT UNFOCUSED INDONESIAN ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Ernest Z. Bower

Indonesians, like citizens of other Southeast Asian nations, perceive American power to be in decline relative to a rising China, yet they generally believe the United States will retain its role as the world's preeminent power for the next several decades. More salient are Indonesian concerns about U.S. engagement—that is, that the U.S. focus on Southeast Asia is inconsistent, whether the United States is powerful or not. The uneven attention paid by Washington generates unvoiced fears of abandonment and, to a lesser degree, entrapment.

Even though it is the fourth-largest country in the world and the largest in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) by a factor of more than two, Indonesia feels caught between the United States and China. Like citizens of all Southeast Asian nations, Indonesians emphasize that they do not want to be asked to choose between the United States and China. Unlike other some others in Southeast Asian countries, however, Indonesian elites have a clear preference for American as opposed to Chinese preeminence. Like its ASEAN neighbors, Indonesia does not want to “be like” China; in other words, China has little soft power in ASEAN countries. However, China's economic dynamism and pragmatic approach to regional economic integration make it a useful and necessary economic partner.

Indonesia views China as a competitor because of the geography of the region, the inevitable struggle for similar markets and investors, and the fact that Indonesia considers itself the only “big country” in Southeast Asia. In this context, perceptions of U.S. power are an important factor in Indonesian strategic calculations, providing reassurances that it is safe and helpful for Indonesia to counter, even if subtly, Chinese attempts to dictate the agenda in ASEAN-related forums such as ASEAN Plus One, ASEAN Plus Three, and the East Asia Summit (EAS). This is significant because Indonesia will chair ASEAN and the EAS in 2011 and is self-consciously returning to its role as the leading voice in Southeast Asia.

Indonesia is the least likely of the ASEAN countries, after Vietnam, to pursue policies of accommodation with China. This does not mean it will necessarily run into an American embrace. Indonesian concerns about U.S. power, combined with a more learned mistrust of U.S. commitment to the country and the region, encourage Indonesians to guard against “entrapment” or going too far with the Americans and not being supported after making external commitments based on perceived U.S. support. In other words, Indonesia will use hedging to protect its image of independence and of being a leader of less-developed countries, and it will work to avert perceptions of its being overcommitted to the United States.

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Indonesians have historically characterized their foreign policy as “independent and active,” a formulation that led it to pioneer the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War era of the 1950s. Though not always true to this vision, for Indonesia it is the default position. As a result, Indonesian policymakers require strong assurances of U.S. power and presence to commit to partnership with the United States.

This dichotomy explains the result in the 2009 CSIS survey on Asian regionalism, in which 65 percent of Indonesian elites responded that they believed that China would be the “strongest in overall national power in ten years *in the Asian region*.”¹ This did not indicate their confidence in Chinese leadership: more Indonesian respondents, 29 percent, than in any other country indicated that China was the “greatest threat to regional peace and stability.”² A plurality, 46 percent, responded that the bilateral relationship with China would be the most important relationship in ten years. Only 23 percent indicated that the U.S. relationship would be most important.³ Indonesian elites like the idea of U.S. engagement in the region and dislike the thought of a dominant Chinese role, but they have far more confidence in the Chinese commitment to the region than they do in the U.S. commitment.

1. Bates Gill, Michael Green, Kiyoto Tsuji, and William Watts, *Strategic Views on Asian Regionalism: Survey Results and Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, February 2009), p. 15.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Methodology

Indonesian foreign-policy making, despite democratization, remains the province of the Indonesian elite. As a result, this report focuses on their views. The observations in this report are based on interviews with Indonesian elites attached to the State Palace, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Trade, and the Indonesian Chamber of Industry; think tank and civil society leaders; and leaders in locally and foreign-owned businesses with influence over government policy. Discussions with those close to the Islamic leadership groups in Indonesia supplemented these observations. Quantitative measures are based on polling conducted by CSIS and the Pew Research Center. Additional insight was gleaned from newspaper reports, editorials, and opinion columns written in English and Indonesian, particularly from *Kompas*, *Tempo*, the *Jakarta Post*, and the *Jakarta Globe*.

It is important to stress that, because of Indonesian norms of consensus and the continuing dearth of strong institutions charged with the examination of foreign policy, foreign-policy making in Indonesia is less sophisticated or structured than in Asia's industrialized states. There are few identifiable "camps" in debates on foreign policy, and as a result there are fewer lines of demarcation that can be drawn in those debates. Consensus on issues such as U.S. power and presence emerges through a long and irregular process of dialogue among many actors. Policy is then forged out of that consensus through the leadership of the president of the republic.

This paper begins with some important background on Indonesian perceptions of U.S. power and presence. The next two sections outline where the consensus on these issues stands today and where the benchmarks for determinations regarding U.S. leadership will occur. Next, the analysis disaggregates the consensus according to various institutional perspectives. Finally, the paper explores the implications for U.S. policy.

Background

Indonesia is the world's fourth-largest country. It is arguably Southeast Asia's most influential country. Its population is more than twice the size of the next closest member of ASEAN, and it has the region's largest economy. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, and people's religious lives are dominated by a predominantly moderate and personalized version of Islam. It is also the world's third-largest democracy after India and the United States.

Indonesia does not perceive the United States to be as important as other nations in Southeast Asia perceive the United States to be. This is in part because Indonesia is generally less integrated into the international economic and financial system than many of its Southeast Asian neighbors. Its large population means Indonesia has a large domestic consumption base, so it is not as dependent on exports or foreign markets for GDP growth as other countries are. Although trade amounts to more than 300 percent of GDP in Singapore and nearly 200 percent of GDP in Malaysia, trade is less than 30 percent of Indonesia's GDP. Because of its large domestic market, Indonesia is one of only a few economies to sustain economic growth throughout the most recent worldwide economic crisis. Moreover, its population is relatively nonmobile. Although some Indonesians are lured abroad for schooling, at the high end, or for remittances, at the low end, they tend not to stay away for long. Few permanent Indonesian expatriate communities exist abroad, especially compared with those of other countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, or China.

The New Order under Suharto

U.S. power has not translated to real engagement in Indonesia since the 1980s. After the Cold War, at the apex of U.S. global dominance, U.S. foreign policy was perceived by Indonesians as inconsistent, unfocused, and even tone deaf. While U.S. investment in Indonesia climbed steadily and Indonesian students began to flood into the United States, America's Indonesia policy was dominated by issues the Indonesians saw as highly sensitive yet peripheral to their country's priorities, namely separatist movements and related human rights concerns in Aceh and East Timor. This led to a decoupling of private interest in U.S. society, which remained high, and public interest in U.S. policies, which declined.⁴

The U.S. Congress passed human rights legislation that severed the close links that the U.S. military had established with the Indonesian military since the ascendance of President Suharto.⁵ The Pentagon and the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) were forced to disengage, beginning a nearly 20-year period of little to no contact between the U.S. military and the military of Southeast Asia's largest country.

At the end of the 1990s—as the Asian financial crisis ravaged Indonesia and shattered the lives of families by decimating savings, eliminating jobs, and closing off opportunities for advancement at all levels—President Suharto and his government fell. This should have been a watershed moment for U.S. foreign policy in Indonesia and the opportunity for Southeast Asia's largest country to move from a centrally controlled military dictatorship toward democracy. Unfortunately, the U.S. response to the financial crisis was seen as cold, sterile, lacking compassion, and underlining Indonesian suspicions that “the Americans don't really know us”; thus, an important opportunity was lost.

An iconic photograph of the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Michel Camdessus, standing smugly over a hunched and defeated President Suharto as he signed a major agreement in 1998 with the IMF, which was understood to be closely aligned with Washington, represented for many elite Indonesians this perceived lack of compassion and lack of respect with which the United States handled the crisis.⁶

The Chinese Charm Offensive

As Indonesians forged ahead to create a democracy, they did so with mixed feelings about the United States. On the one hand, they were inspired by Jeffersonian ideals and the courage and vision of great U.S. leaders like John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King; on the other hand, they could taste the bitter pill of perceived U.S. indifference to the worst financial crisis in the nation's history.⁷

4. Ali Alatas, the late Indonesian foreign minister; A. R. Ramly, former Indonesian ambassador to the United States; and Arifin Siregar, former Indonesian ambassador to the United States, interviews with author.

5. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and former senator Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) were key drivers of legislation prohibiting the U.S. military from engaging the Indonesian Armed Forces.

6. Though Camdessus is not an American, Indonesians closely associate the IMF with the “Washington consensus” and U.S. policy.

7. During the Asian financial crisis from 1997 to 2000, the percentage living in poverty in Indonesia moved from less than 12 percent to more than 50 percent, savings were depleted by an estimated 70 percent, and the rupiah was devalued from 2,500 to 14,500 to the U.S. dollar.

It was precisely at this moment that the People's Republic of China transformed its profile and perception in the region from that of a stodgy ideological giant to a newly empowered neighbor, ready and willing to help. China provided—for the first time—financial assistance to beleaguered ASEAN nations, including Indonesia. The Chinese charm offensive in Southeast Asia had officially begun.

China has made surprising inroads considering the history of mistrust and racial tension between Indonesia and its ethnic Chinese population, and Indonesia and the Chinese Communist Party. Although Chinese Indonesians have always suffered under suspicion and ethnic chauvinism in Indonesia, the situation worsened when Suharto came to power on the back of a failed coup attempt by communists.

Suharto's supporters set out to purge the country of alleged communists, a move that unleashed spasms of violence against Chinese Indonesians—most of whom were not, in fact, communists.⁸ Importation of any Chinese-language writings or recordings was prohibited until 1999. As part of Suharto's ensuing effort to forge a cohesive national identity, his regime ordered Chinese Indonesians to adopt Indonesian names. Many did, and the Chinese community recovered its place in the country's leadership by rebuilding business empires and supplying a corps of loyal academics and technocrats to Suharto's governments.

As a result, cultural and political obstacles to China's influence in Indonesia are far greater than the obstacles to U.S. influence. China's size and proximity have caused the Indonesian system to produce natural antibodies to its influence in the region. Chinese investment, while welcome, often comes with kickbacks for senior officials, and low-interest loan packages require projects be built by Chinese companies and workers. This approach has generated resentment in Indonesia.

The Obama Era

The election of Barack Obama as president of the United States—the first U.S. president to have lived in Indonesia—and Indonesia's transition to democracy are coincident events that have refocused Indonesians on the United States. While the Obama administration clearly plans to take advantage of this window of opportunity to elevate and transform the relationship through presidential focus and a new comprehensive partnership, it has just begun to seize the momentum and fully engage Indonesia.

President Obama set out plans to visit Indonesia three times before finally making the trip for a brief 22 hours in November 2010. For Indonesians, the message sent by the postponements was clear—"You are not particularly important to the United States, even with Barack Obama as president."—but President Obama's short visit in November 2010 was well received by most Indonesian elites. It will take time to find out whether Indonesians will alter their perspective of U.S. engagement and staying power. For now, there is a sense that the jury is out, and there is clearly hope that the president's visit turns out to be a historic inflection point after which genuine alignment of U.S. and Indonesian interests and values will be explored and promoted.

At this juncture, U.S. policy has still not closed the gap between the relative indifference of Indonesians toward the United States at the policy level and the personal interest in an America led by Barack Obama and what the United States represents.

8. The Indonesian Communist Party, the PKI, was averse to including ethnic Chinese Indonesians because the party did not want to be seen as a foreign fifth column, but as an indigenous group.

Measures of U.S. Power

Military

In terms of military power, the United States is seen as strong and forward deployed. The leadership of the U.S. military in the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief effort following the 2004 tsunami reminded Indonesian elites that forward-deployed U.S. power in Asia is a public good that fundamentally contributes to the security of Indonesians. Moreover, the speed and efficiency of the response impressed Indonesian foreign policy elites. The relief effort helped rehabilitate the image of the U.S. military in the Indonesian popular imagination. Although that rehabilitation was short-lived among the broader population, the positive impression left with Indonesian foreign policy elites has remained.

Unlike other ASEAN countries, Indonesia perceives itself as large country that merits a higher level of respect and engagement than it engenders, and that conveys the perception of the need for military engagement. When the United States is not forthcoming with that level of engagement, it is often interpreted—if not as a lack of power—as a lack of commitment to the region.

To ensure that the United States has strong alignment with ASEAN as new regional security architecture is established in the form of the EAS and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+) forums, U.S. policy has recognized the strategic imperative of reestablishing military ties with Indonesia. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and the U.S. Department of Defense have worked with the State Department to initiate that effort, with good results thus far.

A key challenge in that regard was recently overcome when Secretary Gates visited Jakarta in July 2010 to reestablish training programs and channels of communication with Kopassus, the elite special operations forces unit of the Indonesia military. U.S. legislation had prevented the Pentagon from engaging Kopassus for decades because of human rights concerns. To move forward, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Indonesia military had to commit to significant reforms in Kopassus. This step was fundamental to enhancing military ties between the United States and Indonesia. It creates an opportunity to enhance perceptions of U.S. military power in Indonesia as well as to build closer U.S.-Indonesia security ties. Should serious human rights abuses come to light in the future, however, Indonesian discipline and U.S. commitment will be tested. This dynamic has already been tested in the case of Indonesian military officers caught on videotape allegedly torturing West Papuan suspected separatists. The Indonesian military court has sentenced four military personnel to prison terms for their involvement in the incident.

Culture

The influence of U.S. culture on Indonesian culture remains powerful. Knowledge of English is seen as a requirement for entry into the elite. Successful new cable news channels catering to this audience often host full shows or bulletins in English to enhance the prestige of the channel. U.S. television shows and films are readily available to young people via pirated entertainment media. In addition, U.S. models for social media and networking have caught on in Indonesia. Indonesia is among the top three countries in the world for Facebook and Twitter users.

Historically, the Indonesian elites' understanding of and positive disposition toward the United States was a function of its technocratic leadership's education in U.S. universities and

educational institutions. During the last 12 years, unfortunately, the number of Indonesians studying in the United States fell by more than 50 percent, from 15,000 to approximately 7,000, whereas in comparison the number of Indonesians now studying at Al-Azhar University in Egypt is nearly 6,500. The Asian financial crisis forced many Indonesian students to return home or go to other markets such as Australia, Egypt, and China. These trends were exacerbated by U.S. immigration and visa policies after the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. Although efforts are under way to reverse these trends within the new Comprehensive Partnership and in other forums, the prospect of a generation of elite Indonesians who have never experienced the dynamism of the United States and thus gained a better understanding of its strength is one of the more unfortunate consequences of the “lost decade” between 1998 and 2008.

Economics

Indonesians are concerned about the U.S. economy and the seemingly protracted yet still uncertain efforts on the part of the United States to move into a sustained recovery. Indonesian elites believe that the domestic focus of the United States, revealed in a particularly unfortunate manner by the last-minute postponement of President Obama’s state visit in March 2010 in order to shepherd through his health care legislation, represents a diminished interest and capability to manage its affairs abroad. Indonesians fear that their hoped-for elevation of bilateral relations under the Obama administration may be delayed or shelved as a result of further political upheaval resulting from this U.S. focus on domestic affairs.

There is also concern about the lack of U.S. leadership on trade, which is being perceived as a possible prelude to protectionism in the current economic climate. Recent World Trade Organization judgments finding for U.S. interests against key Indonesian industries, such as pulp and tobacco, have done little to reverse the perception that a somewhat weaker United States would use the multilateral trading system to protect its markets.

Indonesia hopes to attract more U.S. investment and wants the United States to participate in the development of priority sectors such as education and infrastructure. There is more suspicion and concern around financial markets and health care although increasing engagement and progress under the Comprehensive Partnership will alleviate concerns in these areas.

Statecraft

A significant number of Indonesians—both Muslims and non-Muslims—deeply empathize with the plight of the Palestinian people. The issue sharply focuses Indonesians on questions of U.S. power. Indonesians hope that the United States can help resolve the issue by using its leverage to secure Israeli government concessions in the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Indonesians believe that the United States is the most powerful country in the world, but that it is unwilling or unable to deploy that power in support of an enduring settlement in the Middle East.

Indonesians say that this is the issue that undercuts the positive impact of President Obama’s efforts to reach out to the Muslim world, particularly since his speech at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. They believe U.S. policy on Israel and Palestine is hypocritical and, as a result, undermines the trust between the Jakarta and Washington. Many Indonesian elites privately commented that if President Obama had followed through on his planned visit to Indonesia in June 2010, shortly after Israeli troops clashed violently with passengers on board the *Mavi Marmara*, his trip would

have been dominated by expressions of Indonesian frustration and outrage over the Israel-Palestine situation.

Benchmarks for U.S. Engagement

The pattern of occasional U.S. neglect alternating with promises of reengagement has made Indonesians particularly adamant that the United States commit to the country in a visible way. Substantial visits to the country by important U.S. leaders such as President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton meet this test. Attendance in the various forums of ASEAN such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and now the EAS, which President Yudhoyono will host in 2011, is considered mandatory for U.S. leaders. Failure to show up for both bilateral visits and the regular schedule of summitry generates the all-too-familiar fears of abandonment. It is only fair to note here that President Yudhoyono failed to attend the last U.S. ASEAN Leaders' Meeting hosted by President Obama in New York in late September 2010. Privately, members of the Indonesian elite say that Yudhoyono could not have attended after President Obama failed to follow through on three planned visits to Jakarta. That decision was augmented by the perceived lateness of the invitation and the fact the meeting was scheduled to be held on the margins of the United Nations meetings instead of in Washington.

Indonesian calculations regarding America's appetite to use its power in Asia in ways relevant to Indonesia will be tested by the U.S. commitment to developing Asian architecture and its follow-through on Secretary Clinton's assertion of U.S. interests in the South China Sea.

South China Sea

The U.S. commitment to maintain freedom of navigation and its support for a multilateral resolution of disputed claims in the South China Sea based on international law are important indicators of U.S. commitment to the region. Indonesia has a significant interest in U.S. engagement to balance China's aggressive claims of sovereignty. Indonesia is one of the "claimant" countries in the South China Sea and has significant interest in developing oil and gas reserves in and around disputed waters. Indonesia has a focused interest in the Natuna Sea, where it and its commercial partners have identified tens of billions of dollars worth of potential gas and oil resources.

Secretary of State Clinton's intervention on the South China Sea at the ARF meeting in Hanoi in July 2010 was important to Indonesia. Her remarks stating U.S. interest in keeping the rights of navigation open and in seeing disputes resolved on a multilateral basis in accordance with international law were another reminder that effective U.S. power can be used to balance a China that is clearly viewing Southeast Asia as a region coming under its influence.

Indonesia is carefully watching the United States and looking for it to follow through on its commitment to the South China Sea issue. In that context, recent trips by Secretary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Gates, and President Obama have underlined continued U.S. commitment to the region, significantly raising perceptions of U.S. power. These perceptions continue to be somewhat undercut by concerns about the U.S. ability to pay for a sustained forward-deployed military presence in Asia and atavistic fears that the United States will change its focus away from Asia.

If the United States steps back, Indonesians will see the move as another chapter in U.S. inconsistency, and trust will be seriously undermined.

Regional Institutions

ASEAN is the foundation for newly developing security architecture in Asia, which includes the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting + 8 (ADMM + 8), the ARF, and the EAS. Indonesia is ASEAN's largest member and will chair the organization in 2011. Indonesia is also a member of APEC and the only ASEAN member in the Group of 20. It is also a significant leader in the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. Indonesian influence in emerging regional architecture will thus be significant. Its impact can be understood by looking at concentric circles of power starting with ASEAN.

During last summer's negotiations over the admission of new members to the EAS, Indonesia was a strong supporter of the campaign within ASEAN to have the United States admitted as a full member. This movement, led by Vietnam and Indonesia, defeated a Singaporean initiative to convene a separate, expanded meeting that would have been known as the EAS + 2. This was an effort on Indonesia's part to anchor the United States in regional institutions.

If the United States, having joined the EAS, fails to participate at the leader level, U.S. credibility in Southeast Asia will be undermined, as will U.S. capacity to drive or influence priority issues ranging from trade to security to transnational issues in regional organizations.

Variation among Indonesian Institutions

Government Institutions

The government, currently led by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, includes a variety of actors influential in foreign policy. The president and his closest advisers, generally referred to collectively as the Istana Negara, or State Palace, are the most influential of these.

The president is personally fond of the United States, having spent two tours of duty at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, during his time in the armed forces. In 2003, he told the *International Herald Tribune*, "I love the United States, with all its faults. I consider it my second country." Many of his advisers, most importantly the current ambassador to the United States, Dino Patti Djalal, who remains a close confidant of the president, likewise have strong ties to the United States and proclaim fondness of the country.⁹ Despite these ties, the Istana shares the broader Indonesian concerns regarding U.S. economic strength and how it will affect the level of U.S. engagement in the region.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Indonesia's intelligence agency are the only Indonesian government institutions that possess the capacity to think strategically about foreign affairs independent of current leadership. Indonesian diplomats in the Department of Foreign Affairs are among the most convinced of and concerned by perceived U.S. decline relative to a rising China. Led by Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa, the former permanent representative at the United Nations, the department has assumed since the turmoil of the late 1990s that it would need to engage both the United States and Russia in order to protect Indonesia from a potentially aggressive

9. Ambassador Dino served as the presidential spokesman on foreign affairs during Yudhoyono's first term in office, but in fact acted as his chief adviser on the subject. His nomination to be the ambassador was vigorously opposed by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), an Islamist party, because its leaders thought him to be too close to U.S. government officials and too fond of the United States.

China. The department maintains some of the closest ties to regional powers outside the U.S.-China dyad, especially Russia, Japan, and Australia.

The Department of Trade is led at the time of publication by the Berkeley-educated economist Mari Pangestu. Although she is the only member of the cabinet of Chinese ethnicity, Trade Minister Mari is another friend of the United States. Despite the expansion of trade and investment with China during her tenure, particularly through the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, this is the product of a disinterested attempt to expand trade ties wherever they are available, not strategic interests. Other leaders, such as the chairman of the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), Gita Wirjawan, also want to expand linkages with the United States based on their personal experience and vision for their country.

The Indonesian legislature has made halting attempts at involvement in foreign affairs since Indonesia became a democracy. Through Commission I, which is responsible for foreign affairs, security affairs, and telecommunications, it has forced government policy changes on two sets of issues: those relating to the welfare of Muslims around the world, and those relating to democratic rights in the region and particularly in Myanmar. Its members have regularly insisted that the government take a stronger stand against U.S. policy in the Middle East and against the junta in Myanmar.

Nongovernmental Institutions

Indonesian business elites, as some of the best educated and most influential members of society, play an important role in Indonesian policymaking. Members of this group are well aware of the depth of the global financial crisis and its effects on the U.S. economy and are genuinely concerned about the ability of the United States to maintain a leadership position in the region until it recovers. They also generally agree that the U.S. system is by nature adaptable and, although it will take time, the United States will make the changes needed to regain its leadership role. While interested in the opportunities presented for investment by a rising China, they are wary of what sort of influence China might eventually want to wield in Indonesia and in ASEAN. Again, there is a sense of preference for U.S. engagement and investment, which is seen to bring with it high levels of training, education, community investment, and opportunities for Indonesians. Chinese and Indian investors have not followed similar models; they have usually pursued a more mercantilist approach.

Muslim civil society organizations are more wary of the United States. The two largest organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, pay particular attention to events elsewhere in the Islamic world. They have been universally disappointed by what they perceive as a lack of change in U.S. policies toward the Middle East since the election of President Obama, noting after his most recent speech in Jakarta that rhetoric would not be enough to win them over. Israeli attacks on Gaza in recent years have led to particularly harsh words for the United States. The inability of the United States to bring about peace in the Middle East reflects poorly on U.S. influence in Indonesia.

Indonesians are less clear in their impressions of U.S. engagement in Afghanistan. Megawati Sukarnoputri, the president of Indonesia from mid-2001 until late 2004, was the first foreign leader to visit the United States after 9/11, and Indonesians, along with most Southeast Asian countries, supported U.S. determination to track down the source of the terrorist attacks. Indonesians, having been victimized repeatedly in their capital of Jakarta and in Bali, share a common interest

in defeating terrorism. Indonesian elites are well aware that many radicalized Islamists in Indonesia terror cells have either trained in Afghanistan or had contact and training from others who have trained there. Indonesian elites tend to believe sustained military engagement by the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq is draining U.S. resources, and they wonder about the wisdom of extending a large presence in Afghanistan. In general, a consensus view is that the United States should focus on ensuring its economic recovery and reduce its presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Implications for Policy

One of the initial foreign policy objectives of the Obama administration was to transform the U.S.-Indonesia relationship, much as the Bush administration did with India. It had good reason to believe it could achieve this goal—a president who grew up in Jakarta and spoke some Bahasa Indonesia and a newly democratic Indonesia seeking a larger role in regional and global politics.

Good intentions have yet to translate into policy, but the infrastructure is in place and the window of opportunity is still open. President Obama's visit to Indonesia in November 2010 was effective. The launch of the new Comprehensive Partnership with Indonesia was warmly welcomed by Indonesian elites. That effort, combined with Secretary Gates's commitment to reestablish military-to-military ties and a more focused U.S. engagement in ASEAN, could augur well for Indonesian perceptions of U.S. power and the U.S.-Indonesia relationship.

The Comprehensive Partnership approach to elevating the Indonesia relationship should allow policies to focus on the interests and aspirations of young Indonesians. Getting alignment right in this area is fundamental to rebuilding trust and strengthening perceptions of U.S. power and presence in Indonesia.

Reengaging the Indonesian military is vital to building a sense of equity in Indonesia for a continued strong U.S. security presence in Asia. Trust and defining common goals and shared interests with Indonesia are also necessary to ensuring the ability of the United States to participate effectively and contribute to the emerging trade and security infrastructure in Asia. Without alignment between Indonesia and the United States, China or others will be able to pursue divide-and-conquer strategies on important issues such as the South China Sea.

If the United States fails to seize the window of opportunity to change Indonesian perceptions and enhance relations, there will be a serious impact on the ability of the United States to project its power and influence in Asia, especially through ASEAN-based regional architecture.

Indonesia is a rising Asian power. As a new democracy, it will surely face serious challenges as the politically empowered population struggles with institutions weakened by years of autocratic rule. Recent lessons from Thailand demonstrate the bloody danger of the failure of weak institutions to adjudicate political confrontation in nascent democracies. Indonesia could face such challenges as early as its next national elections in 2014.

Conclusion

Indonesia sees the United States as the world's most powerful country militarily and economically. U.S. soft power is also surprisingly pervasive in Indonesia. Although U.S. power is perceived to be in relative decline compared with China's rise, Indonesia has a vested interest in encouraging the

United States to sustain its economic and military strength in Asia to balance China. Indonesians, however, are frustrated by U.S. policy and the inconsistent use of U.S. power in issues related to Indonesia or that Indonesia believes are priorities. If Indonesia perceives a continued lack of focus by the United States, frustrations may eventually transform Indonesia into a competitor on certain issues.

Indonesia is an important country whose influence in regional and global politics is increasing. Its perceptions of U.S. power have been skewed by perceptions of U.S. indifference and historical mistrust. At a personal level, Indonesians admire the United States and the freedom it represents. Unfortunately, the last two decades have not encouraged U.S.-Indonesian alignment of interests.

There is now an opportunity to transform the U.S.-Indonesia relationship. A U.S. president raised in Jakarta, a newly democratic Indonesia, and an increasingly aggressive rising China provide the context for developing a partnership built on the shared aspirations of Americans and Indonesians. Rebuilding trust based on cooperation in areas such as education, governance, rule of law, and economic empowerment will create a foundation that is a necessary condition for enduring U.S. engagement in Asia for the next several decades.

5

CONTINUED PRIMACY, DIMINISHED WILL

INDIAN ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Teresita C. Schaffer

India's accelerating economic growth and the end of the Cold War have dramatically changed the way it looks at the world and at the United States. Since about 1990, India's perception of its international interests has placed greater weight on the country's economic potential, which in turn has become much more closely intertwined with the global economy and specifically with the United States. India's security perceptions traditionally revolved around its land borders and its concerns with Pakistan and China. India's defenses were largely based on its continental character, centered around a large land army. Both its economic and security concerns are now shaped much more by the maritime environment of the Indian Ocean. The traditional rivalries with Pakistan and China are still critical, but the one with China has the primary strategic importance and extends beyond the military realm into economic performance and global presence. The United States, which had a thin and mercurial relationship with India during the Cold War years, has now eclipsed Russia to become India's most important external partner.

This transformation in India's outlook took place between 1990 and 2000. Ten years later, with the United States engaged in two wars, both of them involving countries important to India, and with the world emerging unevenly from a global financial crisis, India is recognized as a rising power—but is also concerned about the strategic implications of China's more rapid ascendance.

This is the backdrop for our reflections on how Indian policy circles perceive U.S. power in 2010. This essay will look at the view from Delhi on the nature of U.S. power, its evolution in the next decade, and its likely impact on India. To establish the context, we start with a brief discussion of India's strategic outlook and a snapshot of attitudes toward the United States as measured by recent surveys of Indian opinion. The heart of our analysis draws on the views of some two dozen people in Indian elite circles, as expressed in their written analyses, in a free-ranging discussion with the author, and in e-mail correspondence with the author. We finish with some conclusions on how India will figure in the U.S. strategic outlook in the coming decade.

In general, the United States is not seen in India as a declining power. Our interlocutors do, however, express concern that the United States is not mobilizing its sources of power as effectively

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as it might. Indian elites with a range of backgrounds and interests fervently hope that the United States will remain powerful and use its power wisely.

Indian Strategic Perspective

Indian national security, as seen from Delhi, starts with geography. It is sometimes articulated as three concentric circles, reflecting India's most important interests and challenges. The inner circle includes India itself, the challenges to its internal security and governance from disturbances and insurgencies in the Northeast, in the areas affected by the Naxalite movement, and in Kashmir. India's South Asian neighbors, including its long-standing problems with Pakistan, its strategic stake in Afghanistan, and its complicated security relationships with Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, are also part of this core security zone.

The second circle includes the Indian Ocean, which has become even more important at a time of high economic growth because some 70 percent of the energy critical to India's economic growth comes in by sea. Traditionally, India has sought to dominate this space, as its colonial rulers had earlier done. More recently, it has become less concerned about domination—especially in the open sea—and more interested in its relationship with the other powers with a military presence in the Indian Ocean region. A common concern for maritime security is one of the key building blocks of India's security relationship with the United States. Improved relations with Washington have led Delhi to regard the U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean as benign.

The outer circle of India's security perimeter includes East Asia, extending to China and Japan in the east to and the Persian Gulf in the west. Here, India expects to be a significant player, with

important interests engaged, but has no expectation of a dominant role. Here, too, Indian and U.S. interests have important overlaps—but some significant differences as well.

India's post-Cold War foreign policy treats economic growth as a matter of national security, in sharp contrast to the way economics was viewed in earlier years. Both the end of the Cold War and economic success thereafter have led India to adjust its perceptions of its major international partners. The United States is now in the first rank of its partners. Other important relationships include Japan. Russia is significant but much less able to support the rising international role India seeks to craft. Perhaps the most complicated of India's major international ties is the relationship with China, which is at the same time a major strategic challenge, a benchmark for the kind of international status India seeks, an important trading partner, and, less frequently, a collaborator on international initiatives.

Ever since independence, Indian policymakers have been strongly committed to the idea of “strategic autonomy” as a guiding principle in their foreign policy. The idea means that India will not act in ways that give external powers the substance or the appearance of undue influence in India's policies. This has been a source of regular misunderstanding and occasional friction with the United States.¹

The Public View

The popular view of the United States, as measured in at least four surveys of Indian public opinion conducted since the mid-2000s, confirms the view that the United States is popular in India and is regarded as a critically important external friend.

The United States is viewed favorably by the Indian public. Although the questions asked in each survey are not identical, thus making comparisons risky, the percentage of respondents reporting a positive view of the United States was consistently over 50 percent and usually in the high 50s or 60s.²

One large-sample survey by Devesh Kapur in 2007 reports even warmer feelings toward the United States, even in the two Indian states that have elected pro-Chinese communist governments on numerous occasions over the past few decades.³ In the other surveys, the attitudes toward China were surprisingly positive, including large numbers who considered China a “partner” to India.

1. For a more detailed exposition of India's security outlook, see Teresita C. Schaffer, *India and the United States in the 21st Century: Reinventing Partnership* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2009), pp. 4–8; 66–71.

2. “Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 17, 2010, pewglobal.org; Devesh Kapur, “India in Transition: India-U.S. Relations—What Does the Indian Public Think?” Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania, November 4, 2007, <http://casi.ssc.upenn.edu/iit/deveshkapur>; Angela Stephens, “Public Opinion in India and America,” World Public Opinion, March 1, 2006, www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brasiapacificra/176.php?nid=&id=&pnt=176&lb=bras (BBC Survey); “Global Unease with Major World Powers—Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 27, 2007, <http://pewglobal.org/2007/06/27/global-unease-with-major-world-powers/>; *The United States and the Rise of China and India: Results of a 2006 Multination Survey of Public Opinion* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2006), pp. 40–45, www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/POS_Topline%20Reports/POS%202006/2006%20Full%20POS%20Report.pdf.

3. Kapur, “India in Transition: India-U.S. Relations—What Does the Indian Public Think?”

Beyond that, the surveys do not provide very detailed information about popular perceptions. The survey conducted for the 2006 report of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs looked at manifestations of U.S. power. Its respondents assessed U.S. influence in the world at 7.3 on a ten-point scale, higher than any other country they were asked about. They expected this level of influence to stay essentially stable over the next ten years. Similarly, the respondents in this survey saw the United States as the world's top innovator (6.9 on a ten-point scale), and expected this level to go up slightly in ten years. In both categories, China came in about the middle of the countries the respondents were queried about, well below both the United States and India. Respondents were also asked whether they expected the United States still to be the world's most powerful country 50 years hence. The views here were more skeptical. Only 28 percent agreed with that view; 30 percent expected another country to equal U.S. power, and 23 percent expected another country to exceed it.⁴

It is difficult to distinguish between elite and general public opinion in these reports. Kapur, whose work surveyed more than 200,000 people, notes that among those with low education, the percentage who responded “don't know” or “no opinion” was often over half. He noted that elites had warmer feelings for the United States and, to a lesser extent, for China than the general public, but he also noted that disagreements within the elite category were more numerous and sharper than in the general public. Put another way, elite opinion is where one will find the strongest support for the new foreign policy that India has developed since the end of the Cold War, but also the much more jaundiced view of the United States that held sway in earlier years. The Chicago Council survey also found that respondents with a low education responded “don't know” more frequently than the rest of the respondents. Their report consequently omitted the responses from people with the lowest educational levels (fewer than six years of school) when computing the percentages. In practice, however, this made little difference to the totals.

One interesting observation is the streak of realism that ran through the responses, especially in the Chicago and Kapur surveys. In both cases, the respondents argued that India needed to drive a hard bargain, implying that more powerful countries would otherwise take advantage of it.

Perceptions in Indian Policy Circles

A more complex view of shifting patterns of U.S. and global power and what they mean for India emerges from a series of interviews of people drawn from different parts of the policy elite, amplified by published analyses prepared by people with similar levels of expertise.⁵

Elements of Power

Some of our respondents saw power as “holistic” or indivisible, but those who were willing to distinguish different sources of power focused primarily on five:

4. *The United States and the Rise of China and India*, pp. 40–45.

5. The views summarized here, unless otherwise sourced, come from a seminar conducted in New Delhi on July 23, 2010, by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies with the participation of a dozen former senior officials and academic experts, and from the author's correspondence in August 2010 with some respondents unable to attend the seminar.

- First, the inherent productive capacity of the United States. Several participants saw innovation as the key driver here, including the capacity to turn innovation into wealth and military power. Most participants argued that this was the most important factor, the one most beneficial to India, and the one least likely to erode. One held that this was a factor that was uniquely important for the United States—though the discussion of India’s sources of power later in the seminar highlighted some of the same factors, suggesting that domestic capacity is a critical limiting factor in assessing the power of other countries as well. A couple of participants contrasted the way the “inherent productive capacity” issue works for the United States and for China and India: for the United States, productive capacity was measured in innovation and economic output, whereas for India and China the sheer size of their populations, assuming a reasonable level of economic performance, is an element of power that can compensate for a lower level of modernization and technological sophistication. The stress on innovation was a major theme of one published analysis by Admiral Raja Menon (retired) and Dr. Rajiv Kumar, which looks specifically at the question of how shifting global power patterns are likely to affect India.⁶
- Second, national will and confidence, the “can-do attitude” and even “swagger” that have often been looked on as American characteristics.
- Third, soft power—ideational and cultural attraction. The people we interviewed were divided on the importance of this factor, some regarding it as very important, others as ephemeral. One participant noted that U.S. soft power was largely “people driven,” in contrast with China’s, which was primarily state driven. Some of those who considered it important saw soft power as connected with innovation. One person singled out “the idea of freedom.” There was relatively little discussion of democracy in this context, but the significance of shared democratic values that reinforced the U.S.-India relationship cropped up at multiple points in the discussion.
- Fourth, dominance of the international institutions that set the terms for participation in global life and that serve as tools for global governance. This dominance is in part a legacy of global power from years past and is subject to redefinition when new powers become more important participants. The extent to which powerful countries use these institutions, and less powerful or rising countries see the multilateral arena as favorable, varies depending on the issue and on a country’s ability to develop a working alliance with others. Several of those interviewed noted that the United States is selective in how and when it uses international institutions. This was regarded as a predictable habit of powerful countries. It was interesting that no one listed coalition-building capacity as an important element in U.S. power although, as noted below, the discussion of East Asian security clearly assumed that the United States would continue to need to mobilize the support of a diverse group of countries in that region.
- Finally, military power. Surprisingly few of those interviewed noted this as a critical element in how India relates to U.S. power. Indeed, one participant argued that U.S. policy was becoming excessively militarized. There were two important exceptions. One retired senior official argued that U.S. naval strength was the most important element in U.S. military power and in the U.S.-India relationship. China was “overawed” by it. Naval power presented a tremendous opportunity for a U.S.-India security partnership. And the previously cited analysis by Menon and Kumar, while it does not address directly the size of the U.S. military machine or the impact of

6. Rajiv Kumar and Admiral Raja Menon, *The Long View from Delhi: To Define the Indian Grand Strategy for Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: ICRIER and the Academic Foundation, 2010).

the recession on U.S. defense spending, argues that the single most important factor in determining the future U.S. global role is the outcome of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

How Does the United States Measure Up?

At a time when major countries like China, but also Brazil and India, are becoming more powerful, some of our respondents noted that a relative decline in U.S. power is inevitable—if only to accommodate the rising powers within a fixed total of 100 percent. With this caveat, most participants saw little evidence of significant decline in U.S. power. They argued that the United States had such strong inherent domestic capacity that it was likely to remain the dominant global power at least for the next decade. One economist downplayed the significance of the financial crisis in determining the future of U.S. power, arguing that “the United States can still get what it wants,” such as, for example, the revaluation of the Chinese yuan.

Several participants, however, argued that the United States no longer seemed to have the drive to dominate internationally—or, as one participant put it, “there are increasing doubts about whether the United States has the stomach to police the world any more.” Another participant felt that, as a result, the United States would be “neutralized” in Asia within five to ten years, with China emerging as the dominant power. One of the scenarios explored by the Menon and Kumar study has the United States “withdrawing” from Pakistan and reducing its engagement with East Asia. Several participants in our interviews felt that U.S. soft power had declined at least in relative terms.

Two recent surveys echoed this more pessimistic tone. A 2009 CSIS study based on interviews with a small number of elite respondents found that most Indian respondents expected China to eclipse the United States as the most important country for India within a decade.⁷ The 2006 Chicago Council on Global Affairs survey referred to above similarly reported that Indians expected to see a shift in power toward China, albeit a more gradual one. The 2008 survey took place at a time when India-China relations were in relatively good shape. Sino-Indian friction in 2009–2010 may have had an impact on the views expressed in our interviews.

Longer-term projections of the relative power of the United States and China are more guarded. Some, including at least one of those interviewed for this project, argued that the key question was whether the United States would succeed in “reinventing itself” and renewing its educational and start-up funding capacity. This view also figured prominently in Menon and Kumar’s analysis.

What Are the Key Competitive Arenas?

Overwhelmingly, Asia was looked on as the key arena where the redistribution of global power would be manifested. China was regarded as the principal competitor to U.S. power and the principal strategic challenge. The U.S.-China-India triangle was seen as the key relationship, a view that also comes out in published analyses. The most often noted features of Chinese power were its military buildup and its diplomatic presence, but some argued that China was also building up its soft power, especially in Asia. There was strong support for the United States maintaining its influence in Asia. Some expressed the hope that India could address the coming changes in Asia “in a spirit of partnership with the United States, without antagonizing China.”

7. Bates Gill, Michael Green, Kiyoto Tsuji, and William Watts, *Strategic Views on Asian Regionalism: Survey Results and Analysis* (Washington: D.C.: CSIS, 2009).

The doubts expressed about U.S. “national will” were important in the China context. One participant whose views seemed to be fairly widely shared commented that “the most troublesome U.S. relationship with China is one where the United States is weak and China is in the ascendant; the most beneficial would be the U.S. taking the lead” to develop regional cooperation. There was a widespread expectation that China would become more assertive. One participant saw this as the natural consequence of a likely fall in China’s growth rate, “akin to a country approaching middle age,” and expected China to accelerate its push for greater economic and military presence away from its immediate borders, with adverse consequences for both the United States and India.

Our respondents’ view of the global distribution of power was centered on the problem of China. One participant even argued that the current U.S. preoccupation with Afghanistan and Pakistan was a distracting “sideshow” and that the sooner the United States pulled out, the better.

More frequently, respondents saw Afghanistan as the critical current test of U.S. power and of the U.S. ability to transform regions for stability and peace. As already noted, the Menon and Kumar study shared this view. One participant saw Afghanistan as a place where U.S. national will was being tested: “self-imposed limits on projection of U.S. power . . . [are] probably going to make it so hard to win in Afghanistan.” Some see U.S. sensitivity to India’s strategic concerns in Afghanistan as a key indicator of the value of U.S.-India ties, a view also often expressed in the establishment press. Some argued that the United States and India should be working together to advance the values of liberalism and pluralism in this large and strategically important area. One person said that the United States must “rid itself of the Pakistan habit to truly benefit from its partnership with India.”

The discussion of Islamic radicalism brought up two perspectives that get relatively little emphasis in Washington. First, most of the world’s Muslims are South Asian or Southeast Asian, not Arab, so the “Muslim world” should not be looked on as an Arab phenomenon. Second, the issue is not so much “Islamic radicalism” as radicalism itself.

One participant noted the importance of Indian Ocean security as an area for India-U.S. cooperation, and cited the Horn of Africa as an area of great potential danger, which was likely to be aggravated by population growth and climate change.

Also of interest was that Europe did not figure in the interviews as a strategic factor. Europe, however, does appear in foreign policy commentary—including from at least one member of the group interviewed for this project—as a power center whose relationship to India would enhance India’s ability to hedge against excessive dependence on the United States or vulnerability to Chinese pressure.

International Institutions

All the participants appeared to see global institutions, as they currently function, as an extension of U.S. power. They expected China to become more of a shaper of these institutions over time. Its vote would increase in the institutions that use weighted voting, such as the international financial institutions.⁸ Several participants expected China to expand its influence in international institutions by diversifying its financial holdings, now disproportionately in the United States, so that other countries would be inhibited from challenging China on the multilateral scene.

8. India’s voting share is also increasing, albeit more slowly than China’s.

One participant wondered if we were close to the point where China would take on a kind of “Middle Kingdom mentality” about when to follow the rules of international institutions and when not to. Several were concerned that China’s proposal of a nuclear deal with Pakistan, with no attempt to obtain the consent of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) as was done with the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, was an early indication of precisely this trend. Participants were alarmed at the mild U.S. response.

Against this background, Indian elites see India’s election to a two-year term on the United Nations Security Council as an opportunity for India to start reshaping its international profile as a major power. President Barack Obama’s announcement in New Delhi in November 2010 that the United States would support a permanent Security Council seat for India was taken as a critically important marker of the U.S.-India partnership. The strong U.S. response to tensions in Korea and the well-publicized disagreements between the United States and China on the South China Sea were both received in India as indications that the United States was willing to be firm when China challenged its interests. In other words, Indian perceptions of U.S. willingness to defend its power in Asia are regularly shaped and reshaped by the way the United States handles its relations with China.

While interviews for this project devoted relatively little attention to the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, other conversations with the same participants and with others from India’s policy elite circles regard that agreement as a critical step toward India’s move away from what they often refer to as “nuclear apartheid.” U.S. willingness to push that agreement through the NSG was seen not only as an important exercise of U.S. power, but as an indication that the United States was willing to use that power for India’s benefit. President Obama’s endorsement of Indian membership in the export control groups that form part of the nonproliferation system was seen as another indication (and also represented a change in India’s traditional posture toward the formal nonproliferation system). India’s foreign-policy watchers are keeping careful score on whether the Obama administration continues to be willing to do this.

One participant argued that India would remain multilateralist in its orientation. The more common view was that India would have limited influence in global institutions. Several argued in effect that India needed the United States to stand up for the rules of the international institutions. These views contrast with the perception in the United States that India and the United States have a hard time working together multilaterally. As seen from the United States, India seems to use a number of global venues to strengthen its nonaligned credentials, which leads it to take positions that fit in badly with the kind of understandings the United States is trying to reach.

Our interviews did not focus on Asian regional institutions as such, but the 2008 CSIS study found strong support for “an East Asian community” among its Indian respondents. Although the composition of this community was not specified, it is not unreasonable to see this as an expression of interest in greater integration of India into East Asia-centered organizations.

India’s Sources of Power

The group generally agreed on the importance of economic capacity in shaping India’s power and was quite optimistic about India’s growth potential in the coming decade. Opinions were divided as to the importance of soft power and India’s ability to use it as a source of global influence. Similarly, the respondents argued that India’s ability to innovate would be a key source of economic strength, hence of power, in the future.

Most participants saw India's sheer size as a key element in India's power, coupled with its "demographic advantage"—not just the size of India's population but the benefit deriving from the anticipated high percentage of India's people who would be in their economically most productive years during the next couple of decades. Several mentioned the Indian diaspora as an element. This also linked India to the United States. Not only is there a large and dynamic Indian community in the United States, but historically immigration has added greatly to the energy and productivity of the U.S. economy. Participants saw this as a sharp contrast with China and Japan, and something of a contrast with Europe, where immigrant groups have had more trouble being integrated into society.

On the negative side of the ledger, many participants cited the need for the Indian state to demonstrate its capacity, and implicitly or explicitly noted the importance of extending growth to the lower end of the income spectrum. One mentioned job creation as a critical variable. At least two mentioned international factors that serve as a drag on India's power: first of all, the need, as one participant put it, to get "the monkey of the Pakistan problem" off India's back; and, second, the need for India to take up responsibilities for global management as it took on a more visible role in global institutions.

What Do Trends in U.S. Power Mean for India?

On this point, views were consistent: erosion of U.S. power is bad for India. Most participants expressed a preference for a multipolar, or at least a "non-unipolar," global power structure. The United States was seen as the only power capable of counterbalancing China. A significant increase in Chinese influence in international institutions, or greater Chinese willingness to disregard the norms established by these institutions (for example, the China-Pakistan nuclear deal mentioned above), would be a problem for India that could be addressed only with U.S. help.

One especially interesting illustration of this strong support for continuing U.S. power and influence came in the 2006 Chicago Council survey. Asked whether the United States should "continue to be the preeminent world leader in solving international problems," 34 percent said "yes." Another 42 percent agreed with the proposition that the United States should "do its share," in partnership with others, to solve world problems. And a surprising 53 percent agreed with the notion that the United States had a "responsibility to be a world policeman." A separate question in the same survey, however, also had 53 percent of respondents agree with the statement that the United States played the role of world policeman more than it should.⁹

The ambivalence suggested by these survey results was understated in our interviews, but it is evident in India's foreign policy toward the United States, international organizations, and Asia. On the one hand, U.S. innovation, drive, success, and idealism are widely admired in India. There is much evidence that India's policy and economic elite believe the United States is pursuing an Asian vision that accords better with India's than the alternatives, especially at a time when a somewhat mercurial China is on the rise. On the other hand, there is a persistent skepticism—born partly of the long and often troubled U.S.-Pakistan relationship and partly of a conviction that India ultimately has to look after itself—that the United States is prepared to honor India's security concerns. This gives India's decades-long attachment to "strategic autonomy" great staying

9. *Global Views 2006: Comparative Topline Reports* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, October 11, 2006), pp. 58–59.

power, and it also gives rise to the view we found in several larger population surveys that India needs to drive as hard a bargain as possible.

The View from Washington

Four themes emerge from these pages. First, domestic factors—innovation, creativity, expanded productive capacity, and human and demographic resources—are widely seen as the basic raw material from which both India and the United States derive their power. There are strong strategic reasons for the United States to focus on rebuilding its economy and strengthening its resources of people and creativity, and for India to do the same. Neither can afford to think in terms of a trade-off between domestic and international power.

Second, maritime security and naval cooperation are likely to remain two of the most positive areas in U.S.-India military cooperation and areas that reinforce constructive perceptions of U.S. power.

Third, China will be India's principal metric for assessing trends in U.S. power. The United States will need to develop policies toward East and Southeast Asia that convey its views firmly but without confrontation. These policies need to be well understood in both Beijing and Delhi, and pursued steadily. The Obama administration's decision to articulate its policy toward India in a larger Asian context, as it has done quite consistently since November 2009, is a welcome step in the right direction. President Obama's trip to India in November 2010 was a particularly important event from that perspective. In contrast, recent developments like the proposed increase in H-1 visa fees that appeared to be targeted at Indian companies are viewed as ominous signs.

Fourth, Afghanistan and Pakistan will continue to be a problem for India, and, unlike years past, U.S. actions there are also interpreted as indicators of overall trends in U.S. power. U.S. ties with Pakistan have of course been a perennial problem for the Indian government and more generally for Indian observers. In today's circumstances, the Pakistan issue brings together three problems. The first is the traditional concern that U.S. support for Pakistan, and military sales in particular, enhances Pakistan's ability and willingness to confront India both militarily and by cross-border subversion. The second, paradoxically, is India's interest in the stability and governability of both Pakistan and Afghanistan—an issue on which India and the United States are in fundamental agreement and that Indians believe would be threatened by a hasty U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Finally, because China's support for Pakistan is a major security concern for India, the future of U.S. relations with China also affects India's troubled relationship with Pakistan and the impact of that relationship on its ties with the United States.

PART 2: MIDDLE EAST

6

FIERCE OR FEEBLE PERSIAN GULF ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Jon B. Alterman

Since the conclusion of the Cold War brought an end to Soviet threats to Western Europe, no region of the world has a security architecture more reliant on U.S. power than the Persian Gulf. The U.S. military commitment to the Gulf is substantial for such a small piece of geography. Although hard to quantify now in the face of two ongoing wars, there has been the equivalent of a carrier battle group and air wing in the vicinity of the Gulf for most of the last two decades. Hard to put into dollar terms, some economists ascribe some rather fantastical numbers to U.S. defense spending for the Gulf. One estimate puts the U.S. peacetime commitment to be upward of \$44 billion per year,¹ and another provocatively estimates it as approximately a quarter of the total Pentagon baseline budget, or approximately \$125 billion per year.²

Whatever the actual cost, and even if the durable U.S. commitment is only a handful of U.S. ships and a few thousand troops, the U.S. role in the Gulf remains central to the United States, the Gulf states themselves, and to the world that buys their oil and gas. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states rely on the United States to protect them from Iran, Iraq, and each other, while powers as diverse as China, India, and Japan rely on the United States to secure the free passage of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. As the Navy of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps increases the activities of its small craft in the Gulf, all countries look to the United States to identify and combat potential threats. For most of a decade, European policymakers have argued that any international effort to deal with potential Iranian nuclear proliferation must have the United States at its core. The Gulf, then, represents the intersection of several forces: U.S. power, Iranian opposition to U.S. power, global vulnerability, and reliance on the United States.

Importance of U.S. Power

There is no region in the world where the perception of a rise or decline in U.S. power should be more consequential. *Ceteris paribus*, a sense of U.S. power waning should be expected to embolden Iran and cause U.S. allies in the region to bandwagon with Iran; a perception of rising U.S. power should stiffen the resolve of U.S. allies and provoke more conflict-averse Iranian behavior. Yet, a series of conversations with senior leaders in the Gulf in May 2010 and subsequent research suggest that U.S. power is merely one of several factors that Gulf nations evaluate when shaping

1. M. R. Copulos, *America's Achilles Heel: The Hidden Costs of Imported Oil, A Strategy for Energy Independence* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense Council Foundation, 2003), p. 32.

2. Roger Stern, "United States Cost of Military Projection in the Persian Gulf, 1976–2007," *Energy Policy* (2010).



their own behavior. Equally important (yet not wholly independent) are questions of U.S. commitment, intentions, and capabilities. Although such a finding undermines any effort to fit Gulf perceptions of U.S. power into a global model, it also suggests that key sets of determinants are firmly within U.S. control. Whereas it is difficult for the United States to manage global perceptions of its rise and fall, the United States can shape regional perceptions of its commitment, intentions, and capabilities through a discrete set of actions and statements.

The common perception of the United States in the Gulf is that the United States is considerably weaker than it was at the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This impression is influenced partly by the difficulty that the United States has had in shaping the future of Iraq and the effectiveness of regional parties in undermining the order that the United States had sought—arguably without much forethought—to impose there.³ Gulf leaders also evince discomfort with President Barack Obama’s strategy of outreach to Iran, out of fear that any U.S.-Iranian rapprochement will be at their expense. An open-ended war in Afghanistan contributes further to the narrative, as does open worry about the U.S. debt, and a concern that the U.S. president has been outmaneuvered by a wily right-wing Israeli prime minister. There is no shortage of reasons close at hand to fear a U.S. decline. Even absent a broad decline in U.S. power, ongoing difficult entanglements in Iraq and Afghanistan combined with the need to wind down the long-term engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan make increasing the level of U.S. action in the region difficult at the current time.⁴

3. See Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2008).

4. See Bechara Nassar Charbel, “Future Scenarios of Iran Nuclear Crisis,” Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, April 29, 2010.

Beneath the surface, however, is an appreciation of how much of the region's security order is a consequence of U.S. action and how little ability any other country or collection of countries has to do anything close to what the United States does. While there is fear for the future of the U.S. role, there is at the same time no alternative to it. No other country has the military resources or the will to safeguard what is, in the end, a global commons. Rather than seek to eliminate the U.S. role, regional countries—both friendly and unfriendly—are determined to try to shape it in order to advance their own interests.

It is worth pointing out two things at the outset. The first is that much of this is a speculative exercise. Decisions on foreign policy are closely held, with no public consultation, at the highest levels of the Gulf leadership. Those leaders are often mannered when talking with Americans, almost seeming as if they are calibrating their messages to achieve the desired response rather than to give insight into their own thinking. Although it is worth paying attention to words spoken in private, those words need to be supplemented with attention to the actions the leaders take as well as to the parameters of the public debate that they allow to exist.

Second, there is a tremendous range of views within the Gulf, not only between Iran, Iraq, and their GCC neighbors, but even within the GCC itself. The United Arab Emirates⁵ feels most vulnerable to Iran, for example, while Oman and Qatar seem intent on finding a modus vivendi with Iran. Kuwait feels threatened by everyone in its neighborhood, while Saudi Arabia relies on U.S. backing in order to seek to lead the neighborhood. For each country, the bilateral relationship with the United States is the most important relation, not least because it protects each country from the predatory actions of its neighbors. Correspondingly, there is no single “Gulf” or “Arab” view of the United States, nor a single view of U.S. power or U.S. commitment to the region. Even within countries, there seems to be considerable diversity. Where there is unanimity, however, is in the expectation that the region must have some external guarantor, as it has had since the early sixteenth century.

Importance of Iranian Power

Despite the foregoing, the organizing principle of every Arab Gulf country's defense posture is the same: Iran. As one Saudi royal put it bluntly, “Iran is everybody's problem.”⁶ By far the most populous of the region's states, Iran's imperial past, its presumed ambitions, and its supposed ties to the Shi'ite communities scattered around the Gulf make it a constant source of worry. As one senior Gulf royal commented in 2007 when discussing Sunni-Shi'ite tensions, “You don't understand. Iran has only been Shi'ite for 500 years. It has been Persian for millennia.”⁷

It is difficult to fathom precisely how the Iranian leadership perceives U.S. power, as so much writing on Iranian foreign policy in Iran seems transparently written for a political, ideological, or diplomatic purposes. Still, the celebratory nature of much of Iranian analysis has some basis in fact. Iran's regional position has grown during the last decade, partly as a consequence of U.S. acts of commission and omission, and sometimes despite concerted U.S. efforts to the contrary. The

5. Clearly, the leadership in Abu Dhabi is more alarmed than the leadership in Dubai. With Dubai's relative decline in the wake of the financial crisis, Abu Dhabi has a more prominent role in the seven-emirate federation, and the federal government's views of Iran hold more sway in Dubai now than two years ago.

6. Saudi royal no. 2, private interview, May 2010.

7. Emirati royal no. 1, private discussion, January 2007.

U.S. removal of governments in Iraq and Afghanistan that were hostile to Iran was a boon to the Islamic Republic. Iran has seized on the more open politics in today's Iraq, and to a lesser degree in Afghanistan, to boost its allies and secure its interests. In addition, Iran's asymmetrical warfare capabilities have helped undermine the U.S. position in Iraq, and they have done so at relatively little cost to Iran. Iran has also garnered significant public support throughout the region and the world. In recent polling, almost three times as many Arabs viewed the Iranian acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability as positive rather than negative, and Arabs were almost eight times as likely to see the United States as a threat to them than Iran.⁸ That support extends to Muslim-majority countries outside the Middle East such as Pakistan and Indonesia as well.⁹ In addition, Iran's allies, such as Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, are among the most respected political figures in the Arab world.

Much else of Iran's ascent has occurred despite concerted U.S. efforts to the contrary. Iran's nuclear program appears to be progressing in spite of U.S. efforts to marshal an international coalition to blunt it, and Iran's proxies in Lebanon and Palestine remain deeply consequential in their respective politics. Iran has forged friendships not only among international pariahs such as Venezuela but also among aspiring powers such as Turkey and Brazil.

One important think tank in Tehran, the Center for Strategic Research, published a paper coinciding with President Obama's inauguration in January 2009. Although the paper purported to describe a policy debate in Washington, its transparent purpose was to lay out an argument for how the United States would benefit by engaging Iran. The author highlights the failure of prior U.S. efforts to shape Iranian behavior and argues that

Prolongation of the present trend would pose increasing risk of a catastrophic clash with the country. . . . It is reasoned that Iran would be much more responsive to U.S. concerns and more cooperative in reaching a compromise on its nuclear program safeguards if the U.S. would change or abandon its old policy of intimidation and threat toward Iran. For this purpose, Iran must be recognized as an ancient and great civilization of no less status than the U.S. or Europe.¹⁰

Another Iranian author, Kayhan Bargezar, seizes not so much on U.S. failure as on Iranian successes. In Bargezar's argument, Iran's rise in the Middle East since September 11, 2001, helps elide the traditional disparities between the United States and Iran and presents Iran with an "unprecedented opportunity to benefit from its advantageous geopolitical and cultural positions, thereby empowering its regional and consequently, international position."¹¹

8. Shibley Telhami, principal investigator, "2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll," conducted by the University of Maryland in conjunction with Zogby International, August 5, 2010, www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2010/08_arab_opinion_poll_telhami/08_arab_opinion_poll_telhami.pdf.

9. See Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Muslim Disappointment: Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home, Global Image of U.S. Continues to Benefit* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, June 2010), chap. 4, <http://pewglobal.org/files/pdf/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Spring-2010-Report.pdf>.

10. Nasser Saghafi Ameri, "Obama's Iran Policy," Center for Strategic Research, Tehran, January 2009, www.csr.ir/departments.aspx?lng=en&abtId=06&&depid=74&&semid=1534. Another article by the same author, "America Needs Iran in Afghanistan," in March 2009 made a case for Iranian indispensability; see www.csr.ir/departments.aspx?lng=en&abtId=06&&depid=74&&semid=1593. The center is headed by the prominent conservative cleric, Hassan Rowhani, who was secretary general of the National Security Council under President Mohammad Khatami.

11. Kayhan Bargezar, "Iran, the Middle East and International Security," *Ortadoğu Etütleri* 1, no. 1 (July 2009): p. 38. www.orsam.org.tr/en/enUploads/Article/Files/20091016_barzegar.pdf.

Neither of these articles suggests an absolute decline in U.S. power, but they both—and others like them—suggest a decline in U.S. power relative to Iranian power. From this, one might draw two opposite conclusions. One is the rejectionist conclusion that a relatively weaker United States will allow Iran to act with greater impunity. So long as Iran does not invite a direct military confrontation with the United States (and there is every indication that its leadership is cautious to avoid such a confrontation), Iran can continue to chip away at the U.S.-constructed order in the region by lurching forward on its nuclear program and supporting proxies who undermine the interests of U.S. clients in regional governments. Seen that way, the U.S. decline empowers Iran and harms U.S. interests in the Gulf and beyond.

The authors here posit a different argument, which is that a relative U.S. decline removes a persistent obstacle for U.S.-Iranian rapprochement. If decades worth of vast disparities between U.S. and Iranian power removed both the necessity and the urgency of the United States resolving its long-running tensions with Iran, a relative decline in that disparity provides an opportunity for the United States and Iran to advance their interests simultaneously through cooperation and dialogue.

Whether the latter is merely an academic argument or the true intentions of the Iranian leadership is hard to fathom. At the public level, the Iranian government's actions do not seem oriented toward finding a modus vivendi with the United States. There have been a number of reports that private U.S. government gestures to the Iranian government have been rebuffed,¹² and Tehran walked away from what seemed to be an agreement in October 2009 to supply enriched uranium from abroad for the Tehran Research Reactor in exchange for Iran shipping its low-enriched uranium overseas and suspending further high-level enrichment. Further, Iranian behavior in a whole range of negotiations, including for energy rights, suggests an Iranian preoccupation with the country's own weakness. Negotiators report a lingering Iranian fear that any party's willingness to strike a deal with the Islamic Republic is in and of itself proof that the deal is more advantageous to that party than to the Iranians, and there is a notable Iranian predilection to seek to renegotiate deals after they have been concluded in order to find terms even more favorable to Iranian interests.¹³

In the case of Iran, behaviors and statements seem to suggest a desire to engage in the abstract, but an Iranian preoccupation with national weakness makes finding common terms for such engagement difficult to imagine. While Iran keenly searches for signs of U.S. strength and weakness, that search is so intimately tied to Iran's own search for a regional identity and regional respect that the peripheral concerns overwhelm the assessment. Many in Iran seem to see in the country's rise and America's descent an emerging opportunity for a better U.S. relationship, but Iran's actions give little confidence that such a relationship will emerge. The conventional balance in the region is still deeply skewed in favor of the United States, and Iran's apparent nuclear ambitions seem likely to provoke a conflict with the United States or its allies rather than a bid for rapprochement.

In its focus on the United States, Iran almost seems to take its role in the Gulf for granted, much to the consternation of parties in the Gulf. A German working for a Gulf think tank complained,

12. Borzou Daragahi et al., "Iran: Report of Second Letter from Obama to Tehran," *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 2009, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2009/09/iran-report-of-secret-letter-from-obama-to-tehran.html>.

13. Jean-Francois Seznec (presentation at Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, July 12, 2010).

Iran remains acutely oblivious to the security concerns of the GCC states, and . . . it solely seeks to measure up to the United States, even seeing itself in the same league as Washington. . . . The result is an Iranian approach to its neighbors that in essence borders on contempt and is framed within suggestions of superiority.¹⁴

Gulf States vis-à-vis Iran

The Gulf states are keenly focused on a wide array of threats they see emanating from Iran. Although many would argue that the direct military threat Gulf governments face from Iran is relatively small, the greater perceived threat is political: internal subversion and diplomatic intimidation.¹⁵ There is virtual unanimity among regional elites that, despite their disdain for Iran, the country represents their greatest security threat. As one senior Saudi prince put it memorably, “Iran is a paper tiger with steel claws.”¹⁶ Yet, even so, there is a split among elites over how dramatic a change an Iranian nuclear capability would represent. A senior Kuwaiti official argues that a nuclear Iran does not change much. “If someone already has a gun pointed at your head,” he asked in two separate conversations, “what difference does it make if he has a cannon pointed at your back?”¹⁷ Others aver that an Iranian weapon would almost certainly spur a nuclear race throughout the region. Speaking with Western researchers, a senior Saudi diplomat said in 2006 that the best way for the Gulf to respond to an Iranian nuclear capability would be “with another nuclear weapon.”¹⁸ “We are naked,” a Saudi prince recently complained. “We are surrounded by a country that already has a nuclear capability [Israel], and a country that is building it [Iran].”¹⁹

The threat that Gulf states feel from Iran clearly transcends the neighborhood. One senior Emirati official argued that Iran has established beachheads in southern Lebanon, Gaza, and Yemen and has sleeper cells in Bahrain, the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Iraq, he argued, “is a done deal.”²⁰ A Lebanese writer for an Abu Dhabi-based center echoed the concerns:

From observation, it has become evident that the Islamic Republic has gained place in new negotiations in the region—ranging from Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, because of its large presence in the Arab region, through its alliances with Hezbollah and Hamas in Damascus. It has gained this influence at the expense of the role of Gulf countries—especially Saudi Arabia—that always played an influential role in the process of forming Middle East policies.²¹

14. Christian Koch, “Implications of Iran’s Nuclear Program: A View from the Arab Gulf Region,” *Gulf Monitor* (Gulf Research Center, Dubai), March 2010, p. 20, www.grc.ae/data/contents/uploads/Gulf_Monitor_15_9703.pdf.

15. Greg Gause, for example, reporting on his conversations in Saudi Arabia in “Saudi Arabia: Domestic Dynamics and Regional Politics,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., May 2010, http://csis.org/files/attachments/100601_GRT_Summary_Gause.pdf. A discussion of the perceived nature of the Iranian threat also appears in “Chain Reaction: Avoiding a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East,” Report to the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, S. Prt. 110-34, February 2008, pp. 11–12.

16. Saudi royal no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

17. Kuwaiti royal no. 1, private discussions, April 2006 and January 2007.

18. Cited in Dalia Dassa Kaye and Frederic M. Wehrey, “A Nuclear Iran: The Reactions of neighbors,” *Survival* 49, no. 2 (Summer 2007): n20.

19. Saudi royal no. 3, private discussion, May 2010.

20. Emirati royal no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

21. Bechara Nassar Charbel, “GCC-Iran Relations: Trail of Tensions,” Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, May 26, 2010.

Despite the enormity of the threat—or perhaps because of it—Gulf Arab states feel they have relatively few tools at their disposal. “The UAE is small,” a senior prince said, “and Iran has links from China to Chile.”²² A basic response is to engage with Iran, which all of them do to some extent. Bilateral trade and senior visits increase the value of positive bilateral relations to Iran and create a series of incentives for positive relations going forward. A security adviser to an Emirati royal explained that the Emirates has “a mature relationship with Iran,” and that the UAE government talks with Iran “more than any other country.”²³ For all of the Saudi fear of Iran, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia invited President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran to come to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage in 2007, making him the first Iranian president ever to make such a visit as the guest of the Saudi king.²⁴

Another response is waiting out the Iranians, which some advocate. One Saudi royal suggested, “Iran is a state undergoing transformation from within, undergoing a shift to a more military regime. If it is more military, it is governed more by security concerns than ideology. The only thing to do is containment. You don’t necessarily threaten the regime, but you wait for it to mature.”²⁵ This, however, was clearly a minority view. Another royal complained that the die was already cast. “The UN Security Council won’t get Iran to abandon nuclear weapons. Iran will be a nuclear state. We haven’t ruled out developing a system,” he explained.²⁶

Engagement and patience are only part of the strategy. The regional nature of the Iranian threat and the fear that the GCC allies would be a thin reed on which to base national defense have caused each country in the region to rely on the United States for protection. With little faith in either GCC capability or willingness to protect Emirati interests in the event of a conflict, the adviser to one senior royal explained that the Emirates was looking to deepen relationships with the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.²⁷ Even so, this adviser’s boss said later, “The biggest mistake is to say someone will help.”²⁸

The Gulf states are stymied, however, as to what kind of protection they want, or even what kind of protection the United States is able to give. A senior Saudi prince worried aloud, “A military option to prevent a nuclear Iran will have catastrophic consequences. A nuclear Iran would have catastrophic consequences.”²⁹ An Emirati sheikh mirrored the ambivalence, saying, “We don’t agree that the solution is bombing Iran, but we don’t see another. We know sanctions won’t work.”³⁰ One Emirati leader argued that even if a decision is made to strike Iran militarily, the groundwork must be prepared. “No one can decide to hit Iran tomorrow,” he argued. “Discussion with Iran is important. It needs to be gradual. There needs to be a strong, careful approach.”³¹

22. Emirati royal no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

23. Adviser no. 1 to an Emirati royal, private discussion, May 2010.

24. “Abdullah, Ahmadinejad Hold Wide-Ranging Talks,” *Arab News*, December 21, 2007, <http://archive.arabnews.com/?page=1§ion=0&article=104858&d=21&m=12&y=2007>.

25. Saudi royal no. 2, private discussion, May 2010.

26. Saudi royal no. 3, private discussion, May 2010.

27. Adviser no. 1 to an Emirati royal, private discussion, May 2010.

28. Emirati royal no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

29. Saudi royal no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

30. Emirati royal no. 2, private discussion, May 2010. It is worth comparing this Emirati view with that expressed by the UAE ambassador to Washington on July 6, 2010, at the Aspen Ideas Festival. The ambassador argued that any potential Iranian reprisals would be less damaging to the UAE than a nuclear Iran; see “In Conversation: UAE Ambassador Yousef Al Oteiba,” www.aifestival.org/audio-video-library.php?menu=3&title=582&action=full_info.

31. Emirati royal no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

Seen this way, the Obama administration's approach is a good one, as long as it is backed up with seriousness and commitment. To the approval of this official, "Obama took the right decision playing things soft and working hard." Yet, to others in the region, the U.S. approach is too tentative. One Saudi royal argued that the only viable platform for regional security is moving aggressively toward a goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, a goal pursued through sanctions and incentives and backed in the interim with a nuclear guarantee from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (instead of the United States). He argued against pursuit of a U.S.-Iranian grand bargain, positing that the Arabs could deliver more to the United States than Iran on regional issues related to Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, and that any grand bargain would be skewed in Iran's favor.³²

There is widespread agreement in the Gulf that operations in Iraq and Afghanistan constrain U.S. military options with regard to Iran, and there is widespread understanding that the consequences of U.S. deployments in those regions will affect U.S. forces for years. Yet, as one Saudi prince explained, "Being a great power means there are many options: military, financial, soft power, working through allies. Yet the outcomes are not guaranteed."³³

The most insightful observation came from an Emirati minister who dismissed as "noise" the discussions about U.S. "declinism." Arguing that alleged signs of U.S. failure could be found all over the world, he contended that what truly mattered was what the outcome was when the United States really wanted to do something. In his estimation, the United States had put its full weight behind only a small number of initiatives in recent years, and although they were not wholly successful, the U.S. role was both consequential and constructive. Gulf security is an issue that the United States would be deeply serious about, and he judged that the way to measure the U.S. ability to influence that set of issues should not be shaped by something very different, such as the U.S. ability to shape elections in Ghana. The issues are of different levels of magnitude and importance.³⁴

United States as Security Guarantor

Deeply reliant on the United States for their security, the GCC states' principal concerns are three: U.S. commitment, U.S. intentions, and U.S. capabilities. The issue of commitment is perhaps the hardest to judge because one must separate actual commitments from the pro forma diplomatic assurances that are part of international discourse. In the Gulf, one clear issue that will need substantial discussion in the future is that of nuclear guarantees: those that the United States and its allies might provide as well as the degree to which the Gulf states receiving those guarantees will be reassured. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, as a presidential candidate and as a secretary of state, has several times floated the idea of a "nuclear umbrella" over the Gulf.³⁵ The effect of any such umbrella would depend very much on the circumstances in which it was created—whether it was narrow or part of a broad commitment to arm countries in the region, as some Saudis call for. In addition, the sincerity of the commitment would not necessarily be trusted

32. Saudi royal no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

33. Saudi royal no. 2, private discussion, May 2010.

34. Emirati minister no. 1, private discussion, May 2010.

35. See "Transcript: Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," April 16, 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/04/16/us/politics/16text-debate.html?pagewanted=print; and Jim Hoagland, "Hillary Clinton's Iran Indiscretion," *Washington Post*, July 26, 2009, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/24/AR2009072401955.html.

initially, leading to a high level of U.S. commitment with little reward. How the United States treats other allies it has brought under its nuclear umbrella, such as South Korea and Taiwan, could have a profound effect on how a U.S. commitment is measured and how GCC states act in response. Indeed, the lack of a U.S. response to North Korea's sinking of a South Korean ship in March 2010 drew concerned comment from the Gulf. One Gulf-based Lebanese analyst quoted an anonymous Arab official as saying, "What could Arab countries or even the United States do if submarines or gunboats of a nuclear-capable Iran attack and sink a Saudi or UAE frigate? Nothing more than simple words of condemnation."³⁶

The GCC states have not been clear about what kind of security commitment they would like from the United States although they are clear on the effect they would like such a commitment to have—to deter aggression against their interests. A leading Kuwaiti political scientist and consultant to the government complained, in a typical column, that Secretary Clinton's loose proposals to extend a U.S. security umbrella to the Gulf signals Israelis that the United States accepts a nuclear Iran and forces GCC states to choose between Iran and the United States, which they are loath to do. The column concludes with a complaint that the United States subordinates the Gulf's security to Israel's security, and it essentially ends there. The desire for an effective U.S. commitment to the region runs through this piece, but there are no positive suggestions on what form such a commitment should take or at what cost.³⁷

Although few are willing to discuss it, the shape of U.S. deployments in the Gulf communicates volumes about U.S. intentions. The United States currently maintains military facilities in every GCC state except for Saudi Arabia, maintains extensive stockpiles of pre-positioned equipment, and keeps tens of thousands of sailors on duty in nearby waters. While decisions have not yet been made on the U.S. force structure in the region after the end of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are completed, those decisions will have a profound effect on how Gulf States view their own importance in future U.S. planning.

The other factor that contributes to calculations about intentions is the president's stated determination to free the United States of dependence on foreign oil—an idea that is so central that he raised it in his inaugural address.³⁸ Not only do the Gulf countries rely on oil exports for their economic well-being, but they know that it is oil that elicits U.S. interest in their security concerns. If Gulf Arabs saw indications of the United States moving away from seeing oil security as energy security, it would prompt a rebalancing of their relationships in the region and the world to account for a diminished U.S. role.

In this regard, what many in the Gulf are watching closely are signs of diminished U.S. commitment to provide free passage of energy resources out of the region. U.S. economic ties to the Gulf have always been secondary to security concerns. The United States is not the principal oil export market for any country in the region, nor is any Middle Eastern country the principal source for U.S. imported oil. In fact, Saudi exports to the United States have flattened, and China is now the principal destination for Saudi oil. There is an immense hunger for Chinese manufactured goods and construction in the Gulf, and a real thirst for the oil that helps drive the Chinese

36. See Riad Kahwaji, "North Korean Sinking of South Korean Frigate Raises Arab Fear of Nuclear Iran," *Eurasia Review*, May 29, 2010, www.eurasiareview.com/20100529230/north-korea-sinking-of-south-korean-frigate-raises-arab-fear-of-nuclear-iran.html.

37. Abdullah al-Shayji, "Unfold Plans on U.S. Security Umbrella," *Gulf News*, August 3, 2009.

38. President Obama's inaugural address noted, "The ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet."

economy in Beijing. Chinese oil demand is growing strongly and is projected to continue to do so. Is it conceivable that U.S. politicians intent on reducing the federal deficit could begin to ask why the United States is paying for Gulf oil to arrive safely in China?

What this view underappreciates is the continuing vital role the United States is likely to play to provide security in the Gulf in order to protect the global market for oil. For more than a half century, U.S. interests have centered on energy security—not so much for U.S. consumers but for the global market on which we all rely. Securing the stable, uninterrupted flow of oil at reasonable prices has remained a high priority for the United States, and promoting the stability of friendly regimes has consistently been an important means to this end.

Of course, Gulf oil exporters may increasingly look eastward toward their economic interests, possibly even turning away from the United States. There certainly is widespread curiosity in the Gulf about what a deeper relationship with China might hold. In part, this curiosity is driven by dissatisfaction with U.S. policy in the region and increasing U.S. rhetoric of energy independence. China, however, has shown no real interest in increasing its own role in providing for the safe transportation of energy resources. Beijing has been a major beneficiary of the enormous U.S. efforts to maintain stability and security in the greater Middle East and seems content to freeload on the U.S. policy of securing sea lanes for the time being.

What we have ultimately is an inescapable triangle between China, the United States, and the Gulf, with all three sides sharing a basic strategic interest in regional stability and the free flow of energy. While no immediate conflict seems on the horizon, there may be something inherently unstable in a Middle Eastern order that relies on the West for its security and the East for its prosperity, particularly if the Gulf countries begin to doubt U.S. commitment to sustain its historic role.

The final element in this triad is capabilities. U.S. performance in Iraq and Afghanistan has tarnished Arab views about U.S. capabilities. Gulf leaders criticize not only U.S. performance but also Americans' ability to understand the tasks that need to be done. One leading Saudi intellectual blasted the U.S. performance in the Middle East by saying, "If you compare the U.S. political mentality to the British political mentality or the French political mentality you will find a great difference in terms of dealing with events. The U.S. attitude to developments is a short-term attitude. They deal in parts and details but not in a comprehensive way."³⁹ Complaining about the U.S. performance in Afghanistan, former intelligence chief (and ambassador to Washington) Prince Turki al-Faisal told an audience in Riyadh in May 2010 that the United States had irretrievably bungled things in Afghanistan. He argued it was an illusion to think that the United States "could fix Afghanistan's ills by military means." He continued, "Hunt down the terrorists on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border, arrest or kill them, and get out, and let the Afghan people deal with their own problems."⁴⁰

There is widespread admiration for the United States to do very difficult things well—for example, to integrate surveillance, signals intelligence, and armed drones to kill targeted individuals. Yet, when it comes to connecting the tactics and the strategy, regional players see deep failings in the U.S. system. The problem is, in part, because the United States has taken on massively complex

39. Dr. Turki al-Hamad, interview by Turki al-Dakhil, *Spotlights*, al-Arabia television, July 2, 2008, reported and translated by BBC Monitoring Middle East.

40. Paul Handley, "Inept U.S. Cannot Fix Afghanistan: Top Saudi Prince," Agence France-Presse, May 15, 2010, www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hYXFTjO20EmusORGAdXhfx-HgDbA.

problems that do not lend themselves to clean and simple outcomes. Rightsizing goals by making them smaller and more discrete will help underline U.S. capacity. According to many in the Gulf, goals such as “fixing Afghanistan” or “making Iraq into a democratic, multiethnic state” are likely beyond U.S. capabilities, and a wiser United States would not seek to be evaluated on that measure.

The criticism is even more stark when it comes to domestic affairs in the Middle East. Gulf leaders see the United States as earnest but naive on regional political issues, and the issue came to a head when protests swept the Arab world in early 2011. In February 2011, Saudi sources leaked the details of a “testy” telephone conversation between King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and President Obama, in which the king expressed his anger at the U.S. abandonment of longtime ally Hosni Mubarak in the wake of widespread street demonstrations in Egypt. According to newspaper reports, the king told the U.S. president that Saudi Arabia would replace U.S. aid if the United States withdrew it.⁴¹ A month later, when the United States sought to encourage negotiations between Bahraini protesters and the royal family, GCC neighbors feared the U.S. path would lead to an overthrown monarchy and an Iranian beachhead just a few kilometers away from the oil-rich Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. In between visits of senior U.S. officials, a contingent of GCC forces moved into Bahrain to put down the uprising decisively. Whereas Bahraini policy had long been to sustain close relations with both the United States and Saudi Arabia, when the two differed on a key domestic issue with potential existential consequences for the royal family, the Bahraini leadership edged toward Saudi perspectives and away from those of the United States.

The GCC countries are unwilling to rely on U.S. judgments about their political interests. But where they do rely on the United States and seek to discern U.S. commitments, intentions, and capabilities, the ability of the U.S. government to shape GCC perceptions of them is strong. The broader global debate about the United States in the world relies on a complex set of variables, only a fraction of which are within the U.S. ability to control. For better or worse, the GCC view is far more parochial and self-interested.

For many in the Gulf, the rise and decline of U.S. power in absolute terms is a largely academic exercise. Within the neighborhood, the U.S. role is both necessary and durable. More significant is the question of U.S. relative power in the Gulf, especially as it helps shape Iranian action. Most important, however, is ensuring a sense among the parties in the Gulf that their region remains one of principal concern to the United States. An overwhelmingly powerful United States that deemphasized the region would provoke a profound realignment; yet, even a diminished United States that is committed to the region would be overwhelmingly more powerful than any other party and would shape political alignments for years into the future.

It is in this context that United States must conduct its discussions about the shape of its future forces, both in the Gulf after Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and worldwide. A sense that a cash-strapped United States was curtailing its commitment to the Gulf would prompt a readjustment by friends and foes alike. Similarly, the effectiveness of a U.S. strategy that stressed extended deterrence at the expense of an enduring presence in theater would depend at least as much on the perceptions of both friends and foes as it would on the actual obligations undertaken in the strategy. U.S. global leadership would help the United States lead an international consensus on Gulf security, which could help relieve the direct burden on the United States. Yet, given a choice between U.S. leadership and U.S. commitment, allies throughout the region thought leadership was largely a U.S. problem; commitment was a GCC need.

41. Hugh Tomlinson, “Saudis told Obama Not to Humiliate Mubarak,” *The Times*, February 10, 2011.

7

UNCERTAIN COMMITMENT

ISRAELI ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Haim Malka

Israelis believe the United States is projecting weakness in a region that has no mercy for the weak. The Israeli elite do not doubt U.S. power and military capabilities as much as they question how the United States will use its assets to shape regional trends and events that directly affect Israeli interests. They fear that America's political influence is declining and its unwillingness to use unilateral military action to solve regional threats will come at their expense. Moreover, U.S. demands for the ouster of the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, a longtime ally and pillar of regional stability, stunned many Israelis who fear that U.S. support for popular Arab protests fundamentally destabilizes the region. Israeli assessments reflect a deep sense of uncertainty and anxiety over the trajectory of U.S. policy and its potential impact on Israeli security and interests.

More specifically, Israelis see America's unwillingness to threaten Iran with military force not only strengthening Iran's resolve but making a nuclear-armed Iran inevitable. The United States has the capability to stop Iran's nuclear weapons program, but Israelis doubt whether the United States has the "stomach" for such a fight. The question lies at the center of Israeli strategic calculations, and in many ways Israelis see U.S. resolve on Iran as the test of U.S. global power. They fear the United States will fail the test, leaving Israel alone to face the burden of a nuclear Iran.

Although most Israelis are confident that the United States will remain the world's dominant military power for the foreseeable future, many see rising powers like China, Russia, and Turkey increasingly challenging U.S. policy on a range of issues. Some even point to the slow evolution of a multipolar international order in which the United States has less influence to shape trends and outcomes. This poses serious diplomatic constraints for Israel, which relies on strong U.S. diplomatic support, especially in international forums. Israelis fear a U.S. shift toward multilateralism may become irreversible and will further deepen their own international isolation.

More broadly, U.S. indecision and passivity raise fundamental Israeli questions about the long-term U.S. commitment to Israel's security. For nearly half a century, America has sustained a level of political and military support that has guaranteed Israel's security. If U.S. support is in doubt, then Israeli decisionmakers believe they will have to rely even more on their own military strength and assets to protect Israeli interests. The consequences could be destabilizing for both Israel and the United States.

The impressions cited in this chapter came from a series of discussions in Israel during May and October 2010 with several dozen Israeli officials and former officials, journalists, and academics. The discussions, which were conducted almost exclusively in Hebrew, included conversations with Israelis from a broad cross section of Israeli politics and society.



Obama's Worldview

As most Israelis see it, America's passivity stems largely from President Barack Obama's strategic orientation, which emphasizes multilateralism and dialogue over unilateral military action and traditional alliances.¹ The president's talk of engagement with U.S. adversaries and his outreach to the Muslim world early in his presidency contrasted sharply with the language of preemptive force and unilateralism with which Israelis identified during the George W. Bush years. Israelis had grown accustomed to U.S. presidents showering them with attention and friendship. The contrast was stark, and it created a deep uncertainty about how Obama's different approach would affect Israel.

Bush's friendship and strong moral support were reassuring to Israelis. His public affection for Ariel Sharon, whom he called a "man of peace," complemented strategic outlooks that saw Israel's battle against Hamas and Hezbollah as the same as the U.S. war against al Qaeda. Bush's warm embrace eased Israeli concerns about the negative strategic consequences of his policies, many of which undermined Israeli interests. Bush's democratization policy helped bring Hamas to power in 2006, and the execution of the war in Iraq raised many questions about U.S. judgment and capability in the Middle East. The release of the National Intelligence Estimate in November 2007, which concluded that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003, was another blow to Israeli confidence that the Bush administration was taking the Iranian threat seriously. But for all

1. In expressing these perspectives, Israelis tend to focus on their own strategic environment and overlook the fact that President Obama has increased U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan and stepped up the use of drones and targeted killings of al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan and throughout the broader Middle East.

of Bush's strategic shortcomings, Israelis took comfort not only in his unflinching support but also in his projection of U.S. strength.

To most Israelis, President Obama is different. He displays an inherent sympathy for a vague notion of global equality that has shaped his attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, more important, toward the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Whereas George W. Bush unapologetically identified with Israel's challenges, Barack Obama sympathizes with both the Palestinian and Israeli narratives. The president's early position on the siege of Gaza, his public demand for a settlement construction freeze, and his Cairo speech were three critical moments that shaped Israeli attitudes and perceptions of Obama in his first half year in office.

The encounter was tense from President Obama's first days in office. Obama celebrated his inauguration in the aftermath of the Israel-Hamas war, which clouded an unprecedented occasion in U.S. history. Two days later at the State Department the president announced a new peace envoy to promote Israeli-Palestinian talks. More alarming for many Israelis, his talk about Palestinian suffering in Gaza seemed to hint at a nuanced shift in policy toward the Hamas-controlled territory as he declared, "As part of a lasting cease-fire, Gaza's border crossings should be open to allow the flow of aid and commerce, with an appropriate monitoring regime. . . ."² That was just the beginning.

The Palestinian issue and Israeli settlement construction quickly became key sources of bilateral tension between the Obama administration and Netanyahu government. President Obama's approach to restarting direct talks by focusing on an Israeli settlement construction freeze in the West Bank and East Jerusalem was seen by many Israelis as not only overly ambitious and idealistic, but ultimately counterproductive. Ironically, even those Israelis who supported negotiations toward a Palestinian state believed that U.S. actions made an agreement less likely.³

More egregious for many Israelis was the Obama administration's argument that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was undermining broader U.S. security and national interests, a concept that Israelis overwhelmingly rejected. "The absence of peace between Palestinians and Israelis is an impediment to a whole host of other areas of increased cooperation and more stable security for people in the region, as well as the United States," Obama said.⁴ Israelis became fixated on this

2. "Transcript: President Obama Delivers Remarks to State Department Employees," *Washington Post*, January 22, 2009, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/22/AR2009012202550.html.

3. Israeli columnist Ari Shavit, for example, wrote that the Obama administration adopted a "tough love policy" toward Israel, which, he argued, is potentially damaging to the relationship and irreversible. "Without a strong Israel, a Middle East peace can neither be established nor survive," he wrote. The following year, tension between Obama and Netanyahu would also rally opposition forces in support of the Netanyahu government's Jerusalem construction policy. In March 2010, for example, Otniel Schneller, a member of the Knesset affiliated with Kadima, distributed a letter supporting the Israeli government's decision to build additional housing units in Jerusalem. According to Schneller and press reports, nearly two-thirds of Knesset members supported or signed the letter. See Ari Shavit, "Is a Crushed Israel in America's Best Interest?" *Haaretz*, July 2, 2009, <http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1097244.html>; and Rebecca Anne Stoil, "MKs to PM: Stand Up to US on Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Post*, March 19, 2010, www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=171326. Another editorial in Israel's leading daily, *Yediot Ahronot*, for example, argued that the "problem with American policymakers is that they see the Middle East through the lens of their own culture." See Mordechai Kedar, "Atzor et Obama" [Stop Obama], *Yediot Ahronot* (Ynet), May 13, 2009, www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3713501,00.html.

4. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Obama and President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority in Press Availability," May 28, 2009, www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/

“linkage” that Obama and his national security team articulated between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and America’s broader interests in the Middle East.⁵ This idea later spurred a broader debate over Israel’s strategic value to the United States, which alarmed many Israelis.⁶

By mid-2009 the crisis of trust in U.S.-Israeli relations was unmistakable. Many Israelis were convinced that the Obama administration was trying to orchestrate the collapse of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s coalition in the hopes of bringing about a Kadima-led government that would be more willing to negotiate a Palestinian agreement. In an interview with National Public Radio, President Obama explicitly admitted that he was taking an approach to Israel different from that of his predecessors. “Part of being a good friend is being honest,” he said. “And I think there have been times where we are not as honest as we should be about the fact that the current direction, the current trajectory, in the region is profoundly negative, not only for Israeli interests but also U.S. interests.”⁷ The interview was a rare display of public frankness in U.S.-Israeli dialogue. It deepened Israeli concerns that President Obama sought to fundamentally change the relationship.

Then came the president’s Cairo speech, which marked a turning point that convinced many Israelis that President Obama was intent on rebuilding U.S. ties with the Muslim world at their expense and that he was hostile toward Israel and Israeli interests. The speech equated Jewish suffering in the Nazi Holocaust with Palestinian suffering and displacement. For Israelis the Cairo speech was a double blow: not only did it raise Palestinian displacement on equal moral ground with the Holocaust, but the president, who was only 250 miles from Tel Aviv, chose not to visit Israel.

Despite these concerns, most Israeli critics could not point to any concrete examples of how President Obama’s approach directly undermined their security or interests. Indeed, despite unprecedented political tension during the first 18 months of the Obama administration, strategic cooperation continued growing as the president pledged additional funds for Israeli defense systems and granted Israel access to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which the Bush administration delayed. While the majority was critical, dissenting Israeli voices took a more balanced approach, and some Israeli government professionals privately acknowledged that President Obama’s outreach to the Muslim world made sense from the U.S. perspective and that it was counterproduc-

Remarks-by-President-Obama-and-President-Abbas-of-the-Palestinian-Authority-in-press-availability/.

5. The Iraq Study Group (Baker-Hamilton Commission) made a similar argument.

6. The issue was later addressed by General David Petraeus, then commander of CENTCOM, before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Petraeus argued that “the conflict foments anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of U.S. favoritism for Israel. Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of U.S. partnerships with governments and peoples in the AOR. . . .” Secretary of Defense Robert Gates echoed a similar sentiment shortly after the Petraeus testimony, claiming that “the lack of progress in the peace process has provided political ammunition to our adversaries in the Middle East and in the region, and that progress in this arena will enable us not only to perhaps get others to support the peace process, but also support us in our efforts to try and impose effective sanctions against Iran.” For the Petraeus testimony, see Senate Armed Services Committee, “Statement of General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army Commander, U.S. Central Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Posture of U.S. Central Command,” March 16, 2010, <http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2010/03%20March/Petraeus%2003-16-10.pdf>; and for the Gates comments see Department of Defense, “Media Availability with Secretary Gates and Israeli Defense Minister Barak from the Pentagon,” April 27, 2010, www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4616.

7. Liz Halloran, “Obama: U.S. Needs To Be ‘Honest’ With Israel,” National Public Radio, June 1, 2009, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104798978.

tive for Israelis to raise such loud protests regarding U.S. policy.⁸ Such sentiment was the exception, and relations deteriorated further still.

In March 2010 Vice President Joseph Biden visited Israel to reassure Israelis and repair ties. Instead, the Jerusalem Planning Committee issued an ill-timed announcement that Israel would build 1,600 housing units for Jewish families in East Jerusalem, which sparked a major political crisis between the two governments. In the aftermath both sides recognized that such deep political tension was counterproductive, and they worked hard to repair damaged ties. President Obama firmly backed Israel's position after the Gaza flotilla incident and announced plans to provide an additional \$205 million to fund Israel's development of the Iron Dome short-range rocket defense system.⁹ In July 2010, President Obama warmly welcomed Prime Minister Netanyahu to the White House and publicly reinforced his administration's commitment to Israel's security. Prime Minister Netanyahu seemed to grudgingly accept America's strategy for confronting Iran through United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions, and some commentators argued that U.S. and Israeli positions on Iran were converging.¹⁰ Most important, the strong relationship built between Admiral Michael G. Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gabi Ashkenazi, then chief of the General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), played a crucial role in maintaining close strategic cooperation during a period of heightened political tension.

Yet, if Israelis had grown more accustomed to President Obama toward the close of 2010, their public criticisms reemerged during the waves of public protest that swept Tunisia and then Egypt in January and February 2011. Many Israelis blamed Obama for supporting the ouster of Hosni Mubarak as president of Egypt. For three decades Mubarak had been one of Israel's most important strategic partners and anchor of regional stability. Mubarak's departure created a new set of uncertainties for Israeli policymakers. More broadly, they feared that the president's support for popular Arab uprisings would create hostile regimes on Israel's borders and beyond. In a public gathering, Amos Gilead, director for political-military affairs at Israel's Ministry of Defense, expressed Israeli concerns, stating, "Look around the Middle East: If there is a democratic process here, it will bring, for sure, hell."¹¹

Ramifications for Israel

Ongoing Israeli mistrust of President Obama's policy approach directly influences Israeli policy debates in three critical ways. First, if Israeli decisionmakers believe the United States is reluctant

8. Former senior Israeli intelligence official, private interview, Tel Aviv, May 9, 2010.

9. The Obama administration argued that the Iron Dome system would help Israel take the necessary risks for peace. This was likely in response to Defense Minister Ehud Barak's discussions with U.S. officials in 2009, during which he reportedly argued that Israel could not make concessions on the Palestinian issue until it had the capability to protect itself from rocket attacks. While Iron Dome may give Israel some protection against short-range rockets, it does not address the larger strategic threat of ballistic missiles. Two Iron Dome batteries were deployed in southern Israel in March 2011 although there is still significant criticism of the system. For a brief history of the controversy, see Barbara Opall-Rome, "Israel Speeds Iron Dome Short-Range Defense System," *Defense News*, January 28, 2009, www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=3327047.

10. See, for example, "Indyk: U.S. More Likely Than Israel to Bomb Iran," *Atlantic*, August 16, 2010, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/08/indyk-us-more-likely-than-israel-to-bomb-iran/61508/.

11. Barbara Opall-Rome, "Hedging against America," *Defense News*, February 14, 2011, <http://www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=5699414>.

to use force, or at least the threat of force, to solve regional security threats—most importantly stopping Iran’s nuclear weapons program—then it raises the urgency of decisive and perhaps even unilateral actions to protect Israeli interests. Second, Israelis believe U.S. policy is facilitating a slow evolution toward a multilateral international order, where the United States is increasingly constrained diplomatically and challenged by regional powers. Third, U.S. policy fuels Israeli doubts about America’s reliability as a strategic ally and raises difficult questions about its long-term commitment to Israel’s security. The deep uncertainty has significant ramifications not only for Israeli decisionmaking but for U.S. interests as well.

Confronting Iran

Most urgently, Israelis believe that the United States is not acting decisively to stop Iran’s nuclear weapons program. This heightens the urgency for decisive action by Israeli policymakers to protect Israeli security. As Israelis see it, a nuclear Iran would fundamentally alter the regional security landscape and balance of power, denying Israel its regional hegemony and freedom of action. It would embolden Iran and its allies Hezbollah and Hamas and subject Israel to an ever-rising series of threats. Some Israelis have concluded that the United States has already accepted the idea of a nuclear-armed Iran and is moving toward a containment strategy.¹²

What is frustrating for many Israelis is that the United States has the military capability to stop Iran’s nuclear weapons program but is reluctant to use, or at least threaten to use, that power. They believe cautious language by U.S. officials projects weakness instead of instilling fear in Iran. They point to President Bush’s threatening language in 2003 and Iranian fears of U.S. military action in the aftermath of the Iraq invasion as important examples of how the threat of force can influence Iranian decisionmaking.¹³ But many Israeli security officials argue that statements such as those made by Admiral Mullen that a U.S. strike on Iran would be “very, very destabilizing” with unintended consequences¹⁴ signal to the Iranians that the United States has no intention of using force to stop Iran’s nuclear weapons program. Israelis believe that U.S. passivity and indecision encourages Iran to pursue its nuclear program with acceptable costs.

Because Israel and the United States are so closely allied, Israelis believe that the perception of a weak United States in the region affects Israel’s own image and power projection. The IDF in particular watched its deterrent gradually erode following the unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza in 2005. The declaration by Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah, that “Israel is weaker than a spider web”¹⁵ still haunts many Israelis, who fear that the image of Israel’s military prowess has eroded.¹⁶

12. See, for example, Ephraim Asculai, “A U.S. Volte-Face?” *INSS Insight* No. 166, March 8, 2010, www.inss.org.il/publications.php?cat=21&incat=&read=3862.

13. In making this argument, Israelis cite the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate although they were critical of its conclusion when first released.

14. Admiral Mullen used the same language to describe a nuclear Iran and a strike against Iran. See Admiral Michael Mullen (speech delivered at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 7, 2010), www.jcs.mil/speech.aspx?ID=1309.

15. Hassan Nasrallah first used the concept of a spider web to describe Israel following Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000. See, for example, Hassan Nasrallah, “Speech during the Divine Victory Celebration,” August 3, 2010, <http://english.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=11970&cid=231>.

16. In a conversation with youth leaders from the Hashomer Hatsair (Labor Zionist) movement, they quoted Hassan Nasrallah’s spider web theory and worried that Israel was becoming weaker because

To restore its image as a dominant military power Israel has resorted to military campaigns, often at the expense of diplomacy. The wars in Lebanon in 2006 and Gaza in 2008–2009, which in part aimed to restore Israel’s military deterrent, are prime examples. Future military confrontations will likely be even more devastating to both Israel and its adversaries.¹⁷ The IDF’s revised military doctrine, targeted against Hezbollah in particular, plans to use overwhelming airpower to inflict heavy damage on Hezbollah assets and Lebanese infrastructure to force a swift international cease-fire. Military planners consider such a cease-fire the most effective way of protecting their home front from sustained rocket and missile attacks and preventing Hezbollah from declaring a political victory. However, overwhelming force and potentially high civilian casualties could create political tension with the United States and jeopardize U.S. political cover for Israel, especially in international forums.¹⁸ Such confrontations could also pose diplomatic challenges for the United States in the future and complicate its broader regional policy.

Diplomatic Challenges

As Israelis see it, U.S. policies in the region not only strengthen its enemies but are exploited by U.S. allies as well. Israelis fear that a broader perception of U.S. weakness, combined with the administration’s preference for diplomacy and multilateral action, is slowly reshaping the international arena and directly undermining Israel’s diplomatic interests in two key ways. First, they believe that U.S. allies are pressuring the United States on key foreign policy issues such as non-proliferation. Second, many Israelis believe that U.S. diplomatic hegemony is eroding, which will constrain its future ability and willingness to protect Israel in the international arena. Any softening of U.S. diplomatic support, either as a result of a U.S.-Israeli crisis or external pressure on the United States, will fuel the international campaign to delegitimize Israel.

U.S. support for Israel in the United Nations and other international forums has been vital for Israel. According to one former Israeli official, “Israel could probably live without U.S. military assistance, but it could not survive without U.S. political support.” The country is at a natural disadvantage in an international system where the United States is less dominant diplomatically and less willing or able to advocate on behalf of Israeli interests.

Israel already faces a hostile international environment, and many Israelis believe the drive to delegitimize its existence is an emerging strategic threat. Senior Israeli political and defense officials, for example, have curtailed travel to Great Britain and other European countries for fear of arrest under universal jurisdiction laws. This deepens Israelis’ sense of isolation and fuels a fear that they have no one to depend on but themselves. Some Israeli analysts point to U.S. acquiescence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference agenda promoted by

the ethos of self-sacrifice for the greater good was disappearing from Israeli culture and values. They also pointed to the overemphasis of low Israeli military casualties, primarily in the Gaza war, as a public and IDF barometer of success in that campaign. This trend was also noted in the Israeli media. Private discussion, Tel Aviv, May 6, 2010.

17. Jonathan Lis, “IDF Intelligence Chief: Israel’s Next War Will See Heavy Casualties,” *Haaretz*, November 2, 2010, www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/idf-intelligence-chief-israel-s-next-war-will-see-heavy-casualties-1.322484.

18. Israel paid a high diplomatic price for those conflicts. The international outcry over Israel’s military tactics and high civilian casualties undermined Israel’s national security interests by alienating its allies and increasing international pressure on Israel through the UN’s Goldstone Report. The Gaza War in particular also drove a major wedge in Turkish-Israeli ties that were already waning.

Egypt as a sign that this shift is already in motion. The conference's final document called on Israel to sign the NPT but omitted any mention of Iran's nuclear program.¹⁹

Turkey is another source of Israeli concern. Israelis largely interpreted Turkey's vote against UNSC sanctions on Iran as a sign that regional powers are setting independent agendas that challenge the United States. Turkey analysts in Jerusalem argue that Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in particular is emboldened by his perception of a weak United States and a stronger Turkey, which has led him to rebuff President Obama repeatedly on a number of issues.²⁰

Israeli concerns about the Obama administration's emphasis on multilateral action has led some Israeli officials to argue that Israel needs to strengthen its "networks of common interests" with other regional powers in preparation for a future multipolar world order in which the United States is less influential and less willing to manage global affairs.²¹ At the annual Herzliya Conference in February 2011, for example, Rafi Barak, director general of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, claimed that the United States is "apparently no longer the global policeman." He continued by arguing that Israel should focus on "developing new and bilateral alliances."²² Emerging regional powers like China, India, and Brazil are the most attractive candidates, and many Israelis, especially those of Russian origin, view Russia as an important partner as well.

That Israel should expand its ties with regional powers is not a new argument. In a 2009 visit to Moscow, Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman chaired the first session of the Russia-Israel Strategic Dialogue. At the time one analyst argued that Lieberman sought to build a strategic partnership with Russia in part to balance Israel's overreliance on U.S. diplomatic, financial, and military support.²³ Trade and bilateral exchanges with Russia have increased dramatically in the last decade, jumping from approximately \$50 million in 1990 to nearly \$1.8 billion in 2008, including \$49 million worth of Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles in 2009.²⁴ Although Russia's military sales to Israel's enemies, primarily Iran and Syria, complicate bilateral relations, cooperation in a number of spheres will likely continue.

Israel has also built ties with China, but those relations are also complicated, and most Israelis largely conclude that China is not a viable or reliable strategic partner. For one, China is increasingly dependent on Middle Eastern oil to fuel its economy, and it gets nearly half of its total imports from the region.²⁵ More important, China has no moral or political connection to Israel, which has been one of the most important factors in the U.S.-Israeli partnership. Europe has also been a partner, and in the past, many of Israel's friends in Europe have advocated a closer Israel-NATO partnership. Although some Israeli policymakers have supported the idea, Israel's deteriorating ties with Europe and Turkey, a NATO member, make it unlikely as long as the Palestinian issue remains unresolved.

19. See, for example, Emily B. Laundau, "2010 NPT RevCon: Final Results and Implications for Israel," *INSS Insight* No. 185, June 3, 2010, www.inss.org.il/publications.php?cat=21&incat=&read=4113&print=1.

20. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, private discussion, Jerusalem, May 5, 2010.

21. Kadima member of Knesset, private discussion, Jerusalem, May 5, 2010.

22. Barbara Opall-Rome, "Hedging against America."

23. Amir Mizroch, "Analysis: As US Harps on Settlements, Israel Aims to Boost Russian Ties," *Jerusalem Post*, May 31, 2009, www.jpost.com/Home/Article.aspx?id=144026.

24. Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel), "Imports by Country of Purchase and Exports, by Country of Destination," *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 2009, http://www1.cbs.gov.il/shnaton60/st16_03x.pdf.

25. Saudi Arabia and Iran are China's two largest suppliers in the Middle East. U.S. Energy Information Administration, "China," *Country Analysis Briefs*, July 2009, www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/China/Oil.html.

Long-Term U.S. Commitments

For many Israelis, doubts about U.S. decisiveness and willingness to use force also raise fundamental questions about the long-term U.S. commitment to Israel's security. Israel's partnership with the United States is at the core of its foreign and national security policy, and America's overwhelming support has led many Israelis to believe that the United States is Israel's only true friend and strategic ally in the world.²⁶ Now, many Israelis question whether the United States would stand behind Israel at a moment of truth in a potential Israeli-Iranian confrontation.²⁷ If U.S. support is in doubt, then Israel will have to rely even more on its own military strength and assets to protect its interests, regardless of whether those capabilities are sufficient to confront Iran.

Despite the significant upgrade in U.S.-Israeli military cooperation under Obama, Israel's defense establishment "worries that they will pay a price for America's new strategic orientation."²⁸ They worry that the Pentagon's civilian leadership increasingly believes Israel's policies are undermining a range of U.S. interests in the region.²⁹ Many defense officials fear that ongoing political tension and a shift in U.S. strategic interests could erode Israel's qualitative military edge and prevent greater integration of U.S. and Israeli missile defense architectures. Although defense officials acknowledge that security cooperation has expanded dramatically during the last two years, they remain concerned about future weapons platform development and production, acquisitions, and the long-term sustainability of U.S. military aid.

Israeli questions about long-term U.S. commitments have resurrected an old debate in elite circles about Israel's dependency on the United States. In recent discussions with current and former Israeli officials across the political spectrum, many expressed the need to become more self-reliant and independent in order to prepare for a time when U.S. support might be less forthcoming. "Israel can only depend on itself," argued one former defense minister.³⁰ Others, such as former IDF chief of staff Dan Haloutz, argue that, although Israel's unique relationship with the United States is an unrivaled strategic asset, its dependence on U.S. military assistance is a strategic burden for Israel.³¹ Now many other Israelis, inside and outside of government, echo that sentiment and question whether current levels of assistance are sustainable in the long term.³²

Israelis pride themselves on being strong enough to defend themselves and never asking the United States to fight on their behalf.³³ Still—as many Israelis acknowledge—U.S. military assis-

26. Senior Israeli Ministry of Defense official, private discussion, December 2008.

27. Israeli Ministry of Defense official, private discussion, Tel Aviv, May 3, 2010.

28. Defense officials also noted that President Obama increasingly weighs in on decisions regarding strategic cooperation that past presidents left to the professional military level. Israeli Ministry of Defense official, private discussion, Tel Aviv, May 4, 2010.

29. In a briefing to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Mossad chief Meir Dagan reportedly argued there was an "erosion" of Israel's strategic value for the United States over the last year. This was originally mistranslated in the English-language Israeli newspapers, which quoted Dagan claiming that Israel had become a strategic liability. See "Rosh Hamossad: Shekhika B'chashivuteinu L'Artzot Habrit" [Mossad chief: Israel less important to U.S.], *Yediot Ahronot* (Ynet), June 6, 2010, www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3897456,00.html.

30. Moshe Arens, former Israeli minister of defense, private discussion, Tel Aviv, May 3, 2010.

31. Barbara Opall-Rome, "Israel's Lebanon War Chief Defends Strategy," *Defense News*, February 22, 2010.

32. Israeli security official, private discussion, Jerusalem, October 17, 2010.

33. Ehud Barak (speech at Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., February 26, 2010), www.washingtoninstitute.org/html/pdf/EhudBarak.pdf.

tance plays a major role in Israel's procurement, its air force is dependent on U.S. spare parts, and its military production line relies heavily on U.S. components. U.S. military aid has ensured Israel's qualitative military edge, but it has also constrained Israel's defense industry, giving the United States essential oversight over Israeli defense production and exports.³⁴

Despite the debates and questions surrounding U.S. commitments, the reality is that Israel has no alternative to its strategic partnership with the United States. Israel's strategic and diplomatic environment is growing more complex, and its need for U.S. intervention on a range of diplomatic issues ranging from the fight against Iran's nuclear program to managing Israeli-Egyptian relations will be critical. Despite the perception that the United States is distracted and its influence is declining, there is no substitute: "Israel is dependent on a strong United States that can solve problems and influence events."³⁵ Most Israelis want and need the United States to remain strong and lead the region and the world, yet the crisis of doubt makes cooperation and coordination more difficult.

While Israelis overwhelmingly blame President Obama for creating tension in U.S.-Israeli relations, much of the Israeli elite is sober about U.S. priorities and how they might be diverging from Israeli priorities. Some Israelis inside and outside of government acknowledge that the United States has a much wider set of interests compared with their own more narrowly focused challenges. They understand that this gap in perspectives leads to different threat assessments and strategic priorities. Many also acknowledge that consecutive Israeli governments have lacked any strategic vision and consistently undermined Israeli interests through short-sighted tactical policies that have deepened the rift with the United States.

Looking Forward

Managing Israeli expectations and actions will likely become more complex in the months and years ahead. The danger is that ignoring Israeli perceptions and doubts makes Israeli decision-making more unpredictable and creates more friction with the United States. For Israel the stakes are high: as Israelis perceive U.S. power and commitment declining, they fear a parallel decline in their own military power.

In all of this Israelis do not necessarily see President Obama actively downgrading the relationship, but they believe his strategic vision and policies will resonate beyond his years in office, with significant ramifications for Israeli interests. Israelis are thinking about how a partnership with the United States might look different in the future, but they remain unsure about its contours or how they might shape it.

34. In 2007 Israel passed an expanded defense export control law to strengthen oversight. See Ministry of Defense (Israel), "Defense Export Control Law, 5766-2007," October 2007, www.exportctrl.mod.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/7B53DDE6-AEE8-47BC-AEFA-1AF325FB96D0/0/Defense_Export_Control_Law.pdf.

35. Retired Israeli air force general, private discussion, Tel Aviv, May 4, 2010.

PART 3: EURASIA

8

MISPLACED PRIORITIES TURKISH ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Stephen J. Flanagan

Turkish elites and the general public retain a wary respect for American economic and hard power but remain dubious that this enormous capacity will be used in ways that will advance Turkish regional and global interests. Many Turks remain particularly concerned that the United States will leave Iraq unstable and provoke a military confrontation with Iran—with damaging consequences for Turkey’s security and prosperity. The appeal of U.S. political ideas, business practices, culture, and scientific and technological advances has declined dramatically among both elites and the public in Turkey since 2001, largely as a consequence of discontent with U.S. policies toward terrorism, Iraq, Iran, and democracy promotion. While the Turkish government still values the U.S. and Allied defense commitments codified in the North Atlantic Treaty, elite and public perceptions in Turkey of NATO’s importance to the country’s security have also dropped sharply over the last decade.

The growth of Turkey’s self-confidence and sense of relative power vis-à-vis the United States and Europe during the past decade has also influenced these attitudes. Turkey’s diminished dependence on the NATO security guarantee coupled with its remarkable economic dynamism (Turkey is now the fifteenth- or sixteenth-largest economy in the world¹) and diplomatic activism have tempered past deference to the United States. Turkey now has other important partners as it has developed burgeoning economic and political relations with Russia, its Middle East neighbors, and Asia. Current Turkish leaders sometimes overestimate their influence and ability to shape regional and global affairs. They refer to Turkey as a “central power,” a pivotal state in Eurasia that can leverage its regional position to become an increasingly influential global actor. They expect the United States and other governments to treat their country accordingly. They do not see the United States in decline as much as they embrace their rise and the “rise of the rest” that is leading to a more diffuse global power structure and that is also increasing Turkey’s ability to advance its interests.

Domestic trends in Turkey, regional dynamics, and enduring bilateral policy differences make it difficult to envision major improvement over the next five to ten years in the very negative attitudes toward the United States prevalent in Turkey today. Instead of assuming Turkey’s inclination to support U.S. policy initiatives, as was generally the case in past decades, Washington should expect Turkish cooperation to unfold case by case after some negotiation and that Turkey will

1. As of November 2010, the World Bank ranks Turkey’s economy seventeenth in terms of nominal GDP and fifteenth based on the measure of purchasing power parity. See <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf>, and http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP_PPP.pdf.



sometimes be working at cross-purposes. U.S. standing and influence in Turkey could be best improved by carefully managing policy differences and giving more profile to cooperation on issues where there is a greater convergence of interests and policy preferences, such as on long-term stabilization of Iraq, expansion of bilateral trade and investment, and development of the southern corridor for Caspian Basin energy, supporting political reforms and economic development in the Middle East and Central Asia. These findings emerge from extensive dialogues with senior Turkish officials, members of parliament, journalists, business leaders, and scholars over the past two years, as well as analysis of Turkish media and public opinion data.

Shifting Turkish Interests and Attitudes

During the Cold War, U.S.-Turkey relations rested on the firm foundation of mutual security commitments through NATO and close bilateral military ties, bolstered by Washington's support for Turkey's secular elite and integration into Europe. Turks joined the coalition in the 1991 Gulf War but were deeply disappointed that U.S. promises of compensation for their consequent economic losses and diminished security were unfulfilled. Initiation of the U.S. war on terrorism placed new strains on relations. Turkish secularists felt marginalized by Washington's perceived tilt toward the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) in its rush to embrace "moderate" Islamist movements. Turks of all stripes were uneasy with being held up as a model for their Muslim neighbors and with the U.S. approach to counterterrorism and democracy promotion. Many Turks worried, despite clear disavowal from U.S. leaders, that the war on terrorism was perceived in the wider Muslim world as a war against Islam, which complicated cooperation with Washington in combating extremism.

Differences over the Iraq War and its detrimental consequences for Turkish security led to a further deterioration of relations and favorable opinion of the United States. Many senior officials and a majority of the public have come to feel that U.S. power in the Middle East has been exercised in reckless ways that takes little account of Turkey's interests. The perceived U.S. failure to take effective steps to prevent the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist group from launching attacks into Turkey from northern Iraq after 2004 became a major irritant and led to enduring perceptions that Washington has a double standard in its fight against terrorism.² Relations with the Turkish government and military recovered somewhat following the establishment in 2007 of the Ankara Coordination Center for exchange of intelligence information on PKK activities in northern Iraq. The Turkish government, however, has not given this cooperation much publicity in the Grand National Assembly or in public statements, and it has not had a major impact on PKK operations.³ As a result, this support has not done much to improve the U.S. image in Turkey.

Domestic politics in Turkey have also influenced bilateral relations and attitudes toward the United States. Since its decisive victory in parliamentary elections in November 2002, the AKP has dominated Turkish politics, winning a second successive election and raising its share of the vote from 34 percent to 47 percent in July 2007. The AKP focused initially on continuing the economic recovery after the serious downturn of 2000–2001 and pursuing accession negotiations with the European Union. It delivered on both those fronts and consequently widened its appeal across the political spectrum. The AKP's roots in the Turkish Islamist movement also necessitated an uneasy cohabitation with the country's rigidly secular system. The AKP reflects the influence of a growing segment of the population that is religious and favors more tolerance of traditional interpretations of piety in public life. It has sought to advance this agenda and its fortunes by emphasizing solidarity with the wider Islamic world. While the AKP avoided an open confrontation with the defenders of secularism during most of its first term, it ran into difficulties when it decided to elect one of its leaders to the presidency in April 2007. As a result of this move and other initiatives to allow traditional expressions of piety in public life, the party was threatened with closure by the Constitutional Court in 2008.

The AKP has lost ground during the past three years, but it remains the most popular party in Turkey. The AKP's continued domination of Turkish politics results, in part, from the weakness of other parties. The two main secularist opposition parties, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), have lacked effective leadership and mechanisms for renewal, making it difficult to mount a strong challenge to the current government. Both parties have been highly critical of the United States and the European Union in recent years and have successfully pressured the AKP to adopt more nationalist and less tolerant policies toward the Kurdish minority. There are signs that the new CHP party chairman, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, is trying to temper this nationalism, as well as elements of the party's rigid Kemalist ideology, and reposition the party as a viable social democratic opposition. Kılıçdaroğlu also has a more positive view of the United States and Western alliances, more in line with CHP's historical orientation.⁴

2. In the 2002 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 58 percent of Turks said they opposed "the U.S.-led efforts to fight terrorism." This opposition jumped to 79 percent by 2007 and still remains high at 55 and 59 in the 2009 and 2010 surveys, respectively.

3. Members of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, interviews with author, Ankara and Washington, D.C., January 2009 and April 2010.

4. CHP representative, interview with author, Washington, D.C., October 2010. While campaigning against the AKP-supported referendum on constitutional reforms, Kılıçdaroğlu promised a creative solution to the fight over the ban on women wearing headscarves at universities and to provide amnesty for PKK

Erdoğan's decisive victory in securing approval of a package of constitutional and judicial reforms in a September 12, 2010, referendum, which the opposition parties denounced, suggests that barring an unexpected economic downturn or some other shock, AKP is likely to retain control of the government after parliamentary elections scheduled for July 2011.⁵

Anti-American sentiment has grown among both elites and the general public in Turkey during the past decade. In the 1999–2000 Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 52 percent of Turks had a positive opinion of the United States. This fell to 15 percent in 2003 after the Iraq War, and dropped to 9 percent in the 2007 survey (among the lowest levels in the Middle East) as the consequences of that war for Turkey became more apparent.⁶ This sentiment reflects lingering discontent with specific U.S. policies, but, over the past few years, dislike of the U.S. government has been accompanied by declining views of the American people and values.

In a 2002 Pew survey, 46 percent of Turks reported a dislike of U.S. popular culture, 59 percent said they disliked U.S. business practices, and 50 percent disliked U.S. ideas about democracy.⁷ A survey five years later revealed further erosion of American ideational and cultural influence: 68 percent said they dislike “American music, movies and television” (up 22 points), 83 percent dislike “American ways of doing business” (up 24 points), 81 percent said they “dislike American ideas about democracy” (up 31 points), and 51 percent said they do not admire the United States for its “technological and scientific advances” (up 27 points since 2002 when 67 percent said they *did* admire such achievements).⁸ The loss of respect for American values has been more pronounced among “conservative” (more traditional and pious) supporters of AKP, but anti-Americanism has become increasingly evident across the Turkish political spectrum.

President Barack Obama's efforts to revitalize relations with Turkey and the Muslim world produced some initial improvement in U.S. standing. The AKP leadership embraced his offer of a “model partnership” and sought to highlight common policy objectives. In 2009, 33 percent of Turks surveyed by Pew expected Obama to “do the right thing” in foreign affairs, up from only 2 percent in 2008, and 50 percent of those surveyed by the German Marshall Fund (GMF) had a positive view of the president's managing of relations with their country. But by early 2010, as policy differences vis-à-vis Iran and Israel gained prominence, these figures had dropped to 23 and 28 percent, respectively.⁹ The United States is still regarded by a large majority of Turks (69 percent

fighters. See Fatma Dişli Zibak, “New CHP Leader's ‘Radical’ Statements Draw Cautious Reaction,” *Today's Zaman*, August 29, 2010, www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-220360-103-new-chp-leaders-radical-statements-draw-cautious-reaction.html.

5. The referendum was approved 57.8 to 42.1, a much larger margin of victory than expected. It is estimated that AKP could expect about 40 percent of the vote in the next elections, down from 46.58 in 2007 but sufficient to form a government on its own. Kılıçdaroğlu has a stronger base of support, and CHP's strength is widely assessed to be more than 30 percent, up from 22.88 in 2007. For an incisive analysis of the implications of the referendum, see Bulent Aliriza and Deni Koenhems, “Erdoğan's Referendum Victory and Turkish Politics,” October 15, 2010, <http://csis.org/files/publication/101510-Erdogan's-Referendum-Victory-and-Turkish-Politics.pdf>.

6. See Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Project, *Muslim Disappointment: Obama More Popular Abroad Than at Home, Global Image of U.S. Continues to Benefit*, June 17, 2010, p. 5, <http://pewglobal.org/files/pdf/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Spring-2010-Report.pdf>.

7. Pew Research Center, *What the World Thinks in 2002*, December 2002, <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/165.pdf>.

8. Pew Research Center, *Global Unease with Major World Powers*, June 2007, <http://pewglobal.org/files/pdf/256.pdf>.

9. Pew, *Muslim Disappointment*, p. 5, and German Marshall Fund of the United States, *Transatlantic Trends, 2010: Key Findings*, August 2010, p. 8, http://trends.gmfus.org/doc/2010_English_Key.pdf.

in the 2010 Pew survey) as the world's leading economic power, but GMF polling in 2009 found that 57 percent of Turks worried about Obama's ability to manage international economic problems.¹⁰ Of Turks surveyed by GMF in 2010, only 6 percent identified the United States as Turkey's most important partner—about the same as Russia (5 percent). Reflecting growing nationalism and a regional focus, 34 percent of the GMF respondents thought Turkey should act alone, and 20 percent felt countries in the Middle East are their country's best partners.¹¹

Several other data points make clear that Turks are wary of any U.S. government, not just the George W. Bush administration. In a July 2008 Gallup poll, only one in three Turks believed the outcome of the U.S. presidential election that year would make a difference to their country. Since 2001, Turkish elites and the public have been increasingly convinced that U.S. leaders pay little regard to Turkey's interests in making foreign policy decisions for the United States. In the 2002 Pew survey, 17 percent of Turks said the United States pays a "great deal or a fair amount" of attention to Turkish interests, but by 2010 only 9 percent of Turks held that view. More alarmingly, 56 percent of Turks surveyed by Pew in 2010 remain very or somewhat concerned that the United States could become a military threat to their country (down from a high of 77 percent in 2007). This sentiment, affirmed in other polls, is part of the legacy of the Gulf and Iraq Wars and reflects a lingering fear among elites and the public that the United States and Israel may yet take military action to thwart Iran's nuclear program and regional hegemony, triggering further instability and economic dislocation in their neighborhood, with very damaging consequences for Turkey.¹²

Turkey's foreign policy decisions over the past few years have generally reflected realpolitik efforts to balance its national and regional interests with relations with the United States and its other allies more than these negative sentiments about the United States. There is undoubtedly a tipping point at which abiding anti-Americanism among the Turkish public will have a more pronounced or distorting impact on Ankara's foreign policy. Both factors were at play in Erdoğan's decision in June 2010 to vote against further UN sanctions on Iran, rather than abstain, as had been expected, and in his government's shifting stance on dealing with the Libya crisis in March 2011.

Turkey's surprising vote on UN sanctions on Iran came in the aftermath of public and official outrage over the Israeli commando raid on the Turkish ship that was part of the Gaza flotilla and the cautious U.S. response as well as Washington's spurning of Erdoğan's effort with Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to broker a nuclear fuel swap deal with Iran. The AKP leadership clearly felt it would not suffer any adverse consequences domestically by challenging the United States and the other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany on such a critical issue. If Israel were to undertake military action against the Iranian nuclear program, whatever the actual circumstances, the Turkish public and leaders across the political spectrum would assume U.S. complicity, which would probably trigger a prolonged rupture in relations with both the United States and Israel.

Turkey's policies toward the Libyan civil war reflected both its efforts to balance its regional and alliance interests as well as its reservations about the application of U.S. and European power

10. German Marshall Fund of the United States, *Transatlantic Trends, 2009*, September 2009, p. 24, www.gmfus.org/trends/doc/2009_English_Key.pdf.

11. German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic Trends, 2010: Key Findings*, p. 23.

12. A May 2007 Gallup poll found 64 percent of Turks surveyed considered the United States hostile. See Julie Ray, "Istanbul Attack Underscores Poor U.S. Image, Two in Three Turks Disapprove of U.S. Leadership, Consider It Hostile," July 11, 2008, www.gallup.com/poll/108754/Istanbul-Attack-Underscores-Poor-US-Image.aspx.

in its neighborhood. As international concern grew in March 2011 that Muammar el-Qaddafi might slaughter innocent civilians as well as rebels fighting his regime, the Turkish government supported UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1973 but contended that it authorized only humanitarian actions to ensure the safety and well-being of the Libyan people. Uncomfortable with military operations against an Arab neighbor and anxious to preserve substantial business interests in Libya, Turkish officials objected that early coalition military actions exceeded the scope of the UN mandate. Turkey later agreed to support NATO assuming command and control of enforcement of the UN-mandated no-fly zone and arms embargo, but it opposed the alliance directing military actions to protect civilians under threat of attack. After intense diplomatic negotiations, including discussions between President Obama and Prime Minister Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Turkish government finally agreed to NATO assuming command and control of military operations related to all elements of SCR 1973, stating that its concerns had been allayed. This arrangement gave Turkey and other allies a veto in the management of NATO strikes. Still Ankara's balancing efforts continued. As NATO assumed command and control of operations, Erdoğan announced that Turkey, with allied blessing, would take over running of the rebel-held Benghazi harbor and airport to facilitate humanitarian aid and was willing to broker a cease-fire between rebels and Qaddafi forces, warning that a lengthy conflict could turn Libya into a "second Iraq or another Afghanistan."¹³

Impact on Turkish Foreign and Security Policy

Turkey's increasingly independent diplomacy reflects its new self-confidence and opposition to certain U.S. policies. Although Turkish leaders still see many convergent strategic interests with the United States, they feel they know their region better than the United States does and that their good relations with all their neighbors give them the ability to engage countries Washington can't. Senior Turkish officials are no longer content to "simply deliver messages framed in Washington," and they feel that their innovative regional diplomacy is not fully appreciated in the United States.¹⁴ This has led to recent strains in bilateral relations. A prominent Turkish scholar summed up this sentiment well:

The Americans, no matter what they say, cannot get used to a new world where regional powers want to have a say in regional and global politics. This is our neighborhood, and we don't want trouble. The Americans create havoc, and we are left holding the bag.¹⁵

Turkish foreign policy under Erdoğan and the AKP has been heavily influenced by the worldview of Ahmet Davutoğlu, the prime minister's longtime adviser and current foreign minister. Davutoğlu's vision rests on several principles designed to leverage Turkey's geostrategic location in the center of Eurasia, as well as its historical Ottoman ties and Muslim affinities, to give Turkey "strategic depth" and global influence over the coming decade. A key element of this strategy is the concept of peaceful regional engagement to achieve "zero problems" with its neighbors. Trade and economic cooperation and demilitarization of its relations with Russia and its neighbors

13. Seumas Milne, "Turkey Offers to Broker Libya Ceasefire as Rebels Advance on Sirte," *Guardian*, March 27, 2011, www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/27/libya-turkey-mediators-prime-minister.

14. Comments at CSIS roundtable on U.S.-Turkish relations, November 2010.

15. Professor Soli Ozel, Bilgi University, quoted by Sabrina Tavernise and Michael Slackman, "Turkey Goes from Pliable Ally to Thorn for U.S.," *New York Times*, June 8, 2010, www.nytimes.com/2010/06/09/world/middleeast/09turkey.html.

in the Caucasus and the Middle East are also central to this strategy. Davutoğlu and other AKP strategists also envision Turkey being well suited to be a bridge between Islam and the West, and through its engagement with Iran to broker a historic reconciliation between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim communities and speak authoritatively for the wider Islamic world in international forums.¹⁶ Erdoğan and Davutoğlu have seen the concept of strategic depth as a way to lessen Turkey's historic dependence on the United States and Europe, and have used Turkey's diplomatic activism to build new partnerships in an effort to achieve a new regional balance of power.

The AKP government has pursued policies toward Iran, particularly Tehran's nuclear program, that have strained relations with the United States. Turkish leaders endorse Iran's right to develop a full nuclear fuel cycle but oppose Iran's development of nuclear weapons because it would alter the regional balance of power. The Turks do not see Iran's nuclear program as an imminent threat. The Turkish government remains convinced that diplomatic engagement with Tehran offers the best route to convincing Iran to forswear acquisition of nuclear weapons, and Turkey adamantly opposes military efforts to stop further developments in Iranian nuclear technology. This conviction, coupled with a belief that Turks have influence and know how best to deal with the Iranians, led to Turkey's initiative with Brazil to broker the nuclear fuel swap deal with Iran. The AKP government will remain reluctant to take further steps to isolate Iran and to accept deployment of U.S. or NATO ballistic missile defense systems on Turkish territory. Reflecting its goal of fostering cordial relations with Iran as well as Russia, Turkey demanded that no country be cited as the threat rationale for the alliance's missile defense system as the price for its agreement to commence its development at the November 2010 NATO Lisbon summit.¹⁷

Turkey's differences with Israel have become a major irritant in bilateral relations with the United States. Turkey's relationship with Israel, always complicated, has cooled in recent years as the AKP government has emphasized Turkey's Muslim identity and sought to broaden its ties with other Middle Eastern neighbors hostile to Israel (including Syria, Iran, and Hamas). Turkish leaders decried Israel's 2006 military operations in Lebanon. Harsh criticism of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians by Prime Minister Erdoğan and other senior Turkish officials, particularly following the Israeli invasion of Gaza in December 2008, further strained relations. The Israeli raid on the Gaza flotilla in 2010, which resulted in the deaths of eight Turkish citizens, triggered public outrage and nearly led to a breach in relations. Erdoğan's concerns about the fate of the Palestinians also reflect deeply held sentiment among the AKP's core constituency. The perception of key Turkish elites and the public is that unwavering and uncritical U.S. support of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians is further fueling extremist rage in the Muslim world and undermining Turkey's efforts to promote reconciliation in the Middle East.

Another shift impacting relations with and perceptions of the United States is Turkey's historic rapprochement with Russia. Bilateral trade, investment, energy, and tourism ties have been

16. In his 2001 book, *Strategic Depth, Turkey's International Position*, Davutoğlu argues that Turkey is "the epicenter of the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus, the center of Eurasia in general and is in the middle of the Rimland belt cutting across the Mediterranean to the Pacific." See Joshua W. Walker, "Architect of Power," *Journal of International Security Affairs* (Spring 2010), www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2010/18/walker.php. Another leading advocate of Turkey's engagement with Iran and Shi'ite communities is the prime minister's current foreign policy adviser, İbrahim Kalın.

17. The Turkish government also demands that all Turkish territory be protected and that it have a role in command and control of the system—which would be the case within the NATO decisionmaking structure. See "Turkey Accedes to a Missile Defense Plan," *Hürriyet Daily News*, November, 22, 2010, www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-accedes-to-a-missile-defense-plan-2010-11-22.

growing during the past decade. Russia has become Turkey's leading trade partner, and the volume of mutual investment is valued at more than \$10 billion. Two-way trade between Turkey and Russia amounted to \$35 billion in 2008, more than double the trade with the United States. Turkey now depends on Russia for more than 65 percent of its natural gas and 40 percent of its oil imports, and Turkey recently signed agreements with Moscow to increase gas imports and have Russian firms construct Turkey's first nuclear power plants. These deals are designed to boost trade to \$100 billion by 2015, leading several Turkish analysts to comment that this is becoming a strategic partnership. This energy dependence, while mutually beneficial, gives Russia important leverage.

A close personal relationship between Prime Ministers Putin and Erdoğan has also influenced this dynamic. This shift of interests, coupled with the AKP government's strategy of zero problems with its neighbors, has led Ankara to be more explicit about balancing its relations between Russia and the United States and other NATO allies. The measured Turkish response to the August 2008 conflict in Georgia was the most visible reflection of this balancing. Ankara also feels confident that it can work effectively with Russia to promote economic cooperation and security in the Black Sea region and has resisted expanded NATO operations in the Black Sea. Ankara also believes its deepening economic, energy, and security ties with Russia give it leverage in advancing regional stability in the Black Sea and the Caucasus. Turkish officials insist their cooperation with Russia is being pursued with a proper wariness and that Turkey remains firmly tied to its Euro-Atlantic moorings.

Support for NATO has also declined among elites and the public. Polling conducted by the GMF during the past five years has revealed that public support for NATO in Turkey was the lowest among any allied country surveyed. The number of Turks who felt "that NATO is still essential for their country's security" dropped steadily from 53 percent in 2004 to 30 percent in 2010.¹⁸ Roughly an equal number in 2007 and 2008 said that NATO "is no longer essential" or "did not know or refused to answer" on the topic, suggesting that the Turkish public does not adequately understand the function of NATO—a relationship seldom mentioned by the current political leadership. Although Turkey has provided forces and other assistance to NATO's engagement in Afghanistan, it has not been seen in Ankara as a central national priority. Only 31 percent of Turks are optimistic about the prospects for NATO's mission in Afghanistan, and only 11 percent of the public support retention of Turkish troop deployments in the International Security Assistance Force.

Some in the Turkish national security policy community express the view that NATO has been diluted by its expansion in the 1990s and that it is not as "serious" an organization as it once was in terms of the military capabilities of members and their willingness to meet commitments. In internal policy deliberations, including within the Turkish Foreign Ministry, invoking NATO obligations or commitments is said not to carry the same weight it once did. There is a sense of ambivalence about NATO among some segments of the Turkish military, particularly in the junior officer corps. Officers who have served in NATO missions and command assignments are more likely to see NATO's enduring value. However, many of those whose service has focused on counterterrorism operations in southeastern Turkey see NATO as placing increasingly costly demands on the Turkish armed forces for expeditionary operations but providing few current benefits in return

18. German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic Trends 2009: Key Findings*, September 2009, p. 26; *Transatlantic Trends 2008: Key Findings*, September 2008, p. 20, www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/2008_English_Key.pdf; and German Marshall Fund, *Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2007*, p. 22, www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/Transatlantic%20Trends_all_0920.pdf.

to Turkish security. Still, in a dangerous neighborhood, some political and military leaders value the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Turkey as a concrete linkage to the U.S. strategic nuclear deterrent. Some national security analysts in Turkey have quietly called for developing the basic infrastructure for a countervailing nuclear weapons capability if Iran's nuclear program progresses unchecked and doubts about the value of NATO's extended deterrent grow.¹⁹

Implications for U.S. Policy

Maintaining the U.S.-Turkey partnership and alliance ties will require careful management of policy differences by both governments, particularly with respect to the Middle East. How the United States disengages from Iraq, deals with Iran's nuclear program, and advances Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation will determine the course of bilateral relations and America's influence and image in Turkey. Turkey can also remain a valuable partner in advancing mutual interests with Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

The United States should deepen its cooperation with Turkey in the long-term stabilization of Iraq. Turkey has played an increasingly positive role in the reconstruction of Iraq and is facilitating U.S. military disengagement. Turkey has a vital interest and important capabilities in promoting long-term economic and energy development in that country. Ankara has invested a great deal of effort toward improving its engagement with the Iraqi central and the Kurdish regional governments during the past two years. PKK terrorism remains Turkey's leading security concern. Turkish leaders would welcome more robust U.S. and Iraqi efforts to prevent cross-border attacks by the PKK. The chief of the General Staff, General Işık Koşaner, identified his top priorities as ensuring that the central Iraqi government and the regional Kurdish administration take measures against the PKK, curtailing external support for the PKK from foreign sources, and maintaining the authorization to launch military strikes on PKK bases in northern Iraq.²⁰ CHP chairman Kılıçdaroğlu has revived the idea of Turkish forces being allowed to create a military buffer zone on the Iraqi side of the border to prevent the PKK from conducting attacks in Turkey. Turkish leaders would welcome more robust U.S. and Iraqi efforts to prevent cross-border attacks by the PKK.

Turkey's credibility and reliability as an interlocutor and intermediary with its neighbors in the Middle East have been severely tested in recent months. Turkey's good relations with all these countries have sometimes proven quite useful, as was the case with its mediation of indirect Israel-Syria talks and its work to promote the Iraqi Status of Forces Agreement with Sunni politicians. However, Turkey's embrace of Hamas, harsh criticism of Israel, and support of efforts to break the Gaza blockade have ended Israeli willingness to let Ankara broker discussions on Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian issues. That said, Turkey has gained influence in the region and credibility on the Arab street. The United States should work to repair Turkey's ties with Israel and seek to leverage Turkey's good relations with Syria and other states over the long term to advance regional

19. Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Iran's Nuclear Program May Trigger the Young Turks to Think Nuclear," *Proliferation News and Resources*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 20, 2004, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/920/irans_nuclear_program_may_trigger_the_young_turks_to_think_nuclear.html.

20. "New Turkish Military Chief Calls for Fight against Autonomy," *Hürriyet Daily News*, August 29, 2010, www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=new-military-chief-mirrors-armys-views-on-critical-issues-2010-08-29.

peace and balance Iranian influence. The Turkish government, nongovernmental organizations, and business community would also welcome partnerships with U.S. and European counterparts, which profiled and leveraged Turkey's ties in the region, to enhance governance, the rule of law, and economic development in the Middle East to ensure that the recent revolutions result in regional stability and cooperation.

Turkey's recent diplomacy vis-à-vis Iran has made the United States, other permanent members of the UN Security Council, and Germany reluctant to seek further help from Turkey in their efforts to dissuade Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. At some point Iran may well cross a red line for the AKP or a future Turkish government. Over the long term, more coordinated Turkish cooperation could be invaluable in halting or dealing with the military consequences of Iranian nuclear weapons. Washington should maintain a dialogue with Ankara on the Iranian nuclear question. CHP chairman Kılıçdaroğlu has argued that Turkey's isolation on this issue is detrimental to his country's strategic interests.²¹ Turkish leaders across the political spectrum say a nuclear-armed Iran would be inimical to those interests. At some point the Iranians may well make a move that will clarify Turkey's red line, which has been difficult to ascertain in recent years, and the United States may be able to enlist Ankara's support for a policy to deter and contain Iran.

While Turkey's economic and political ties to Russia have deepened, Turkish leaders remain wary of Moscow's aspiration to create an exclusive sphere of influence in the Caucasus and to control energy flows from the Caspian Basin. Ankara's principal interests in the Caucasus-Caspian region are maintaining stability to allow for expansion of regional trade and infrastructure and facilitating Turkey's emergence as a key energy hub. Washington should therefore continue to work closely with Turkey to normalize its relations with Armenia, resolve frozen conflicts in the Caucasus, and support Turkey's role as a transit corridor for Caspian Basin energy. Turkey's good relations with Russia could also be leveraged to advance the "reset" in U.S. and NATO relations with Moscow.

The United States should also continue to be unequivocal about its support for Turkey's accession to the European Union. The stalled EU process compromises the U.S. vision of a widening Europe that is increasingly integrated economically and politically. The EU process helps advance reforms that strengthen Turkish democratic governance and its effectiveness as a partner. As long as the Turks feel excluded from European institutions, they will continue to block NATO-EU cooperation and, over time, have diminished willingness to cooperate with the United States and NATO. Washington's advocacy of Turkey's EU bid is resented in some European capitals, but it bolsters the efforts of supporters within the EU and helps prevent its collapse. As the accession negotiations plod along, the United States should support other steps to deepen Turkish integration into European institutions, such as the European Defence Agency.

The prospects for developing the "model partnership" between Washington and Ankara that President Obama envisioned in early 2009 are clearly diminished by the negative views of the United States and doubts about the application of U.S. power that prevail in Turkey today. For the next few years, Turkey's support for U.S. policy initiatives will likely unfold case by case and after some negotiation. Divergent interests will sometimes drive Ankara to work at cross-purposes with Washington although these differences can be managed in ways that can avoid a major breach in bilateral relations and ensure progress in areas of agreement.

21. Sami Kohen, "The CHP's Foreign Policy Stance," *Hürriyet Daily News*, July 28, 2010, www.hurriyet-dailynews.com/n.php?n=the-chp8217s-foreign-policy-stance-2010-07-28.

9

FADING SENTIMENTALITY

GERMAN ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Heather A. Conley

Void of emotion or fanfare, German elites assume that over the next ten years the United States will experience a period of relative decline (militarily and economically) as China, and to a lesser extent India and Brazil, will experience a period of ascendancy. German opinion leaders, however, are not motivated to alter or change their own policies or behaviors on the basis of this assumption of decline. Simply put, they don't really give it all that much thought or attention. American opinion leaders conceptualize in global terms; German as well as European elites conceptualize in terms of process, localized negotiation, and regional dialogue.

Freed from its culture of self-restraint, German policy—both foreign and economic—is taking initial and often erratic steps into a new geostrategic and economic context. No longer clinging to the institutional legs of NATO, the European Union, the United Nations, or the United States as institutional solidarity and transatlantic romanticism fades, German leaders are forging their own policy path, strongly guided by political survival of the elite and shaped by public opinion.

The past few months have seen dramatic reversals of German policy. For the first time, Germany, as a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council, voted in favor of a resolution that called Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories illegal and demanded their immediate halt, a significant change in policy toward Israel. Joined by Russia, China, Brazil, and India, Germany also abstained from UN Security Council Resolution 1973 to protect the Libyan civilian population by all means necessary, and it went so far as to remove its naval assets from the Mediterranean to ensure that it would not be involved in any military action, completely isolating itself from Europe. In late 2010, joined by China, Germany proactively worked against a U.S. initiative introduced at the November 2010 Group of 20 (G-20) summit to “rebalance” export-growth countries. All three decisions go against the very grain of established German policy for the past 60 years.

Why is a strong and reliable American partner becoming increasingly unreliable and difficult in the eyes of its allies and partners? Does this change in part reflect German attitudes toward America's future power and presence? Although recent German decisions can be explained by domestic political forces, such a dramatic change does underscore both an intra-European drift away from greater European integration and a slow disintegration of transatlantic solidarity toward a more insular and nationalistic policy *raison d'être* for Germany. Germany now solicits a high price for its continued support, particularly in support of further European integration. One German commentator has suggested that Germany now places a “price tag on multilateral solutions.” The American foreign and security policy glue that held Europe and the transatlantic community together during the Cold War and immediate post-Cold War eras is no longer an effective adhesive. Today we are bearing witness to the first tentative policy steps by Germany without Europe and the United States.



A Changed Historical and Political Context

German leaders believe that militarily the United States will continue to be Europe's military default power for the next ten years as Germany grows increasingly reliant on U.S. security guarantees as it reduces its own military expenditures. On critical international economic issues, however, Germany will be more willing to challenge U.S.-led global economic policy prescriptions over the coming years as Germans firmly believe that the United States is headed in the wrong direction by not investing in or focusing on the “correct” policy priorities: energy security, climate change, budget austerity, and regulating financial markets appropriately.

In many ways, how Germany views America's future power and presence and how it views its own evolving global role are intertwined, and each view mutually defines the other. German sentimentality about the United States and Europe is fading quickly as German foreign and economic policy becomes more rational, less ideological, and more self-interested. U.S. sentimentality about Europe is also fading. The transatlantic relationship is no longer the center for many issues of mutual concern, and, therefore, maintaining a sense of common purpose will become increasingly difficult. Perhaps most troubling for the future, German elites are growing increasingly indifferent and ambivalent toward the United States and Europe in general on a variety of strategic topics. Continued German ambivalence toward an increasingly disinterested United States will substantially alter U.S.-German relations, potentially increasing bilateral tensions during the next decade.

This paper will provide an assessment of German elites' views on future U.S. power, presence, and projection; the growing divergence between the United States and Germany on international economic issues; German policy formation toward the emerging powers; and the political

ramifications of long-term German indifference toward the United States (and vice versa). These observations emerged from extensive discussions with a wide range of German opinion leaders, including members of the Bundestag, senior government officials, journalists, and German scholars.

Are America and the West in Relative Decline?

German scholarly articles speak to the relative decline of the United States, but these are not usually original German thinking; most often, collections of American writings discussing America's relative decline are reproduced for German elites' consumption. These scholarly regurgitations usually focus less on America's decline (which is assumed) and more on the emergence of new economic powers like China.¹ Many German elites simply take the relative decline of the United States for granted (although they acknowledge America's absolute power today). There is a dearth of German literature providing analytical commentary on how German policy will adjust to this assumed U.S. decline and little discussion about what would or should happen if the last remaining superpower is limited in executing its power. In general, German elites are uncomfortable with discussing national power concepts, particularly their own. Stefan Kornelius, foreign editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, notes that Germany resembles "a nation in shackles of its own making."²

More often than not, European elites tend to lump the United States and Europe together and refer to the West as being in decline. While there is some *schadenfreude* about the "fading of America's unipolar moment,"³ the European chattering classes begrudgingly acknowledge that Europe too is in decline and shrug with resignation at the thought. What was most striking about several conversations with members of the German Bundestag and foreign policy elite is the lack of emotion and passion surrounding a discussion of U.S. power and its presence in the future. Many referred to their intense ambivalence about a U.S. decline. In fact, one senior German official noted that he was "not unhappy that America's capability to react is diminishing." Therefore, if the relative decline of the United States means that it must pause or rethink the frequency by which it projects (hard) power, all the better. Paradoxically, as German elites strongly assume that the United States is in decline, they also assume that the United States "will fix" global problems in the future. But should the United States be unwilling or unable to use its hard-power projection when and where Germany and more broadly Europe believe it must be deployed to protect a vital European interest (although this would be an exceptional event), it would be a complete and traumatic shock to German elites. As much as German officials and Europeans bitterly complain about the militarization of U.S. foreign policy (and Americans bitterly complain about Europe's demilitarization), Europe certainly assumes that the United States is its ultimate default. Should Germany ever need U.S. power and should Germans formally call upon it, it will be available to them, full stop. As Josef Joffe, coeditor of *Die Zeit*, noted in 2009:

The default power does what others cannot or will not do. It underwrites Europe's security against a resurgent Russia—which is why U.S. troops remain welcome there even 20 years after

1. Tim Altegör, "Der Verfall amerikanischer Vormacht—Rückkehr einer Debatte, Beiträge in US-Fachzeitschriften seit dem Amtsantritt Obamas," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Zeitschriftenschau* (July 2010).

2. Constanze Stelzenmüller, "Hands Off Our Shackles, Please: The Debate over German Security Policies," German Marshall Fund of the United States, March 1, 2010.

3. Jonathan Holslag, "Europe in the Age of Fragile Powers," *Europe's World*, October-November 2010.

Moscow's capitulation in the Cold War. It helps the Europeans take care of local malefactors, such as former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.⁴

Why else would Germany and Europe as a whole reduce their own defense spending during the past ten years and continue to do so in the future (other than to maintain critical support to indigenous industry) if they didn't assume that the United States would come to their military rescue?

In a 2009 survey of German foreign policy elites⁵ conducted by the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), nearly all those polled believe the United States is a political superpower today (95 percent) and would remain a superpower for the next 20 years (86 percent). Thirty-nine percent polled believed China was a political superpower today, and 76 percent thought that China would be a superpower in 20 years. Introspectively, German elites thought the relative strength of Germany would decrease over the next 20 years in anticipation of a future, stronger European Union (EU) following ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Forty-two percent thought the relative strength of the EU would increase over the next several years.

German elites today are positive about the new international approach of the United States. There was an initial assumption, based on European euphoria regarding President Barack Obama's election, that the new administration would be more "European" in outlook and approach, such as giving more attention to climate change issues and returning to multilateralism. However, there is a growing recognition among German opinion leaders that there is more continuity in U.S. foreign policy than anticipated, and their long-term perspective about future U.S. influence has been dramatically tempered by their close observation of U.S. domestic politics, particularly on climate change policy.

One of the main drivers of growing German pessimism about the relative decline of the United States is the German belief that the United States is simply not investing in the "correct" priorities. The most important topics for German elites in the next five to ten years will be energy security, climate change, and managing the global economy and controlling the financial markets. In comparison, only 27 percent of German elites believe that fighting international terrorism is very important. Germans see climate change policy and energy security—priorities that are dear to them—as being very low on the U.S. priority list. While there is certainly nothing new about differing transatlantic agendas, it has become more difficult to overcome these differences and find common ground, exacerbating a "creeping alienation"⁶ between Germany and the United States.

Implications for U.S. Policy

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the financial and economic crisis, have brought America to the limits of its power. At the same time countries like China and India are gaining influence globally while Brazil and Iran are striving for regional dominance. Obama stretches out his hand (not always successfully) to all of these countries and seeks to expand power

4. Joseph Joffe, "The Default Power," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5 (September-October 2009): pp. 21–35.

5. "Trends in German Foreign Policy: Results from the First German Foreign Policy Elite Survey," Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. and Dimap Group, 2009.

6. Theo Sommer, "The State of the Transatlantic Relationship: U.S.-German Relations" (address before the Charlotte Eric M. Warburg Chapter of the American Council on Germany and the World Affairs Council of Charlotte, July 25, 2008).

through involvement and cooperation. The superpower's new radically pragmatic motto is: give and take.

This policy doesn't take much notice of old alliances, or surviving sentimentalities. Above all the Europeans—for decades, privileged partners and NATO allies—have felt this. They experience the change of climate in Washington as coldness. And they are freezing. Obama may have mobilized new sympathy for the US among European people. However, in the seats of power across the old world there are increasing complaints that the president disdainfully sees Europe only according to how useful it can be.⁷

Although the above quotation may be overly harsh in tone, it captures a growing perception in Germany and throughout Europe that the United States takes its allies and “privileged partners” for granted. German and European elites believe that they have earned a bit more attention and respect than other international partners that do not share the same history and values with the United States and have not accepted a solemn commitment to defend one another. While recognizing they are no longer the new and exciting “it” thing internationally, they don't quite understand why they don't have a small say in how the United States intends to implement its policies in the Middle East, South Asia, and elsewhere, particularly as the United States relies on European development and military assistance to support its objectives. One increasingly hears German leaders complain that they believe Washington's definition of transatlanticism has morphed into American transactionalism with Europe.

True partnership begins with political, economic, and security agendas that align, more or less. During the past decade, U.S. and German interests have not aligned; if anything, the two countries' agendas have become inverted. If, to use the quotation above, the United States is interested only in “give and take,” then that is exactly what is needed to help bring some semblance of agenda realignment to U.S.-German relations. Both sides must be willing to “give” on an agenda item that may not be of strategic importance to one party but is of great concern and interest to the other. Furthermore, a “taking” concept cannot simply be construed by German elites as Americans visiting Berlin with PowerPoint presentations in tow in order to tell Germany how and what it must contribute. Conversely, “taking” cannot be viewed simply as Europeans taking U.S. security guarantees and not giving anything in return. If Afghanistan is on the top of the U.S. agenda, then—Germans say—the second item on the agenda should be climate change. Recent trends suggest that, to attract the interest of senior U.S. officials, Germans have begrudgingly allowed the United States to dictate the agenda. Partnership, however, cannot be sustained if you are discussing only one partner's interests. Over the long term, the other partner simply begins to tune out the conversation.

One explanation for the growing agenda disequilibrium could be attributed to the lack of a strategic culture in Germany. Because postwar Germany has profited so completely from both U.S. protection and the institutional straitjacket of European integration, German elites simply have forgotten how to think strategically and globally. There is no strategic debate in Germany: Germany has not developed a national security strategy, there is very little dialogue among strategic opinion leaders, and there is very little sense of direction or purpose on where Germany and Europe actually stand and should stand in the world.

Following the Iraq War and the near economic collapse around the world, lack of trust in the global stewardship of the United States coupled with growing disbelief in the EU have robbed

7. Ibid.

even the more sophisticated members of the elite of any concept of identifying and moving toward strategic goals. Although some have argued that Germany does in fact have a strategic community, it is simply not “commensurate with Germany’s weight.”⁸ Whether or not a strategic community exists, it is in the U.S. interest to help the Germans invest in the development of a robust, indigenous strategic community (particularly in the security field) by ensuring that German institutions can effectively ponder longer-term issues, challenge official positions, and make innovative policy recommendations. Germany has several excellent think tanks, but their strategic “bench” must be deepened and broadened, and there must be greater dialogue and interplay between current and former government officials, experts, and nongovernmental actors.

Another plausible explanation could be that, owing to the transatlantic difficulties over the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars coupled with the devastating effects of Europe’s political and economic crisis, there is insufficient political appetite or intellectual enthusiasm for greater transatlanticism by London, Paris, Rome, and Madrid. If the traditional engines of Europe (excluding Germany) have lost their economic and political mojo for the foreseeable future, then Poland has slowly begun to acquire some of its own owing to a more stable economic situation, closer ties to Berlin, and improved relations with Moscow. Look to continued Polish policy activism within the EU and NATO to grow over the next several years as Poles implement smarter politics and policies within the EU (with ever-closer positioning to Berlin) while simultaneously seeking greater U.S. security and political accommodation. Should Poland continue to demonstrate economic and political vibrancy and should Warsaw and Berlin identify additional common policy ground, Warsaw’s policy activism may pull the EU and NATO more forcefully to the East with more forward-looking and pragmatic policies toward Russia and the post-Soviet space.

Moreover, the next generation of German and European leaders is not being shaped by the geopolitical and geostrategic imperatives of either the Cold War, the post Cold War, post-9/11 transatlanticism, or European unity. Today European leaders are being profoundly shaped by an existential geoeconomic crisis. Particularly in Germany, but also throughout Europe, European leaders are defining themselves and being judged by public opinion based upon their success or failure in the economic sphere, not in foreign or security policy.

The Global Economy

Even assuming a return to a truer form of U.S.-German partnership and the development of a strategic community in Germany, the most daunting challenge to the future U.S.-German relationship and the German-European relationship will be overcoming a widening policy gap on the global economy. One could argue that this policy divergence is akin to an economic “Fulda Gap” that places the United States and Europe on opposite sides and thus will have a profound impact on future bilateral and transatlantic relations. In addition to dividing across the Atlantic, this new economic Fulda Gap does not geographically divide Europe West from East; it divides it North from South. The only remaining constant is the centrality of Germany, and only time will tell whether a future economic “iron curtain” will form.

In 20 years, German elites believe the economic power of the United States will ebb (71 percent), and China’s economic power will grow (88 percent). German elites see their own economic power at its zenith today (48 percent) and believe Germany’s power will diminish over the next 20

8. Stelzenmüller, “Hands Off Our Shackles, Please,” p. 4.

years, with only 12 percent contending that Germany will be an economic powerhouse in 2029.⁹ Perhaps as a reflection of their own diminishment, German elites also see the EU's economic weight reduced over that same time period. German elites see the economic rise of India and China at the expense of themselves and of other older powers such as the United States and Japan.

For the foreseeable future, on economic matters German leaders will not acquiesce to an American economic default power. If anything, German elites will fight and challenge the U.S. economic vision of the future as they simultaneously congratulate themselves on the moral certitude that thrifty Swabian housewives have had it right all along. Germans will fight for their disciplined, rules-based vision bilaterally (as they increasingly resent calls and letters from the United States urging them to agree to deals that contradict their global economic vision), within the Group of Eight and, as best they can, within the G-20 format. German economic hubris (some say "moral megalomania"¹⁰) may alienate Germany's friends in the United States and elsewhere in Europe and perpetuate Germany's own distorted views of its economic rationality. This sentiment was best captured in an editorial in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: ". . . Obama's negotiators brazenly rejected all of the ideas that the Europeans had for regulating the financial markets. Germany was castigated as a parasite of the global economy."¹¹

Another complication to the broader European economic agenda is that it can no longer be assumed that Germany will underwrite the economic and political costs of European integration and unity itself. Gone are the days when German leaders took economic decisions (like creation of the euro) in order to give Germany more political space to maneuver within Europe. The last German check in support of European unity may have been written on May 9, 2010, when Germany did the politically unpalatable: it agreed to support a \$1 trillion bailout package for Greece and the euro. Although Europe's economic contagion has now spread to Ireland and is fast encroaching upon Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Belgium, German elites will strongly resist any further subordination of their economic interests and appear to be more than willing to throw away 60 years of political legitimacy if necessary—all done in the name of a stronger, greater Europe in the future.

It is absolutely vital to return Germany and the United States to a shared economic vision. This does not mean creating another Transatlantic Economic Council-like mechanism for technical dialogue. This is about returning to the original spirit of the Group of Seven (G-7) construct where heads of state and government from the "West" quietly went off-site and had a conversation about how "they," the Western democracies, were going to address the formidable economic challenges of their day. While on occasion you can see some of this type of dialogue occurring at the G-7 finance minister level, it is insufficient. This dialogue must take place at the highest levels of government without the fanfare, showmanship, and agenda distractions that have become the norm of the G-"fill in the blank" summits. Because the global economic conversation has brought so many new and important voices to the table, a unified voice and approach by Western democracies is that much more critical to ensure a consolidated and balanced approach toward the emerging economies, particularly China.

9. "Trends in German Foreign Policy."

10. Stelzenmüller, "Hands Off Our Shackles, Please."

11. Christian Wernicke, "Der Unnahbare; Barack Obama nimmt auf alte Allianzen keine Rücksicht, der US-Präsident kalkuliert lieber kühl," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, June 25, 2010.

Germany and the Emerging Powers

Until very recently, Germany's approach to the emerging powers and the non-Western world was based on mutual goals defined by the EU and NATO and multilaterally oriented toward democracy building and conflict prevention, with two exceptions: Israel and Russia. Beginning in 1952, the Federal Republic invested great sums of financial and political capital in Israel—Germany's sole strategic partner outside the Atlantic Alliance—to atone for the wrongs of the Third Reich. As a result, Germany now has a strategic, cultural, and economic position in Israel that is second only to the United States. The other unique German focus has been Russia. Germany and Russia have maintained a highly complex relationship since the eighteenth century. Although German society generally adopts a cautious view of Russian culture and society, political and economic leaders feel a strong need to maintain positive ties owing to deep-seated insecurity about Russia's power and behavior.

With these exceptions, strategically and even economically, the rest of the world has been nearly a blank slate. Neither India nor China has figured in German political calculations until recently. Although Japan is an important trading partner, the complexities of its role and the Asia-Pacific region are generally not understood by most German scholars and leaders. German elites lack both the experience and confidence to adopt an ambitious approach to the emerging world, and, as a result, there is a gap in German knowledge about these new global dynamics. Germany's unexpectedly strong economic performance in 2010 has put the issue even more into focus. German leaders are experiencing—to both their surprise and their increasingly confident delight—their own global economic ascendancy and its accompanied political power. As German elites begin to adjust to the dangers and important opportunities from the burgeoning multipolar global setting, they are discovering new opportunities that they did not know existed and they are finding it difficult to deal with the complexities of a dramatically new situation.

As Germany confronts this new global reality, simultaneously it is confronted by a new and disturbing reality with its EU and U.S. partners. The ongoing European economic crisis has demonstrated to many Germans that they cannot count on European structures to protect their global economic position. Germany finds itself in the uncomfortable position of currently having neither a European economic peer nor an obvious internal ally. A continued absence of U.S. guidance and strategic interest in Europe has created a sense of drift and even abandonment at the exact moment when Germany most needs strategic guidance to navigate this new global terrain. As a result, Germany's efforts to deal with the emerging powers will be shaped and defined by its continued uncertainty regarding the efficacy of its two core relationships.

Amid this uncertainty, what can be observed is the formulation of an insular, bifurcated German foreign-policy-making process: maximizing trade and economic relations while simultaneously encasing the economic relationship with strong cultural, educational, and political ties. Although Germany's historical experience mandates that its economic relations will be tempered and balanced by a values- and normative-based framework to varying degrees, Germany's persistent economic diplomacy will form the basis of its long-term relationship with emerging powers, be it with Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, or even within the EU. German leaders will make deliberate, methodical, agreement-based changes to their foreign policy to accommodate and protect their export-fueled economic growth in the coming years. Germany will be a steady partner that often disappoints its friends with its unwillingness (or perhaps inability) to take the initiative on important problems.

Germany will agree with the U.S. values-based approach to global challenges and will not seek to challenge the global leadership of the United States; if anything, Germany benefits economically from the U.S. security umbrella. Irrespective of U.S. views, desires, or wishes, German policy will seek to accentuate the economic positives of its relations with emerging powers while it makes the necessary cultural, historical, or political concessions and adjustments in order to address negative bilateral attributes. When required, German diplomacy will demonstrate limited flexibility in multilateral settings, such as in the EU and the G-20, as it pursues its national economic interests, attempts to avoid isolation, and, most important, enforces its *pacta sunt servanda* mantra.

Germany's policy priorities for the emerging economies speak for themselves:

- Turkey: German exports to Turkey in 2010 totaled \$14 billion.¹² Germany was Turkey's main trade partner for exports in 2010, purchasing \$990 million worth of goods,¹³ and was Turkey's principal export destination at 9.6 percent of all exports (in 2009) and second principal import source at 10 percent (in 2009).¹⁴ Turkey is the largest buyer of German arms exports, accounting for 14 percent of arms shipped abroad.¹⁵
- Iran: Exports from Germany to Iran increased 11.6 percent to \$3.6 billion in a time span of roughly eight months, from January through August 2010. In 2009, German export values to Iran totaled \$5.3 billion. German imports from Iran doubled to \$765 million against the figure for the first eight months of 2009.¹⁶
- Russia: Exports from Germany to Russia in 2009 were \$29 billion.¹⁷
- China: German exports to China in 2009 were \$53 billion.¹⁸
- EU: Nearly two-thirds of all German imports and exports originate or remain within the EU, with France topping the export list in 2009 with \$116 billion.¹⁹

One example of Germany's policy approach can be found in its approach to an emerging Turkey:

Bifurcation. Germany seeks to enhance its trade relationship with Turkey and solidify its long-standing cultural, energy security, and educational ties (for example, opening universities and encouraging energy trade) in the name of a "privileged partnership" with Turkey.

Pacta sunt servanda. Germany agreed in 2005 to begin the formal negotiating process for Turkey's EU accession, and, in turn, Turkey promised the EU that it would fulfill its commitment to the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement by opening port access to Cyprus. Turkey has

12. "Foreign Trade: Ranking of Germany's Trading partners in Foreign Trade," Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, December 16, 2010.

13. "Press Release: Foreign Trade Statistics, January 2011," no. 40, Turkish Statistical Institute, Prime Ministry Under-Secretariat of Customs, February 28, 2011.

14. "Country Fact Sheet: Turkey," Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, compiled by the Market Information and Research Section, December 2009.

15. Nancy Isenson, "Germany Doubles Arms Exports," Deutsche Welle, March 15, 2010.

16. Iran Energy Project, "Iran-Germany Trade Prospering," Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Washington, D.C., November 3, 2010.

17. "Foreign Trade: Ranking of Germany's Trading partners in Foreign Trade," Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden, December 16, 2010.

18. Ibid.

19. Germany Trade and Investment, Market Research, Federal Statistical Office, 2010.

not fulfilled its promise, but Germany has kept its commitment by not blocking the opening of any of Turkey's accession chapters (as have other EU members).

Avoid isolation. Thus far, German leaders have managed with some success to avoid both overly positive (on the part of the United Kingdom) and negative (France) rhetoric vis-à-vis Turkish EU membership, while underscoring Germany's long-standing cultural ties and vigorously solidifying its economic ties with Turkey, which is opening new markets in the Middle East and Central Asia.

A similar pattern can be discerned in Germany's approach to Iran: Germany strongly believes that Iran must fulfill its obligations to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the international community regarding its nuclear activities and respect human rights. German economic relations with Iran continue on the basis of long-standing economic, historic, and cultural ties despite repeated rounds of international sanctions.

A coherent and future German policy or strategy has yet to be formed for two regional powers: China and the EU. For now, German-Sino economic agendas are aligned on the shared need to maintain robust export growth. Because Germany does not share historic or cultural ties with China as it does with Turkey and Iran, it is struggling to identify an appropriate adjustment strategy to better balance its strong economic relationship and human rights dialogue. Germany therefore lurches between an economics-based or a human rights- and values-based relationship with China. Therefore, U.S. efforts to rebalance Germany away from its export-led growth strategy will only tip the German scales in favor of its economic relationship with China and away from its values-based framework.

Finally and seemingly counterintuitively, Germany has yet to formulate an effective EU strategy in the post-sovereign-debt-crisis era that comports to its preferred economic vision and articulates the emergence of its own national interests in Europe distinct from its past communitarian approach. How can Germany force Europe to be shaped in Germany's economic image without harming its own largest export market and damaging the German banking system in the process? Moreover, because Germans do not have an organic cultural affinity with southern or Mediterranean Europe, they are unable to form a balancing strategy between their economic interests and their cultural ties as they try to address the eurozone crisis. These two contradictory policy prescriptions have stymied Berlin's EU policy formulation and, in turn, have stymied the EU's future vision and role. Formed or not, what is clear is that sustained German economic strength and rapid internal political dynamism will largely shape future European political trends, and Germany's eventual response to Europe's sovereign debt crisis will profoundly shape the continent, with unknown consequences, for the next three to five years.

Conclusion

The analysis of how Germans perceive America's future power in all of its manifestations boils down to a central question that Germans themselves cannot answer: Where do Western, like-minded democracies fit into the global vision of the United States? Or do they fit at all? In its rush to address the strategic conundrum of having enormous power but feeling less and less regionally influential and more challenged, the United States has not yet formed a definitive answer to this central question of where values-based alliances enter into the new multipolar equation. At a time when Germany and Europe urgently seek U.S. strategic guidance, the United States is silent or

reverts to comforting, albeit increasingly hollow, Cold War rhetoric about the transatlantic relationship being a “cornerstone” of international relations.

If the United States cannot answer this question, or if it is unwilling to articulate its vision of how like-minded countries can effectively join forces, Germany most certainly cannot. While it waits for Washington to answer or perhaps grows indifferent to its eventual response, Germany will continue to more assertively and unilaterally position itself on a variety of topics—be it financial regulation, austerity, relations with China, or eliminating U.S. nuclear weapons from its soil—thus causing significant disharmony in the U.S.-German relationship for years to come.

10

RESET EXPECTATIONS RUSSIAN ASSESSMENTS OF U.S. POWER

Andrew C. Kuchins

Russian perceptions of the United States and its role in the world provide a powerful lens not only for framing how Russia conceives its foreign and security policies—far more broadly than U.S.-Russia bilateral relations—but also for understanding deeply rooted notions of contemporary Russian identity and even its domestic political system. For most of the second half of the twentieth century the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in a competitive struggle for global power and hegemony, and each country viewed its adversary as the principal “other” around which much of each country’s identity and foreign policy revolved. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a searing event for citizens of Russia as well as the other newly sovereign states of the region, yet for most policymakers and elites in Moscow old habits of measuring success or failure through a U.S.-centric prism have endured. Now, nearly 20 years past the Soviet collapse, perceptions of the United States probably remain more significant for Russia than for any other country in this study.

As in other countries in this study, the dominant paradigm for Russian government officials and political elite is realism with probably a higher relative weight for the value of economic and military indices of power and lower relative weight for factors of soft power. In the traditional Russian calculus (czarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet), it is not the power of attraction that dominates; instead, it is the power of coercion, typically through intimidation or buying support—a very hard-edged realism. When Westerners emphasize values such as human rights and democracy, the default Russian reaction is deep skepticism that their interlocutors, especially the Americans, are being disingenuous. U.S. promotion of democracy, liberal capitalism, a rules-based system of global governance, and the like is interpreted as a collection of ideological fig leaves designed to conceal the naked U.S. ambition to expand its own power and influence abroad.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union nearly 20 years ago, there has been a quite dynamic evolution in Moscow toward the role of U.S. power in the world. For a brief period that definitively concluded with the defeat of Russian liberal reformist parties in the December 1993 parliamentary elections, the United States was regarded as a model for Russian development, and key Russian government officials had high hopes for a “new world order” that would be comanaged by Washington and Moscow, with Russia even playing the role of junior partner. The defeat of the liberal reformers, caused principally by the economic crisis in the early 1990s, shifted Russian foreign policy to more traditional realist concepts of asserting national interests and expanding power and influence. Increasingly the U.S. liberal democratic model was viewed as, if not inappropriate for Russia, then at least needing to be introduced far more gradually with Russian traditions and values.



From 1993 to 2003, Russian foreign policy was dominated by great-power realists who were joined by many liberals disappointed with reform and the West. The leading figure in the Russian realist camp was Yevgeny M. Primakov, who served as foreign minister in the mid-to-late 1990s and briefly as prime minister after the August 1998 financial crisis. Primakov, both as a statesman and as a straightforward realist in the world of international affairs, is most likened to Henry Kissinger in the United States. His signature moment came in March 1999 when on a flight to Washington he learned of the U.S. launching of war against Serbia; he demanded that his plane not land in the United States but turn back to Moscow. Primakov is pragmatic and nonideological, but his most significant time in Russian politics came in the late 1990s when Russia's power was at its weakest and U.S. unipolar dominance, arguably, at its peak. Like many other nations in the world, Russia sought means to balance or, more correctly, contain U.S. unipolar hegemony. The United States was not viewed as malign, but as often misguided and overbearing. This perspective on the United States endured almost through the first term of Vladimir Putin's presidency.

For the purposes of this exercise, it is especially important to keep in mind the foreign policy conducted by Vladimir V. Putin during his first term as Russia's president because it sheds light on the current U.S.-Russian rapprochement and its potential path in the future. Putin is conventionally characterized as deeply opposed to U.S. interests. For some, their analysis is based on his authoritarian centralization of power; in other words, dictatorial rulers are inherently anti-American. For others, their analysis is based more on the rift in U.S.-Russian relations that was growing during Putin's second presidential term. In my view however, this characterization is flawed.

It is conveniently forgotten that in 2001–2002 Putin pursued his own version of a “reset” in U.S.-Russia relations, and his foreign policy orientation was at least as amenable to U.S. interests

as that of Dmitri A. Medvedev's presidency today. Russia's circumstances changed, but at least as important, Moscow's disappointment with the policies of the George W. Bush administration led to Putin's increasing willingness to oppose Washington on a number of issues. Russian public opinion grew more negative on the role of the United States, but this was fairly consistent with the rest of the world, including our NATO allies.

The period from 2003 to 2008 marked another shift in Russian foreign policy and Moscow's perception of U.S. power capacity and intentions. Russia's confidence about its own reemergence strengthened as economic growth accelerated. The watershed moment came in 2006 when Moscow paid off its Paris Club debt early, and this sense of financial sovereignty equated with a renewed emphasis on political sovereignty. Differences beginning in 2003 over the Yukos affair and especially over the series of "color revolutions" in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan gave more sustenance to the argument that the United States sought to weaken Russia and thwart Moscow's interests in a comprehensive manner. Russian foreign policy remained embedded in a realist and pragmatic framework for the most part; the most significant change was the perception that Russian power was growing while the U.S. "unipolar moment" was receding into history. Putin's position moved from being a centrist power balancer with Western inclinations to being more steeped in efforts to appeal to Russian nationalism and more opposed to U.S. policy, especially in post-Soviet space.

This phase concluded in the second half of 2008 with the near concurrence of the Georgia War and the global financial crisis. Although the Georgia War was a shock, the global economic crisis has had a far more deep impact on Russian leadership and elite perceptions on Russian interests in the ongoing changing balance of power in the world. In short, Russian elites are more unsure about the capacity and durability of U.S. power but also less confident that the shifting global balance of power in which China appears to be the principal beneficiary redounds to Moscow's favor and thus how to respond to it. The almost knee-jerk inclination of the Russian leadership to identify the United States as the primary global threat to Russian interests on issues such as NATO expansion and missile defense has eroded. The policies of the Barack Obama administration have also helped to convince the Russian leadership that the United States does not seek to weaken Russia and that the role of U.S. power in the world is not counter to Russian interests.

Russia's Relative Strategic Decline

The demise of the Soviet Union in the wake of the loss of the Cold War against the United States and its allies in the second half of the twentieth century would appear to mark the most decisive setback for the control of Russian power over territory in modern history. Explaining why gets to the crux of the challenges of Moscow's current strategic environment. For the first time in its history since its emergence from the dark forests of Muscovy, Russia finds itself surrounded by states and political groupings that are economically, demographically, and politically more dynamic than itself.¹

The most obvious case is the rapid growth of China to the east. The juxtaposition of China's rise and Russia's fall over the past 30 years is the starkest in a short period during peacetime for any two neighboring great powers in modern history. To Russia's south, India has sprinted by

1. For an excellent articulation of this phenomenon, see Thomas Graham, "The Sources of Russian Insecurity," *Survival* 52, no. 1 (February–March 2010): pp. 55–74.

Russia in order to try to keep pace with its main peer competitor, China. While the Muslim world remains deeply cleaved, the power of political Islam is also exposing the vulnerabilities of Russia. The now more than half-century process of European economic and political union, a process that through ebbs and flows has moved inexorably forward, has proved itself a far more attractive magnet for influence in Russia's neighbors.

The bad news is that Russia has been in *relative* strategic decline for nearly three decades. The good news is that, unlike during the Soviet period, none of the great powers against which Moscow's power has declined relatively finds promotion of Russian weakness, let alone disintegration, remotely in its interests.

The United States in the Evolving Putin Narrative

During the years of the Putin era, from 2000 to present, Moscow's narrative of its own domestic experience since the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the emergence of a unipolar world dominated by the United States has been increasingly at odds with Washington's perspective over these events.² For Moscow the 1990s were spun as a modern-day Time of Troubles when state authority collapsed and foreigners exercised too much influence over Russian affairs to the detriment of the Russian state and people. Putin's goal was to restore the authority of the state and ultimately Russia's rightful place as a great power in the world. Political elites in Moscow were also deeply disappointed with the perception that the Bush administration failed to take Russian interests into account after Putin's decision in late September 2001 to fully support U.S.-led international coalition efforts to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan. The U.S.-Russia cooperation in Afghanistan in 2001 sparked once again discussions about a much broader and deeper security relationship between Moscow and Washington to an extent not heard since the collapse of the Soviet Union a decade before. Ironically, perhaps the international coalition succeeded too quickly in unseating the Taliban to allow for a more institutionalized security relationship to develop. Bush administration decisions later in the fall of 2001 to go through with the second round of NATO enlargement, including the Baltic States, as well as to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty symbolized for the Kremlin that, despite Russian cooperation on key security challenges, the United States would continue on a policy path in other areas Moscow long held to be against Russian interests.

While the U.S.-Russian relationship remained cordial and President George W. Bush had a successful trip to Russia in May 2002 during which the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) was signed, a bitter seed of unreciprocated concessions to the interests of Washington had been planted in the mind of Vladimir Putin and his colleagues. As the bilateral relationship began to deteriorate after the Iraq War, this bitterness on Moscow's part congealed into a lengthy list of grievances against the Bush administration that was repeatedly articulated by Kremlin officials and insiders to their U.S. counterparts for the next several years. The expression of deep frustration with the "arrogant unilateralism" of the United States became the dominant pathos from Moscow, especially during the second term of the Bush administration. At this time, especially with the renewed accent on democracy promotion as the fulcrum of U.S. foreign policy, Russian frustra-

2. See: Clifford Gaddy and Andrew C. Kuchins, "Putin's Plan," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2008): pp. 117–129.

tion with Washington morphed into a deeper suspicion that the Bush administration was seeking actively to weaken Russia's position in the world.

"Regime transformers" in Washington experienced a euphoric burst of enthusiasm with the series of color revolutions in Eurasia in 2003–2005, the apparent weaknesses of the Putin government in the face of the tragic series of terrorist attacks culminating in the grisly horror of Beslan in September 2004, and then the tens of thousands of Russians demonstrating in big cities across the country in opposition to proposed welfare reform. This period marked the high point of Bush administration confidence as U.S. military power appeared triumphant in Afghanistan and Iraq and a new wave of democratization was apparently sweeping around the globe. There was a growing sense in Washington that the weakness of Putin's authoritarian rollback had been exposed and that certainly his government was on the wrong side of history.

The moment of optimism regarding regime transformation in Russia and the region proved effervescent as the momentum of color revolutions was derailed in Uzbekistan in May 2005 with President Islam Karimov's brutal suppression of the uprising in Andijan, a suppression that was quickly supported by Moscow and Beijing. By the spring of 2006, optimism about Putin's imminent demise was replaced by growing concern about Russia's oil-fueled economic resurgence.³ Putin's speech in February 2007 at the Munich Security Conference conveyed the notion that the United States, in its quest for unipolar global domination, had overextended itself geopolitically and the global balance of power was shifting in favor of Russia and other large emerging-market economies at the expense of the West.

Probably the most fundamental difference in the narratives of post–Cold War history boils down to this sense of the shift in balance of power, the international system becoming truly multipolar, and U.S. relative power being on the decline while Russia rises. To mix metaphors, the U.S. ship of state was slowly sinking while the Russian phoenix was rising from the ashes. For Moscow this disjuncture in perceptions probably was widest shortly after Dmitri Medvedev was inaugurated as president in May 2008, when the oil price hit its peak in July, and the financial crisis remained mostly confined to the United States. Although Washington acknowledged that Russia was resurgent, conventional wisdom held that Russia's longer-term prospects still looked relatively bleak as economic growth remained too dependent on commodities prices, demographic and health trends were extremely adverse, and the country's infrastructure was still decaying.⁴

Russian Views of the U.S. Role in the Global Order

President Vladimir Putin's infamous February 2007 speech at the Munich Security Conference essentially made two points: (1) that the United States was behaving in an "egoistic" rather than a responsible manner in managing global affairs, and (2) an international system of global U.S. hegemony was evaporating and being replaced by genuine multipolarity. Most commentary focused on the first point and missed the import of the second, which Putin concisely summarized:

3. For one of the first such assessments in the mainstream press, see Andrew C. Kuchins, "Look Who's Back," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, May 9, 2006.

4. As vice president in July 2009 in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Joe Biden caused quite a stir when he made similar comments about Russia's vulnerabilities and challenges and then suggested this would lead Moscow to more readily support U.S. foreign policy initiatives. See Peter Spiegel, "Biden Says Weakened Russia Will Bend to U.S.," *Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124848246032580581.html>.

- The combined GDP measured in purchasing power parity of countries such as India and China is already greater than the GDP of the United States.
- A similar calculation of the GDPs of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (the BRIC countries) surpasses the total GDPs of the EU countries; and, according to experts, this gap will only increase in the future.
- There is no reason to doubt that the economic potential of the new centers of global economic growth will inevitably be converted into political influence and will strengthen multipolarity.

Putin and his colleagues elaborated on this theme in a number of important speeches in 2007. The call for a “new international architecture” of global governance also became one of the campaign themes of the Russian parliamentary-presidential electoral cycle.⁵ Moscow essentially views many of the changes that have occurred since the late 1980s as illegitimate because Russia was too weak to assert its positions. In this narrative, the West, and mainly the United States, took undue advantage of Russian weakness through NATO expansion, Kosovo, promoting regime change (the color revolutions) on Russia’s borders, abandoning the ABM Treaty, and other policies.⁶

The Russian elite clearly view these Western moves in the 1990s as detrimental to Russia’s national interests. It is understandable to some extent that Russians are reveling in their resurgence, but too often this is manifested as “the Russia that can say no” rather than Russia cooperating to build a better world. The sometimes obstinate and sometimes cocky Russia was reflected in Putin’s personality as well as Russia’s rocket-like recovery during his presidency. Russian *schadenfreude* was also notable as Moscow watched the trials and travails of the United States in Iraq and in the global financial system, sparked by the subprime crisis.

The tensions between Russia and the West, and especially Moscow and Washington, became tragically evident during the August 2008 war in Georgia. The prevailing narratives in the United States and Russia regarding the original provocation for the war were almost diametrically opposed. Putin, with very flimsy evidence, even accused Washington of orchestrating the conflict, while President Bush castigated Russia for violating Georgia’s territorial integrity, behavior that is impermissible in the twenty-first century. Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov gave the Russian view in a speech in Moscow on September 1:

Should the United States and its allies choose to back the regime of Saakashvili who has learned nothing at all, it will be a mistake of historic magnitude. . . . America’s military aid to Saakashvili’s regime never became a leverage with his government. On the contrary, it encouraged this irresponsible and unpredictable regime to proceed along the road of escapades.

For the analytical task at hand, it is not the proximate causes or immediate consequences of this war but, rather, the implications for Russia’s future role in the evolving international system that are of interest. As Russian elites themselves discuss this issue, it should be noted how little they talk in terms of “public goods” and “norms.” Russians describe their foreign policy as ultimately pragmatic and interest driven. U.S. and European references to values and norms are received at best cynically but often with defensive hostility about U.S. and European “double standards.” The default interpretation in Russia of U.S. efforts to promote its values is to view them as hypocritical justifications for the promotion of U.S. interests—and, ultimately, influence and hegemony.

5. For more on this point, see Gaddy and Kuchins, “Putin’s Plan,” pp. 117–129.

6. *Ibid.*

Rather than norms and public goods, Russian leaders and political analysts frame Russia's terms of international cooperation as realpolitik bargains and trade-offs of interests.⁷ For example, if Washington wants Russia to take a stronger position to isolate Iran, then the United States is expected to compensate Moscow by halting NATO enlargement or deployment of missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic. One of the most oft-repeated grievances is the U.S. betrayal of the gentleman's agreement supposedly struck between George H. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990 to allow the unification of Germany as long as NATO would not expand and deploy new bases on the territory of former Warsaw Pact countries.⁸

Russian Perceptions of the United States during the Obama Administration

For several years until the autumn of 2008, the mainstream Russian view, as epitomized by Vladimir Putin, saw the United States in decline as economic troubles mounted and setbacks in Afghanistan and Iraq sapped U.S. power. Russia was on the rise, along with large emerging markets in line with the Goldman Sachs BRIC thesis,⁹ and a truly multipolar world was emerging. Despite the perception of U.S. decline, the Putin leadership still saw it useful for domestic political reasons to paint the United States as its main adversary seeking to weaken Russia. The Kremlin increasingly controlled the dissemination of this view through mass media, especially national TV networks, and it found a receptive audience in the Russian hinterland for this view. Indeed, this mainstream Russian view of the United States was not very different from how most countries in the world viewed the United States, including European allies of the United States.¹⁰

The dramatic impact of the global economic crisis on Russia in the fall of 2008 struck a blow to this narrative as the vulnerability of the Russian economic growth miracle of the past decade was exposed. The Russian economy was the hardest hit of all members of the Group of 20.¹¹ As the crisis was at its worst in late January 2009, the Obama administration took office. Very quickly the administration made its desire to improve relations with Russia public through Vice President Joseph Biden's speech at the 2009 Munich Security Conference where for the first time this policy goal was described as an effort to reset relations with Russia. As Bill Clinton had done with Boris

7. Interestingly, President Medvedev, in a major speech he gave in Berlin in June 2008, spoke out against consideration of such trade-offs as detrimental to Russia's interest; see "Speech to Political, Parliamentary, and Social Representatives [in Russian]," June 5, 2008, www.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/06/05/1923_type63374type63376type63377_202133.shtml. In reality, such trade-offs on major issues seem fairly rare in international relations. And in the case of perhaps the most significant such example during the Cold War, the U.S. withdrawal of nuclear forces in Turkey to resolve the Cuban missile crisis, we did not learn of this until decades afterward.

8. The incident shows the problem with such unwritten exchanges, since U.S. officials contest the Russian interpretation of this period.

9. Goldman Sachs has predicted that the BRIC countries are on a path to dominate the global economy by 2050.

10. See Anders Åslund and Andrew Kuchins, *The Russia Balance Sheet* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics and Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), for a chapter on Russian public opinion survey research.

11. For a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the global economic crisis on Russia, see Anders Åslund, Sergei Guriev, and Andrew C. Kuchins, eds., *Russia after the Global Economic Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics and Center for Strategic and International Studies; Moscow: New Economic School, 2010).

Yeltsin and George W. Bush with Vladimir Putin, President Obama struck a strong personal bond with the new Russian president, Dmitri Medvedev. Russian elites were naturally skeptical of the Obama administration's intentions, and the dominant view was that it was the United States that needed to reset its policies on NATO enlargement, missile defense plans for Europe, and other issues in order to reverse the decline in the bilateral relationship.¹² Kremlin-connected analysts and government spokespersons continually expressed the view that the United States needed Russian cooperation far more than Russia needed support from Washington.

Despite the skepticism, the bilateral relationship between Washington and Moscow has steadily improved since the Obama administration took office. Reaching agreement on the new START treaty was the watershed moment in April 2010, but cooperation over the transit of goods to supply U.S. forces in Afghanistan and eventual agreement on a new round of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program have also been significant markers of improved ties. Russian public opinion views of the United States have become much more positive, and negative images of the United States and its policies are presented in the Russian mass media with considerably less frequency.¹³ The implications of the relative decline of U.S. power in the world are viewed with more discernment, and there is more open discussion of the pros and cons of China's rise. There is also more open acknowledgement about the importance of the West as a partner in Russia's efforts to modernize its economy. In sum, a number of signs point to more realistic and more contentious views of the United States, its role in the world, and its implications for Russian interests.

The spring of 2010 marked a dramatic acceleration of the reset of not only U.S.-Russia relations but Russia's ties with Europe as well. The first watershed was the signing of the new START treaty in Prague on April 9, but this was accompanied by an increasing tide of data points that reduced the skepticism about the prospects for the Obama administration's efforts to improve ties with Moscow. These events include the Russian-Polish rapprochement over the World War II Katyn Forest massacre, the Russian-Norwegian border agreement over the Barents Sea, cooperation between Moscow and Washington over dealing with the public disturbances in Kyrgyzstan beginning in April, and others. The June United Nations Security Council resolution over a new and tougher round of sanctions on Iran marked another major step forward, and the positive Russian vote starkly contrasted with the negative vote on sanctions by NATO ally Turkey. Russia deepened its cooperation with the United States and its allies in Afghanistan, and the NATO summit in Lisbon included a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council that led to a number of new agreements with the alliance, including the effort to explore cooperation on missile defense. From Moscow's standpoint the year ended on a very positive note, with the U.S. Senate ratification of the new START treaty as well as the passage of the U.S.-Russia 123 Agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation.

This marked acceleration in the U.S.-Russian rapprochement in the second half of 2010 was a pleasant surprise and deserves serious consideration for explanation.¹⁴ My conclusion is twofold.

12. Sergei Lavrov, foreign minister of Russia (speech, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2009); when asked which policies Russia should revise to improve bilateral relations, Lavrov essentially responded "none."

13. "Russians Increasingly Positive about Relations with US – Poll," Interfax International Information Group, last modified July 8, 2010, <http://engforum.pravda.ru/showthread.php?289508-Russians-increasingly-positive-about-relations-with-US-poll&daysprune=-1>.

14. The author traveled to Russia three times in the latter part of 2010 and engaged in many discussions on this question with Russian analysts, government officials, foreign government officials, businessmen, and

One, as noted above, is that the global economic crisis had a deeply sobering impact on Russian elites and political leaders, which led to renewed efforts to integrate with the West to promote the modernization of Russia. The Russians were deeply skeptical of and opposed to the Obama administration's initial efforts to promote the so-called G-2 notion of joint U.S.-China cooperation as a pillar of global governance. But they are also very concerned about the rapid growth of China and its growing influence in Russia, especially in the Far East as well as in Central Asia, the Caspian, and even Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova—Russia's "zone of privileged interests."

The second key factor is not so much the Russian perception of U.S. power, but rather the perception of U.S. policies and intentions as they pertain to Russia. The most telling and likely the most important change regards U.S. policies toward Russia's near neighbors. The Bush administration's concerted efforts to admit Ukraine and Georgia into NATO were deeply unsettling. The perception of Washington's role in promoting the color revolutions of 2003–2005, and especially the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, struck a very deep wound in Vladimir Putin's capacity to trust his counterpart in the White House. The Bush administration's announcement in January 2007 about missile defense deployments in Poland and the Czech Republic hit right on Moscow's deepest insecurities about encroachment in its backyard, broken promises of NATO, and the erosion of Russia's nuclear deterrent. The perception of virtually unconstrained support for Mikhail Saakashvili's Georgia before and just after the August five-day war in 2008 provoked the deepest suspicions in Moscow of U.S. policy and intentions to undermine Russian interests.

Moscow was initially skeptical about Barack Obama's intentions and capacity to alter some of these Bush administration policies in Russia's neighborhood, but that skepticism has been melting. The question of NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine is virtually off the table for the time being. The Obama administration did reverse the Bush administration's plans for ballistic missile defense in Europe. Most important from Moscow's perspective is that not only has the momentum for the color revolutions in the post-Soviet space completely reversed, but the Ukrainian and Kyrgyz presidential elections in 2010 contrasted dramatically with their predecessor elections in 2004–2005. In Ukraine, the Western-supported candidate, Yulia V. Tymoshenko, lost—as one would probably expect for a sitting prime minister in the midst of a deep economic recession—and the Russia-preferred candidate, Viktor F. Yanukovich, won. Then, three months later, Presidents Obama and Medvedev cooperated to alleviate deeper fallout from the unrest in Kyrgyzstan. All of these events and policies together have mitigated the Russian belief that the United States cannot be trusted and seeks to weaken the global position of the Russian Federation.

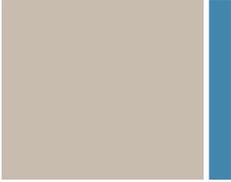
Conclusion

Like the U.S.-Russia relationship, Russian elite perceptions of U.S. power and role in the world have experienced great volatility in the past 20 years. How durable is the current Russian perception that not only is the United States less threatening but is pursuing policies far more accommodating to Russian interests? And because we are entering a new Russian (and American) presidential cycle in the coming year, to what extent does possible de facto leadership change in Moscow matter? There is no definitive answer to this question, but from reviewing the last ten years or so

diplomats. The trip in June was primarily to participate in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, the September trip to participate in the Valdai Discussion Club, and the final trip in November for workshops and meetings related to the George Washington University project on emerging world powers. The following is a synthesis of these meetings and discussions.

since Vladimir Putin first became the Russian president, my conclusion is that U.S. policies will be a far more important factor in effecting Russian leader and elite views of the United States than who the next Russian president is. The Russian perspective on U.S. power and role in the world did not change during the last two years because Dmitri Medvedev replaced Vladimir Putin as president of Russia. The Russian perspective changed because of the impact of the global economic crisis and changes in Obama administration policies of greatest interest to Moscow.

Russian elites are unsure about the durability of U.S. power capacity, but they have seen the United States renew itself in the wake of global foreign and economic setbacks in, for example, the 1980s. Russians are as aware as anybody of the current fiscal challenges of the United States and the questions about whether the U.S. political system will be capable of managing to resolve them. They are also watching closely the political commitment of the United States to stabilize Afghanistan. If the United States manages progress on these domestic and foreign policy fronts and, more important, continues to pursue a pragmatic set of policies that accommodate some of Russia's core interests, then the current trend toward a more positive assessment of U.S. power and growing cooperation on a wide variety of issues will continue. In other words, we are the critical independent variable.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jon B. Alterman is director and senior fellow of the Middle East Program at CSIS. Prior to joining CSIS, he served as a member of the Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State and as a special assistant to the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs. He is a member of the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel and served as an expert adviser to the Iraq Study Group (also known as the Baker-Hamilton Commission). In addition to his policy work, he teaches Middle Eastern studies at SAIS and the George Washington University. Before entering government, he was a scholar at the U.S. Institute of Peace and at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. From 1993 to 1997, Alterman was an award-winning teacher at Harvard University, where he received his PhD in history. He also worked as a legislative aide to Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY), responsible for foreign policy and defense. Alterman has lectured in more than 25 countries on subjects related to the Middle East and U.S. policy toward the region. He is the author or coauthor of four books on the Middle East and the editor of two more. His opinion pieces have appeared in numerous national and international publications.

Ernest Z. Bower is senior adviser and director of the CSIS Southeast Asia Program and is recognized as a leading expert on economics, politics, and business in Southeast Asia. Prior to joining CSIS, he formed BrooksBowerAsia, a consulting firm specializing in the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier, he served for a decade as president of the US-ASEAN Business Council, where he established and built the council from the ground level, working with government and private-sector leaders from the United States and Southeast Asia. During that time, he established a unique network of leaders of governments, businesses, media, and civil society organizations throughout Asia and the United States. Bower is widely recognized as one of the strongest proponents for close ties between the United States and Asia. He engineered key private-sector initiatives such as the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement Coalition, the U.S.-APEC Business Coalition, and numerous other initiatives. Bower holds a BA from Colgate University and studied Mandarin Chinese at Middlebury College's Sunderland School of Foreign Language.

Victor D. Cha was named to the newly created Korea Chair at CSIS in May 2009. Previously he served as director for Asian studies at Georgetown University, and from 2004 to 2007 he was director for Asian affairs at the White House, where he was responsible for coordinating U.S. policy for Japan, the two Koreas, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Island nations. He also served as U.S. deputy head of delegation to the Six-Party Talks and has acted as a senior consultant on East Asian security issues for different branches of the U.S. government. A recipient of numerous academic awards, including the prestigious Fulbright scholarship (twice) and MacArthur Foundation fellowship, Cha spent two years as a John M. Olin National Security Fellow at Harvard University and as a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation. Cha is the author or coauthor of numerous books and articles, including *Beyond the Final Score: The Politics of Sport in Asia* (Columbia University Press, 2009) and *Nuclear North*

Korea: A Debate on Engagement Strategies (Columbia University Press, 2003). Cha holds a BA, an MA, and a PhD from Columbia University as well as an MA from Oxford University.

Craig S. Cohen, vice president for Research and Programs at CSIS and editor of this volume, serves as principal adviser to CSIS president and chief executive officer John J. Hamre on the Center's research and programmatic agenda, helping to manage more than 40 substantive programs and recruit new scholars to CSIS. Previously, Craig served as deputy chief of staff at CSIS, where he codirected and coauthored the report for its Commission on Smart Power (2007), chaired by Joseph S. Nye Jr. and Richard L. Armitage, which looked at ways to draw on the full strength of the United States and its partners to enhance security and prosperity. Cohen is author or coauthor of *Surveying the Civilian Reform Landscape* about proposed ways of building U.S. government civilian capacity (Stanley Foundation, 2008); *A Perilous Course: U.S. Strategy and Assistance to Pakistan* (CSIS, 2007); "When \$10 Billion Isn't Enough," on U.S. aid to Pakistan (*The Washington Quarterly*, 2007); and *Measuring Progress in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations* (U.S. Institute of Peace, 2006). He served as an adjunct professor at Syracuse University's Maxwell School in 2006. Prior to joining CSIS, he worked with the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations in Rwanda, Azerbaijan, Malawi, and the former Yugoslavia. He received an MA from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a BA from Duke University.

Heather A. Conley serves as director and senior fellow of the Europe Program at CSIS. Prior to joining CSIS, Conley served as senior adviser to the Center for European Policy Analysis, an independent, nonpartisan public policy research institute dedicated to the study of Central Europe. From 2005 to 2008, Conley served as the executive director, Office of the Chairman of the Board of the American National Red Cross. From 2001 to 2005, she served as deputy assistant secretary of state in the Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs, with responsibilities for U.S. bilateral relations for the 15 countries of northern and central Europe. Previous to that, she was a senior associate with an international consulting firm led by former U.S. deputy secretary of state Richard L. Armitage. Conley began her career in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, where she served as the State Department liaison for the U.S. Department of Defense's Global Humanitarian Assistance Program. Conley received her BA in international studies from West Virginia Wesleyan College and her MA in international relations from SAIS.

Stephen J. Flanagan is senior vice president and Henry A. Kissinger Chair at CSIS. Before joining CSIS in 2007, he served as director of the Institute for National Strategic Studies and vice president for research at the National Defense University (NDU) for seven years. He held several senior positions in government between 1989 and 1999, during which he helped shape U.S. strategy for the post-Cold War era, including special assistant to the president and senior director for Central and Eastern Europe, National Security Council Staff; associate director and member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff; and national intelligence officer for Europe. Earlier in his career, he was a professional staff member of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Flanagan has also held several academic and research positions, including senior fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies; faculty member at the National War College, NDU; executive director, Center for Science and International Affairs; faculty member at Harvard University's Kennedy School; international affairs fellow, Council on Foreign Relations; and research associate, International Institute for Strategic Studies. He has published numerous books and articles on transatlantic, Asian, and international security affairs, including three books on NATO. His most recent publications include *Strategic Challenges: America's Global Security Agenda* (NDU/Potomac Books, 2008) and *Turkey's Evolving Dynamics: Strategic Choices for U.S.-Turkey Relations* (CSIS, 2009). He

earned his BA in political science from Columbia University and his PhD in international relations from the Fletcher School at Tufts University in 1979.

Bonnie S. Glaser is a senior fellow with the CSIS Freeman Chair in China Studies, where she works on issues related to Chinese foreign and security policy. She is concomitantly a senior associate with CSIS Pacific Forum and a consultant for the U.S. government on East Asia. From 2003 to mid-2008, Glaser was a senior associate in the CSIS International Security Program. Prior to joining CSIS, she served as a consultant for various U.S. government offices, including the Departments of Defense and State. Glaser has written extensively for national and international journals and newspapers on Chinese threat perceptions and views of the strategic environment, China's foreign policy, Sino-U.S. relations, U.S.-China military ties, cross-strait relations, Chinese assessments of the Korean Peninsula, and Chinese perspectives on missile defense and multilateral security in Asia. Glaser received her BA in political science from Boston University and her MA with concentrations in international economics and Chinese studies from SAIS.

Michael J. Green is a senior adviser and holds the Japan Chair at CSIS, as well as being an associate professor of international relations at Georgetown University. He served as special assistant to the president for national security affairs and senior director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council (NSC) from January 2004 to December 2005, after joining the NSC in April 2001 as director of Asian affairs with responsibility for Japan, Korea, and Australia/New Zealand. His current research and writing are focused on Asian regional architecture, Japanese politics, U.S. foreign policy history, the Korean Peninsula, Tibet, Burma, and U.S.-India relations. Green speaks fluent Japanese and spent more than five years in Japan working as a staff member of the National Diet, as a journalist for Japanese and U.S. newspapers, and as a consultant to U.S. business. He has also been on the faculty of SAIS, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a staff member at the Institute for Defense Analyses, and a senior adviser to the Office of Asia-Pacific Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He graduated from Kenyon College with highest honors in history and received his MA from Johns Hopkins SAIS in 1987 and his PhD in 1994. He also did graduate work at Tokyo University as a Fulbright fellow and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a research associate of the MIT-Japan Program.

John J. Hamre was elected president and CEO of CSIS in January 2000. Before joining CSIS, he served as the 26th U.S. deputy secretary of defense. Prior to holding that position, he was under secretary of defense (comptroller) from 1993 to 1997. As comptroller, he was the principal assistant to the secretary of defense for the preparation, presentation, and execution of the defense budget and management improvement programs. Before serving in the Department of Defense, Dr. Hamre worked for ten years as a professional staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. During that time, he was primarily responsible for the oversight and evaluation of procurement, research and development programs, defense budget issues, and relations with the Senate Appropriations Committee. From 1978 to 1984, he served in the Congressional Budget Office, where he became its deputy assistant director for national security and international affairs. In that position, he oversaw analysis and other support for committees in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Dr. Hamre received his PhD, with distinction, in 1978 from the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the Johns Hopkins University, where his studies focused on international politics and economics and U.S. foreign policy. In 1972, he received a BA, with high distinction, from Augustana College, emphasizing political science and economics. The following year he studied as a Rockefeller fellow at Harvard Divinity School.

Andrew C. Kuchins is a senior fellow and director of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program. From 2000 to 2006 he was a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: he was director of its Russian and Eurasian Program in Washington, D.C., from 2000 to 2003 and again in 2006, and he served as director of the Carnegie Moscow Center in Russia from 2003 to 2005. He has also held senior management and research positions at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Stanford University, and the University of California at Berkeley. Kuchins currently teaches at SAIS and has also taught at Georgetown and Stanford Universities. Recently published books, articles, and reports include *Economic Whiplash in Russia: An Opportunity to Bolster U.S.-Russia Commercial Ties?* (CSIS, 2009); “Putin’s Plan,” *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 2008); *Alternative Futures for Russia to 2017* (CSIS, 2007); and *Russia: The Next Ten Years* (Carnegie, 2004). His latest book (coauthored with Anders Åslund), *The Russia Balance Sheet*, was published in April 2009. He holds a BA from Amherst College and an MA and PhD from Johns Hopkins SAIS.

Haim Malka is deputy director and senior fellow in the Middle East Program at CSIS. His principal areas of research include violent nonstate actors, the Arab-Israeli conflict, North Africa, and political Islam. Before joining CSIS in 2005, he was a research analyst at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, where he concentrated on Israeli-Palestinian issues and coordinated numerous track-two projects with senior Israeli, Palestinian, and U.S. representatives. Malka spent six years living in Jerusalem, where he worked as a television news producer. He holds a BA from the University of Washington in Seattle and an MA from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs. He is a frequent commentator in print, on radio, and on television, and he is the coauthor, with Jon B. Alterman, of *Arab Reform and Foreign Aid: Lessons from Morocco* (CSIS, 2006).

Teresita C. Schaffer directed the South Asia Program at CSIS through 2010. Her areas of expertise include U.S.–South Asia relations, regional security, and economics, energy, and health policy in India. During her 30-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, she specialized in international economics and South Asia, on which she was one of the State Department’s principal experts. From 1989 to 1992 she served as deputy assistant secretary of state for South Asia, at that time the senior South Asia position in the department; from 1992 to 1995 she was U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka; and from 1995 to 1997 she served as director of the Foreign Service Institute. Her earlier posts included Tel Aviv, Islamabad, New Delhi, and Dhaka as well as a tour as director of the Office of International Trade in the State Department. After retiring from the Foreign Service, Schaffer spent a year as a consultant on business issues relating to South Asia. She has also taught at Georgetown University and American University and authored publications on peace building in Sri Lanka, women’s studies in Bangladesh, and diplomacy in India, Kashmir, and Pakistan. Most recently, Schaffer authored *India and the United States in the 21st Century: Reinventing Partnership* (CSIS, 2009). Schaffer speaks French, Swedish, German, Italian, Hebrew, Hindi, and Urdu, and has studied Bangla and Sinhala.

Photo Credits

- Page 4 and cover:** Chinese defense minister Liang Guanglie and U.S. defense secretary Robert M. Gates review the People's Liberation Army Honor Guard as part of an arrival ceremony honoring Gates' visit to the Bayi building in Beijing, January 10, 2011. Source: U.S. Department of Defense News Photos; photo by Master Sgt. Jerry Morrison, U.S. Air Force; http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111_gates1/.
- Page 21 and cover:** Japanese citizens unload food and water from an HH-60H Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 4 off the coast of Japan on March 16, 2011. Source: Defense.gov News Photos; photo by Petty Officer 3rd class Dylan McCord, U.S. Navy; <http://www.defense.gov/photos/newsphoto.aspx?newsphotoid=13951>.
- Page 31 and cover:** Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, tours the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea, November 5, 2007. Source: Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System; photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Chad McNeeley, U.S. Navy; <http://www.dvidshub.net/image/64375/chairman-joint-chiefs-staff-visits-demilitarized-zone>.
- Page 45:** U.S. president Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama walk an honor guard cordon as they disembark Air Force One upon arrival in Jakarta, Indonesia, Tuesday, November 9, 2010. Source: AP Photo/Charles Dharapak; <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cahpamulang/5170893248/>.
- Page 57 and cover:** Coca-Cola advertisement on a building near the Taj Mahal in Agra, India, June 8, 2002. Source: © Justin Guariglia/Corbis.
- Page 70 and cover:** The guided missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay (CG 53) (left) patrols the waters surrounding the Al Basrah oil terminal as two Iraqi tug boats guide a super oil tanker into place on October 28, 2004. Source: Defense.gov News Photos; photo by Petty Officer 1st Class David C. Lloyd, U.S. Navy; <http://www.defense.gov/photos/newsphoto.aspx?newsphotoid=5654>.
- Page 81 and cover:** F-15 fighter jets of the Israeli Air Force (IAF), October 10, 2005. Source: DefenceTalk: Global Defense & Military Portal, <http://www.defencetalk.com/pictures/f-15-israel/p9002-israel-air-force-iaff-15-fighter-jet.html>.
- Page 94:** (From L to R) Brazilian foreign minister Celso Amorim, Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu hold hands after Iran inked a nuclear fuel swap deal in Tehran on May 17, 2010. Source: Photo by Atta Kenare/AFP/Getty Images.
- Page 104 and cover:** Antiwar protesters march from the Brandenburg Gate to the Victory Column on March 29, 2003, in Berlin, Germany. Source: Photo by Kurt Vinion/Getty Images.
- Page 115 and cover:** U.S. president Barack Obama and Russian president Dmitry Medvedev sign the New START Treaty during a ceremony at Prague Castle in Prague, Czech Republic, April 8, 2010. Source: White House; photo by Chuck Kennedy; <http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/new-start-treaty>.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

1800 K Street, NW | Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 887-0200 | Fax: (202) 775-3199
E-mail: books@csis.org | Web: www.csis.org

