

UNITED STATES INTERESTS AND GRAND STRATEGIES

- I. NATIONAL SECURITY GRAND STRATEGIES, COLD WAR ERA (1947-1991)
- A. The "Whether to Contain" Debate: Isolation vs. Containment vs. Rollback (1947-1964). The debate turned on four questions:
1. How "cumulative" are industrial resources? Can a conqueror convert these resources into military power, then use them to take more?
Isolationists: "resources are not cumulative--empires bleed their owners."
Rollbackers: "resources are very cumulative--empires strengthen their owners."
 2. How easy is conquest? Can the USA conquer the USSR? Vice versa?
Isolationists: "conquest is very hard"; Rollbackers: "conquest is easy."
 3. How aggressive is the USSR? (Is war with the USSR inevitable?)
Isolationists: "The Soviets are moderately aggressive, war is avoidable."
Total Rollbackers: "The Soviets are very aggressive, war is inevitable."
 4. Will offensive action against the USSR provoke it or calm it down?
Containers: "offensive policies will provoke Soviet retaliation and war."
Partial Rollbackers: "offensive policies will scare the Soviets into a stand-down."
- B. The "How to Contain" Debate: Europe First vs. Global Intervention (for example, in Vietnam, Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua, Angola, etc.) (1965-1991). Four key questions underlay this debate:
1. Size of Soviet threat to Third World: can the Soviets seize it?
 - a. By direct military intervention?
 - b. By victory of local Marxist proxies? (Do birds of reddish feathers fly together?)
 2. How "cumulative" are Third World resources? Would a Soviet empire in the 3rd World tilt the global balance of power toward the USSR?
 - a. Value of 3rd world military bases?
 - b. Does US economy depend on 3rd world raw materials?
 - c. Domino theory--is it true?
 - d. Credibility theory--are commitments interdependent?
 - e. Does the nuclear revolution make conventional-era cumulatvity arguments obsolete, by making conquest so hard that no Third World gains could position the USSR to conquer the USA?
 3. Can US interventions against the 3rd world left succeed?
 4. Would independent communist states threaten US security?
- II. NATIONAL SECURITY GRAND STRATEGIES, POST-COLD WAR ERA (1991-9/11/2001)
- Seven post-Cold War U.S. grand strategies:
1. **Isolation:** the USA comes home. The game ended in 1991 with the Soviet collapse, we won, it's time to celebrate.
 2. **Neo-containment Type #1:** the USA contains the new potential Eurasian hegemon (usually now identified as China). The USA would contain the potential hegemon's imperial expansion, and might also try to hamper its economic growth.
 - > Tactical debates about executing strategy 2 (and 3 and 4):
 - a. Unilateral vs. multilateral strategy. The George W. Bush administration (2001-2009) leaned unilateral, the Barack Obama administration is more multilateral.
 - b. Threats vs. inducements to win allies. Bush relied heavily on the big stick to win friends; Obama uses both sticks and

inducements.

3. **Neo-containment Type #2:** the USA contains the world's most crazy or hostile states (North Korea, Iran) by limiting their control of special technologies (weapons of mass destruction, or "WMD") or oil resources, using active deterrence and coercion and by lowering US dependence on their products (oil).
 4. **Neo-rollback:** the USA wages preventive war against rogue states that pursue WMD such as Iraq (and perhaps North Korea or Iran), as favored by neoconservatives in the 1990s and by the George W. Bush administration, which favored "regime change" of rogue regimes. Framing this strategy is Lieber and Lieber, "Bush National Security Strategy" (assigned).
 5. **Selective pacification**, or "selective engagement": the USA prevents interstate conflict/war in industrial regions (Europe, E. Asia, Persian Gulf). "War elsewhere hurts the USA, so let's prevent it."
 6. **Global pacification/New World Order:** the USA prevents interstate conflict/war everywhere. The US could do this:
 - a. Unilaterally: the US acts as a global policeman; or
 - b. Multilaterally: the US acts with allies or in a collective security system.
 7. **U.S. global social engineering/global empire:** the USA takes on the task of preventing civil war, protecting human rights, and spreading democracy and market economics around the world (or in part of the world, such as the Middle East). In short, the USA tells the rest of humanity how to live. The rationale is partly security: "civil wars tend to spread to entangle us"; "democracies seldom fight other democracies, hence the US enjoys more peace in a democratic world"; and "democracies produce fewer terrorists, so the US is more secure in a democratic world." Example: Bill Clinton's policy of "engagement and enlargement" of the zone of democracy. (Questions: is democracy good for everyone? Can the US export it?) Another example: the imperial policy favored by some conservatives in recent years. (See Norman Podhoretz article on World War IV.) Can the U.S. pull it off? Will the U.S. benefit by doing it?
- Question: where is counter-terror in this scheme? It's not prominent.

III. PRIMARY NATIONAL SECURITY INTEREST, POST 9/11/01: THWARTING WMD TERROR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. BUT DOES THE U.S. HAVE A COUNTER-TERROR STRATEGY?

- A. How large is the terrorist threat? The 9/11/01 attack showed that the terrorist threat is far larger than most people formerly believed.
 - The al-Qaeda terrorists showed great skill and patience--far more than other groups. This group may have the skill to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction.
 - The al-Qaeda attack dramatized al-Qaeda's vast destructive ambitions. Terrorism experts formerly argued that terrorists only want large audiences, not large numbers of dead. Former al-Qaeda spokesman Suleiman Abu Ghaith has declared al-Qaeda's right to kill 4 million Americans including two million children.
- B. What changes brought this terror threat into being?
 - The cost of making weapons of mass destruction has fallen, the expertise needed to make them has spread, and the number of states trying to make them has grown. Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea--all friendly with terrorist groups--have joined the game. There is fear they will supply such weapons to terrorists if they build them.
 - The collapse of the Soviet Union raised the risk that terrorists will buy or steal weapons of mass destruction or the materials to make them from Russian sellers.
 - Failed states that cannot control their territory, such as

Afghanistan, Somalia, Congo, Lebanon (from 1970s-1980s) and now Pakistan have grown in number. This has given terrorist groups places to locate.

- A terrorist organization--al-Qaeda--that commands substantial wealth has appeared for the first time.
- Highly skilled terrorist leadership, seen in Osama Bin Laden, his cohort Ayman al Zawahiri and their associates, appeared for the first time in al-Qaeda.
- Arab and Islamic hostility toward the United States rose during the decade before 2001. This gave al-Qaeda a friendly sea in which to swim. The roots of this hostility probably lie in five causes:
 - Saudi Arabia's export of its hateful, xenophobic version of Islam--Wahhabism--throughout the Mideast since 1962.
 - U.S. support for corrupt authoritarian Arab regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia.
 - U.S. economic sanctions on Iraq after 1991, which were alleged (I think wrongly) to kill many innocents.
 - U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait after 1991--considered a sacrilege by some Muslims.
 - The continuing Israel-Palestinian conflict, especially the fighting that erupted in September 2000; combined with tacit U.S. backing of Israel's expansion into the occupied territories. The U.S. has given large aid to Israel (some \$3 billion per year) while Israel has exported settlers (450,000 since 1967) into Arab territories it conquered in the 1967 war. This U.S. aid to Israel is essentially unconditional, so Arabs see the U.S. as backing Israeli expansion and colonization of Arab lands.
 - U.S. failure to answer al-Qaeda propaganda or otherwise conduct an effective effort to counter false anti-American claims.

C. Why was the terror threat unforeseen?

- There is no powerful agency in Washington that could increase its budget by pointing to the terrorist threat. For example, the military can't address terrorists, and so has little interest in pointing to the danger they pose. There is no "department of counterterror" whose budget depends on public concern about terror and will gladly sound the tocsin when the threat appears.
- The American press failed to cover the rise of anti-Americanism in the Arab world in the 1990s. This was a striking oversight.
- Al-Qaeda's capability was invisible until it was demonstrated. The skill of a terrorist group can't be seen in satellite photos.

IV. SECONDARY INTERESTS AND STRATEGIES TO PROTECT THEM, COLD WAR AND POST-COLD WAR ERAS, BEFORE 9/11/01. BUT ARE THESE INTERESTS REALLY SECONDARY?

- A. Environmental interests: preventing global warming and other environmental damage. Many fear that human-caused warming will reach catastrophic levels in a few years if unchecked. If so, oceans rise will destroy vast coastal regions. Now-verdant regions will become deserts. Scores or hundreds of millions will be made homeless. Vast economic damage will ensue. Large conflict may erupt as desperate groups fight for a place in this dark new world. (Oh dear! This interest doesn't sound secondary!)

The climate change problem has feasible solutions, but here are some reasons why we humans may be unable to solve it:

1. It pits a concentrated interests (carbon fuel industries) against a more dispersed general interest (everyone else in the world). Concentrated interests usually win such fights.
2. Solutions require international cooperation among states.

Instead states will rationally try to free-ride, letting others solve the problem while they shirk.

3. The climate science community does not understand how to use/does not like to use public relations techniques to make its findings known to publics. But such techniques are necessary to reach global publics.
4. Western moral and religious traditions do not emphasize moral obligations to future generations (unlike, for example, the Iroquois, whose General Law requires that a person consider the effects of their actions down to the seventh generation.)
5. The climate change danger has no analogies in human history. Humans often think analogically; so, seeing no analogies to the danger, people dismiss it. (Looking hard for useful analogies is Jared Diamond, Collapse, a valuable book).
6. The climate change danger does not have a primordial signature such as threat of violent death, huge teeth, huge eyes, gushing blood, fire, or a roaring large-animal noise. Humans over-respond to dangers with such primordial signatures, but under-respond to slow-rising dangers that lack them, like climate change.
7. In the USA today, government money is almost never spent to solve problems that are not yet causing pain. Unfortunately, the pain of climate change will be delayed until long after the actions that cause it, setting in fully only after the harm is done. If we wait to feel real pain before acting we may wait until the catastrophe is unavoidable.

Oh dear. :- (:- (

- B. Human rights: should the U.S. act to protect them? E.g., should it have stopped genocide in Rwanda in 1994? Should it stop the ongoing Darfur genocide in Sudan? See Kaufmann, Cooper, Kristof, and Gelb & Rosenthal in your assigned readings.
- C. Managing emerging threats to public health, especially emerging diseases. The 1918 flu killed 675,000 Americans--more than World Wars I and II combined. With globalization the danger of similar new mass-killer diseases increases; and the advance of medicine promises new defenses against such diseases. Defeating such diseases requires international cooperation on public health. The danger they pose is an argument for preserving cooperation with other states.
- D. Economic interests:
 1. Economic primacy: "We must remain the #1 economy." Questions:
 - a. What matters more: relative or absolute prosperity?
 - b. How can relative prosperity be maximized? By hard-line (trade restrictions, subsidies to US industries, etc.) or soft-line foreign economic policies?
 2. Other interests: preserving access to raw materials? defending US overseas investments? promoting free trade/fair trade?
- E. Defending America's cultural/historic kin: Israelis, Poles, Georgians, S. Koreans, Africans, Filipinos.
- F. Miscellaneous: controlling drugs, migrants.

V. SUMMARY: AMERICA'S FOUR PRIME INTERESTS TODAY: PREVENTING/DEFEATING CATASTROPHIC TERRORISM; CONTROLLING WMD SPREAD; PROTECTING GLOBAL COMMONS (ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH); PRESERVING OPEN WORLD ECONOMY.

These four interests cannot be protected without broad cooperation with other major states. Indeed, they cannot be protected without broad cooperation from others. Fortunately the world's other major states all share these interests with the U.S., so forging broad cooperation should be feasible.

> A strategy for the new era: **Great Power Concert**, a wide cooperation of all major powers led by the United States.

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