



Challenges for the next U.S. president

Hopes and Realities

Center for International Relations, International Affairs Forum

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Welcome to International Affairs Forum's fourth special publication. We are once again delighted to be able to offer our readers a diverse collection of views, and I hope everyone will find something of interest. I think this publication stands out not only because of the quality of contributors, who have been generous enough to give up their valuable time over such a busy period, but also the range of subjects and geographical reach—we have contributors based on four continents and from nine countries covering everything from defense policy through Brand America and U.S.-India relations. I don't wish to add anything to the enormous amount of ink spilled over the historic nature of the recent election, except to say that whatever one's views of the past eight years—and this publication contains a full range of them—living in Tokyo has demonstrated to me time and again that although this is the Asian century, the world's eyes have been, and still are, very much on the United States of America and what Barack Obama will do in office.

I'd also like to offer special thanks to assistant editor Adam Kott and our designer Cristoph Mark. And to help us fulfill another part of our mission, which is to facilitate the exchange of ideas, we'd like to encourage readers to post their comments at: <http://www.ia-forum.org/content/pdflinkfeedback.cfm?pdfid=5>

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International and domestic concerns

“More than anything else though it was the ‘war on terrorism’ that did in the Bush administration.”

—Leonard Weinberg

Community organization on a world scale

By Dick Martin *Author of 'Rebuilding Brand America'*

Barack Obama is the first “community organizer” elected president of the United States since John Adams. While his opponents derided that background, it is precisely what got him elected. It will shape the way he governs, and it could help restore America’s reputation around the world.

Obama’s very election demonstrated that the American Dream has not permanently degenerated into a nightmare of suspicion and fear mongering. But the world will not rise in a single chorus to chant “never mind” when the moving trucks leave the White House for Texas. The Bush administration did a lot to damage America’s global reputation, but its decline began long before. Restoring it will be the work of a generation.

Public diplomacy, which reached its apogee during the Cold War, is the term of art for that task. The idea is to speak directly to the people of other countries while official diplomats work the local corridors of power. The hope is that, if foreign publics understand America better, their leaders will have greater latitude to cooperate with us.

In practice, public diplomacy has three components—information, engagement and advocacy. Counter-intuitively, advocacy played a minor role in winning the Cold War. Punching a hole in the Iron Curtain to give information-starved people access to the truth was far more powerful. And person-to-person contact, whether through student exchanges or Dizzy Gillespie concerts, said more about our values than propaganda films ever could.

But when the last Soviet flag flew over the Kremlin, America decided it no longer needed to explain itself to the world. The Clinton administration dismantled the United States Information Agency in 1999.

To its credit, the Bush administration was concerned about America’s declining reputation even before the attacks of September 11, 2001. But it treated public diplomacy as merely another form of political campaigning, swinging back and forth from vacuous imagery to hectoring advocacy.

Obama has a unique opportunity to

Social media can do for America of the 21st century what the Voice of America and Fulbright Scholarships did in the 20th.

restore America's reputation by bringing the tactics of information, engagement and advocacy back into balance.

He should move quickly to establish an independent, USIA-like agency of public diplomacy, leaving the advocacy of foreign policy in the State Department. Advocacy is honorable. Even candidate Obama was not shy about selling his proposals and responding to opponent's attacks. But advocates tend to spin information and manage engagement; their perspective is transactional.

Information and engagement focus on building long-term relationships. They are based on the premise that the best way to win friends and ultimately influence people is to let them see us exactly as we are, warts and all. Rather than simply "telling" our story, they invite people to experience it for themselves.

In addition to dramatically expanding targeted foreign aid and exchange programs, the Obama administration should ensure that the new agency of public diplomacy fully embraces the 21st century

social media tools that got him elected. When historian Daniel Boorstin studied the U.S. 1960 presidential campaign, he concluded that television had fundamentally changed the nature of campaigning. Its insatiable appetite for “images” had put a premium on manufactured events, such as photo ops, debates, and news conferences at the expense of discussing issues. Feeding television’s maw became the candidates’ daily preoccupation.

But if the dominant medium in 1960 was television; today, it’s the Internet. And the nature of the ’net itself has changed.

When the Internet first caught on, many marketers thought it would be a turbo-charged, wallet-seeking form of direct marketing. But Obama understood that today’s Internet is less about communicating with people than about people communicating among themselves. His intelligent use of social media took him from negligible national name recognition to the presidency in just two years. Henry Jenkins, co-director of the MIT Comparative Media Studies program, noted, “Obama has constructed not so much a campaign as a movement.” The difference is significant. Campaigns try to establish connections with people.

Movements capitalize on the connections people already have with each other. Campaign Obama developed world-class social media capabilities. Now President Obama can apply those same capabilities to the rest of the world.

Social media can do for America of the 21st century what the Voice of America and Fulbright Scholarships did in the 20th. They can enable America to regain influence by re-engaging with the rest of the world, shifting the conversation from “foreign policy” to “local society,” from what appear to be America’s parochial obsessions to our common interests. They can take America off “transmit” and put it on “receive.”

But social media play by very different rules that have frustrated many marketers. People cannot be forced into social media; they already belong to communities they have chosen for themselves. And marketers can only participate if they’re invited in as a facilitator or an ally. So the key for America’s new public diplomacy organization is to find areas of mutual interest and join the conversation in a respectful and useful way.

For example, there is a growing appetite in the Middle East and in the developing

world to participate in the proverbial Middle Class. At the height of the Iraq War in 2005, Zogby International found that the Arab in the street was most concerned with issues such as “expanding employment,” followed by “improving health care,” “ending nepotism and corruption,” and “improving education.”

America’s social media outreach should not focus on correcting misinformation in Islamic chat rooms, but on providing useful information to small businesspeople in the Middle East and Indonesia. It should help connect the nascent elements of civil society in developing countries with resources within and beyond their borders. It should give the millions of young people around the world who consider English the language of business an opportunity to learn and practice it.

Americans share hundreds of connections with people around the world, from our ethnic heritage to our concern for the environment. Social media can help America define itself in terms of what it means to others in practical, personal terms. That’s community organization on a global scale.



Dick Martin is the author of 'Rebuilding Brand America' and a former executive vice president of AT&T. His new book, 'Secrets of the Marketing Masters,' will be published by the American Management Association in the spring of 2009.

The financial crisis is man-made

By Hans Martens European Policy Centre

When the new European currency—the Euro—was launched in January 1999,

its value declined rapidly against the U.S. Dollar. The first EUR/USD exchange rate recorded was around 1.18, but within two years the rate fell to a level around 0.85. After a short period with some stabilization, the Euro started a rebound of historic dimensions when it went from around 0.86 to 1.35 in less than three years. And the revaluation continued from there until the Euro stood at nearly 1.60 to the U.S. Dollar at the beginning of 2008.

At the time it was a bit of a mystery why the Euro exchange rates suddenly changed so dramatically in early 2002. The U.S. economy was booming ahead with higher growth rates and more employment creation than in Europe, so the explanation was certainly not to be found in the “real” economy, where the U.S. was constantly outperforming Europe. There were no specific events or visible changes in the macro economic circumstances that could explain the sharp revaluation of the Euro from spring 2002. However, the

main reason was that at least some were beginning to realize that there is more to economic conditions than the “real” economy (growth and jobs). The financial side of the economy counts as well.

In March 2002 Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve System said in a speech to the U.S. banking community that over the past six years, about 40 percent of growth in U.S. capital stock had been financed by foreign investment, increasing America’s reliance on others and running up mounting deficits that need to be controlled because it means a growing share of interest payments are sent abroad.

“Countries that have gone down this path invariably run into trouble, and so would we,” he said. “Eventually, the current account deficit will have to be restrained.”

This was perhaps the first serious warning on the weaknesses of the U.S. economy and the speech highlighted the argument that the whole story about an economy is not just about the real economy, but certainly also about the financial side.

[T]he U.S. economy was in a permanent “stimulus package” during the two Bush administrations, and as this failed in balancing the economy the bubble finally burst in a spectacular way.

These issues were not discussed much in public or in daily politics, but they were noted in the banking community and may have affected currency dealers, and thus became an important element in explaining why the U.S. Dollar suddenly showed such strong weakness against the Euro.

The financial side of the economy was not even an issue at the presidential elections in 2004, but shortly after the second Bush administration began its work, the debate started – at least in some circles. Economists started talking about “global imbalances”, and the Americans began to criticize Europeans for being too cautious and not expanding their economies enough.

Talking about global imbalances was actually misleading, because the root of the problem was the mounting U.S. deficits and the lack of political will to do anything about the problems. The fiscal policies of the first Bush administration were nearly absent. In a very short time the surplus on government finances created during the Clinton administration were changed into large and growing deficits. The Bush administration was increasing public expenditures rapidly—not least to finance the war against terror and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—and at the same time government revenue was reduced because of tax cuts.

The change of Secretary of the Treasury from Snow to Paulson in 2006 probably came too late to make a difference, and the issue was probably also less one of personalities in the Treasury than the general economic philosophy based on spending as the main tool for managing the economy. In addition, it became nearly impossible of political reasons to balance the budget via taxes. The message of spending from the administration was reinforced by the Federal Reserve System which continued to make loan financed spending relatively cheap.

The permanent deficit in the government finances contributed to create the largest currency account deficit the U.S. has ever seen, and as household savings rates

were approaching zero and the debt of households increased sharply, the triple deficit was a reality. Actually the U.S. economy was in a permanent “stimulus package” during the two Bush administrations, and as this failed in balancing the economy the bubble finally burst in a spectacular way. The experiment with growth without savings finally proved to have failed when the financial crises hit the U.S. economy.

There is a clear line from Greenspan’s warning in 2002 to the financial crises in 2008. The warning signs were there, but they were neglected. This legacy of economic governance from the Bush administrations is quite a harmful one—not only for Europe, but for the whole world. The financial and economic crises that have hit the world strongly cannot be compared to a natural disaster. It was man-made.

Although Europe has been hit hard by U.S. policies under Bush, Europe might actually now be better placed to address the crises because of the more prudent policies followed by the Europeans. Countries in the Eurozone have imposed

strong restrictions on public deficits on themselves (the Growth and Stability Pact), and while that might have had a somewhat negative effect on European growth and jobs during the first eight years of this millennium, it has left Europe with much better balanced economies, which now give more room for manoeuvre in addressing the economic crises than is the case in the U.S., where the next administration is actually left with no other option than addressing the crises with the same medicine that created it. We will probably soon see double digit figures for the U.S. government deficit, and after that it will be an uphill struggle to rebalance the budgets when the economy one day begins to escape the shadows of the financial and economic crises.



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The fall of the Bush Administration and the ‘war’ on terrorism

By Leonard Weinberg *University of Nevada*

Less than a year after taking office in January 2001, the Bush administration and the president personally achieved exceptionally high levels of popular support among Americans.

On the face of it, Bush’s popularity was surprising considering the fact that he had only been elected by a distinct minority of voters and in fact it had taken a highly controversial Supreme Court ruling concerning the balloting in Florida to make him president in the first place.

Why the unexpected popularity? The obvious answer is 9/11. Following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, attacks that killed more people than the Japanese had at Pearl Harbor, Bush’s approval rating soared as he vowed retribution and subsequently launched a ‘war on terrorism.’ Something similar might be said about the situation among America’s allies in Europe and elsewhere. While in the Middle East there was a certain amount of public rejoicing at Al-Qaida’s achievement (e.g. by way of celebration, Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip

were given candy by Hamas militants), for the most part the 9/11 attacks had won substantial sympathy for the United States among both the general public and governments, especially the NATO countries.

Some seven years later, President Bush will leave office with the lowest approval rating of any president since the various polling agencies began measuring support levels. Bush’s only rivals in this area were Truman at the height of the Korean War and Nixon towards the end of the Watergate scandal. And what began as widespread sympathy for the U.S. as a target of terrorist violence and mass murder had by 2008 largely turned to hostility among publics and governments, *sotto voce*, in Western Europe.

What caused this enormous swing in popularity? If alchemists claimed to have the ability to turn base metals into gold, Bush and his advisors appear to have had the ability to reverse the process. How did they do it?

Of course there is the performance of the American economy to consider. But Bush’s

support in the American electorate waned well before the housing 'bubble' burst in 2007. National security matters and the 'war on terrorism' played a significant role in explaining Bush's fall.

Defenders of his administration point to a significant accomplishment. Since 9/11 there have been no successful terrorist attacks within the United States. Several plots have been foiled, apparently including a spectacular plan to blow up six New York bound airliners over the Atlantic. If protecting the physical security of American citizens is an essential task of any president, then Bush appears to have accomplished it, at least within the country's borders.

The long-term negative impact of terrorism on the Bush presidency concerns both domestic and international issues. First, at the domestic level there was the election-driven decision to make terrorism a divisive political issue. Before, during and after the 2004 presidential election campaign Bush's Republican advisors stressed the benefits of depicting the Democrats as weak on matters of national security in a manner reminiscent of the GOP's successful claims that its opponents were 'soft on communism' during the 1950s. The tactic worked and no doubt contributed some to Bush's 2004 re-election. But there was a price to be paid in transforming what had been defined as a unifying challenge to all citizens into a divisive partisan political issue. Unsurprisingly, the Democrats reacted. In Congress and the media Democratic spokespersons called attention to the administration's excesses and failures in the war on terrorism. Particularly damaging, at least to those elements in the public sensitive to civil liberty protections and human rights violations, were accounts of torture (Abu Ghraib), indefinite imprisonment without trial (Guantanamo), 'extraordinary rendition', illegal domestic surveillance and various other First Amendment violations .

More than anything else though it was the 'war on terrorism' that did in the Bush administration. The word 'war' might have

been intended metaphorically by Bush's speechwriters for dramatic purposes, comparable to the 'war' on cancer launched by the Nixon administration in the 1970s, but it was taken literally by the President and his principal advisers as well as the public in general. Wars are normally fought by national armies representing different countries or, at least in the case of guerrillas, organized military forces (e.g. the Viet Cong). Defeating terrorist groups, on the other hand, had been normally the work of intelligence services and police agencies using clandestine techniques of one kind or another. (Latin America in the 1970s would be an exception.) By transforming what might have been a surreptitious conflict with Al-Qaida and the various groups to which it had links into a 'war', the Bush administration elevated the latter's status and became engaged in two large-scale wars in Afghanistan and Iraq aimed at defeating them.

The result of these real wars has been thousands of American casualties and many more civilian deaths in the countries caught up in the fighting. These real wars had multiple effects. In the case of Iraq, the U.S. now may very well succeed in subduing the Sunni and Shiite insurgents; achieving a tactical victory in exchange for vast amounts of blood and treasure. But the tactical victory seems likely to lead to a self-inflicted strategic defeat. Iran, America's bitterest rival in the region, seems likely

to be the principal beneficiary of the war in Iraq. In Afghanistan, despite the military success in the fall of 2001, the Taliban are now back in force and pose serious threats to the Afghan government and the American plus NATO forces struggling to defeat them.

In the meantime, Al-Qaida and its network of terrorist groups persists in its conflict with the West, probably somewhat stronger now than it was when the Bush administration launched its 'war' to defeat it.



Leonard Weinberg is a foundation professor at the University of Nevada, Reno and the editor of the journal Democracy and Security. He has written extensively on the relationship between terrorism and democracy.

What can intelligence do for you?

By Jim Arkedis *Progressive Policy Institute*

Members of the Bush White House will probably not look fondly back on the intelligence community, or IC. Partisans will argue that the administration was hampered by two intelligence failures—that it was taken by surprise on September 11th, then duped by a WMD “slam dunk” in Iraq. Those charges can be disputed with the benefit of hindsight, but they gave the Bush administration ample political cover to conduct the largest intelligence community overhaul in the country’s history.

After September 11th, it became clear that members of the intelligence community—like the CIA—and the law enforcement community—principally the Federal Bureau of Investigation—were not sharing information on the country’s adversaries. To force these historical rivals to cooperate, the Bush administration created the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) as a managerial post to oversee the entire security apparatus. Among the myriad of organizational reforms, the DNI constructed what would become the National Counter-Terrorism Center,

placing intelligence collectors and analysts from different agencies in the same building to ensure collaboration.

Then in late 2005, the New York Times revealed that the Bush administration had initiated a shocking domestic wiretapping program of highly questionable legality. After 9/11, the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) placed too many restrictions on intelligence agencies in the age of the Internet and satellites. But in the wake of the attacks, the Bush administration used its own interpretation of FISA, one that eviscerated the spirit of the statute’s privacy protections. Caught between the need to protect Americans’ privacy but gather intelligence within the borders of the United States, Congress eventually passed a sensible update in 2008 called the FISA Amendment Act.

Other reforms were ongoing. Executive order 12333, the IC’s internal code of conduct, was rewritten to strengthen the roll of the DNI. Furthermore, the FBI’s mission was altered to include a focus on terrorism; and in October 2008, Attorney General Mukasey

Obama's national security appointees are an experienced, sage group, but there will always be a certain temptation to use intelligence to support a pre-determined policy.

issued a new set of guidelines allowing FBI agents to be more aggressive against domestic terrorist targets.

The IC overhaul is a lot to digest, so I would offer the Obama administration two basic pieces of advice. The President-elect's first priority is easy: Do nothing.

The Obama administration should take stock of the Bush-era reforms before charging headstrong into the next round. A maturation period is in order: What is working? What still needs improvement? We're not sure yet because the IC needs to catch its breath.

Second, and as elementary as it may sound, Team Obama's next priority should be to educate themselves on an area the Bush administration didn't understand: the benefits and limitations of intelligence. As Paul Pillar, former National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia, has written in *Foreign Affairs*:

“The proper relationship between intelligence gathering and policymaking sharply separates the two functions...The Bush administration's use of intelligence on Iraq did not just blur this distinction; it turned the entire model upside down. The administration used intelligence not to inform decision-making, but to justify a decision already made. It went to war without requesting—and evidently without being influenced by—any strategic-level intelligence assessments on any aspect of Iraq.”

Obama's national security appointees are an experienced, sage group, but there will always be a certain temptation to use intelligence to support a pre-determined policy. To decrease that desire, Obama's cast must learn how to use intelligence properly. Unfortunately, analyzing intelligence isn't like looking into a crystal ball.

The good news is that on static topics, collected intelligence forms a relatively clear picture of the strategic landscape. For example, other nations' armed forces are built up or drawn down over the long-term, and our web of satellites and human sources can provide a largely accurate picture of force composition and posture.

On more dynamic issues, like terrorism, it is simply unrealistic to believe that the intelligence community knows the real-time developments of a terrorist plot. Sad as it may seem, IC employees watch James Bond, Jack Bauer, and Jason Bourne with the same amazement as the rest of us.

While the hard work of American intelligence professionals prevents numerous terrorist operations every year, our security services will never be able to monitor every conceivable threat. With technical capability, ideological dedication, tight internal secrecy, and a certain amount of dumb luck, any given cell could conceivably slip through the cracks.

The final lesson is that like part of the problem in Iraq, intelligence can be just plain wrong. Human sources lie for financial or professional gain; technical data can be misleading; and analysts can draw incorrect conclusions.

Without an understanding of these capabilities, policymakers can become overly-reliant on intelligence as an infallible component of policymaking. Given the limitations I've outlined above,

policymakers should use intelligence as a tool that influences deliberations, along with a host of other considerations. It is a building block of policy, not a crutch, scapegoat, or final arbiter.

As President-elect Obama spends time in office, he will discern

which areas of the national security apparatus need further adjustment.

I imagine, for example, that the FBI will still need help transforming its institutional mindset from law enforcement to intelligence collection. But unless the new administration learns how to use the information that the intelligence community provides, further reforms will be largely for naught.



Jim Arkedis is the Director of the Progressive Policy Institute's National Security Project, where he writes the Web site AllOurMight.com. Previously, he was a counter-terrorism intelligence analyst for the Naval Criminal Intelligence Service.



International terrorism: The handoff from Bush to Obama

By Michael B. Kraft *Counterterrorism consultant*

Just as the world's economic and political situation has altered dramatically since President Bush took office eight years ago, the international terrorism problem has changed, in many ways for the worst.

Terrorist threats continue to evolve and are among the many challenges facing the new Obama administration.

It is time to reflect upon the terrorism threat and responses to it during the past eight years, and possible pointers for the new Obama team. The Obama administration will have to deal not only with direct terrorism threats to the U.S. and its allies prompted by the Al-Qaida ideology but also with possible terrorist attacks related to Iran's apparent drive toward nuclear weapons, the aftermath of the Israel-Gaza confrontation, the Mumbai terrorist attack with its ramifications for the India-Pakistan dispute, the continuing instability in Iraq, the Taliban's growing strength in Afghanistan and Bin Laden's presence in the Pakistan mountains.

The huge smoke plumes from the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and

Pentagon continued to loom psychologically over official Washington ever since the coordinated Al-Qaida attacks that destroyed more lives than the Japanese December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor attack on the American fleet.

The Al-Qaida simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the suicide boat attack on the USS Cole in a Yemen harbor in October 2000 showed much more sophistication in their planning than most of the earlier terrorist attacks against the United State. These Al-Qaida terrorists also demonstrated a greater zeal to cause mass civilian casualties than earlier, largely secular terrorists such as the Abu Nidal Organization or the Red Army Faction in Germany.

During the first spring and early summer of the Bush Administration in 2001, a drumbeat of intelligence reports suggested that another Al-Qaida attack was likely. The Administration was on high alert. I was a senior advisor in the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism and remember the anxiety among government counterter-

rorism specialists and the flurry of memos and exchanges with the White House and various agencies.

The reports began tapering off as the summer wore on. However, as Richard Clarke, the senior National Security Council responsible for counterterrorism later recounted to the 9/11 commission, his efforts to hold an interagency meeting of the top principal officials of the key agencies that summer were brushed off. Only in early September a few days before the September 11, 2001 attacks, did NSC Advisor Condoleezza Rice call a meeting of the principal officials of the key agencies. If held earlier, such a high level meeting might have energized other agencies such as the Transportation Department and the FBI to become even more vigilant and share information more fully.

After the 9/11 attack, the Bush administration swung into action on a number of fronts. To provide a quick overview: Relying heavily on special forces and CIA operatives, and working with the Afghanistan Northern Alliance forces, the Bush Administration ousted the Taliban regime that had provided sanctuary to Bin Laden's Al-Qaida terrorist group. The post 9/11 military operations in Afghanistan initially destroyed Al-Qaida's operating base and curbed the group's ability to train and operate freely there. On the down side, however, U.S. special

forces and other units already were being diverted to Iraq in anticipation of the attack against the Saddam Hussein regime. Bin Laden and his cadre of followers slipped out the back door of Afghanistan into mountain hideouts across the border in the Pakistan frontier region.

Experts disagree over the extent to which Al-Qaida has recuperated and retains the ability to control and direct terrorist cells around the world. Its skillful campaign of using the Arab media and the internet has helped radicalize young Muslims and encouraged them to form their own cells to stage attacks in their home countries. These small groups of "self starters" may have little if any direct contact with Al-Qaida or receive assistance. It is difficult for security forces to detect and penetrate them. Such groups of "home grown" terrorists often involve persons who have no previously known radical or criminal record. A good example: the young doctors of Pakistani and Iraqi origin who grew up in Britain but attacked the Glasgow airport a year and half ago and unsuccessfully tried to set off car bombs near night clubs in London's West End.

Next to Afghanistan, the even more dramatic and costly invasion of Iraq is likely to be the Bush administration's longest lasting foreign policy legacy. In the run-up to the March, 2003 invasion, the Bush Administration asserted that Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons.

It based its case largely on circumstantial evidence, including Iraq's past nuclear efforts, the Iraqi lack of cooperation with U.N. international inspectors, dubious analysis of aluminum tubes and other equipment, a report of yellow cake shipments that turned out to be an Italian con-man's forgery and what intelligence officials thought Iraqi officials were telling (and misleading) each other. The White House, especially Vice President Cheney, also tried to convey the impression to Americans that Saddam Hussein was involved with Al-Qaida and therefore implicated in the 9/11 attacks. This assertion, based on very flimsy evidence of peripheral contacts, was disputed by almost every intelligence analyst but the false impression was left with many in the American public.

In the diplomatic arena, the Bush administration, after proclaiming "you're with us or against us," worked to improve day to day intelligence and other cooperation with friendly countries.

The U.S. led efforts at the United Nations Security Council to pass UN Security Council Resolution 1347, which requires U.N. member nations to strengthen their laws and undertake efforts to curb the flow of money to terrorists. The U.S. Government stepped up its assistance to other countries to help them counter terrorism financing, expanding a training program that began after the 1998 East

Africa embassy bombings. The Justice and Treasury Departments also pursued terrorist fund raisers at home, bringing to court dozens of cases under a Clinton Administration 1996 law that made it a criminal offense to knowingly provide funds or other forms of material support to groups formally designated by the Secretary of State as a foreign terrorist organization.

Also on the judicial front, key events with a major but adverse international impact include the imprisonment of enemy combatants in Guantanamo Bay, most of them without trial for years, and the photographs of abuses and charges of torture at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. The photos and reports of torture prompted outrage and inflamed anti-American sentiment, increasing the pool of potential terrorists.

Domestically, the administration quickly pushed through Congress passage of the voluminous PATRIOT Act, which contained some controversial features. More controversies broke out over whether the administration properly sought prior court approval for wiretaps in some terrorism investigations.

HOMELAND SECURITY

The biggest change on the domestic front was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, which became a super agency wrapping in some 22 dispa-

Whatever solution the Obama Administration develops [for Guantanamo Bay] it should move quickly to close down the facility even if has to retain the hard core terrorists somewhere else on a temporary basis.

rate elements, such as the Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Bush Administration initially opposed the Congressional legislation, but then changed its mind and quickly cobbled together a new agency that was more expansive than the one originally envisioned by Congress. Despite a rocky start, DHS began working on a variety of fronts to improve physical security in the U.S. and improve information flows and cooperation between the federal government and state and local government officials. After five years, there are still complaints by employees and local officials that the mammoth organization continues to have difficulty getting its act together.

Administration officials have taken credit for the fact that there have been no major terrorist attacks on the U.S. since 9/11. That is not the complete picture, however. Our allies have helped protect us and taken the brunt of terrorist attacks.

In August, 2006 the British broke up an Al-Qaida-related plot to blow up half a dozen airplanes while flying from the United Kingdom to America. In Millennium year plots, terrorists who planned attacks against American targets were intercepted at a Canada-Washington State border crossing and in Jordan where they planned to attack hotels and tourist sites. Plots have been broken up in Germany and Belgium. Meanwhile, terrorists affiliated with Al-Qaida or inspired by its no-compromise fundamentalism conducted major attacks in locations as diverse as England, Indonesia and its island of Bali, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey.

They also bombed the Madrid train station on the eve of Spanish elections, helping bring in a new Socialist government that withdrew the Spanish troop contingent from Iraq. The U.S. led invasion of Iraq became a magnet for would-be terrorists from Muslim countries and Europe who were eager to attack Ameri-

can and coalition forces, and then also Iraqis. Iraq became a training ground for terrorists, just as Afghanistan did during the resistance to the Russian invasion.

These are some of the challenges facing the new Obama administration, compounded by the danger of Iran continuing to support terrorists groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Most experts expect that Iran would play the terrorist card if the U.S. or Israel try to use air strikes to knock out Iran's nuclear facilities before Tehran fully develops nuclear weapons capability. Hamas may not yet be in a position to launch significant numbers of rockets against Israel after the late December Israeli air attacks. Hezbollah, however, is believed to have tens of thousands of longer range Iranian-made rockets and has a presence outside the Middle East. In addition, the Obama administration needs to be concerned about possible terrorist attacks touched off by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in Gaza, and the tensions between India and Pakistan following the attack in Mumbai in November by radical Muslim terrorists from Pakistan.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION STEPS

To counter and minimize the numerous terrorist threats, the new administration needs to act simultaneously on a number of fronts, ranging from practical physical measures on the ground, to strengthened cooperation and training support for other

countries, to diplomatic initiatives, public diplomacy and "smart power" programs.

Physical security/Practical mea-

asures: Efforts to improve port security with mandated inspection of cargo containers are difficult but already are underway. The U.S. still has a long way to go in making more secure such facilities as chemical plants and transportation hubs. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent to strengthen the security of embassies and other U.S. buildings. These efforts need to continue, but with the realization that terrorists will then look for softer targets.

Nuts and bolts: The new administration must also pay more attention than did the Bush administration to implementing important but low profile "nuts and bolts" programs. For example, the State Department runs an Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program to strengthen the capability of foreign civilian security officials to counter terrorism. Courses range from bomb detection and disposal to crisis management and VIP protection. The program is important not only to the participating nations but also to improve their ability to protect American citizens living or traveling in their territory. Nevertheless, even after 9/11, the Bush Administration's Office of Bureau and Management cut the State Department's budget requests almost every year, generally by around 10-12 percent. Congressional appropria-

tors then typically would make another across the board cut in the request by about the same percentage. Other, much smaller programs also were similarly cut. FBI and Treasury Department officials also complained that their budgets were not sufficiently bolstered after 9/11 and is still short of Arabic and Farsi translators.

These and most counterterrorism programs do not lend themselves to sound bites but they need to be properly coordinated and funded. A starting point, suggested by some former OMB officials, is increasing the OMB staff so it can pay more attention to the various counterterrorism programs.

Coordination: Strong leadership in the NSC is also needed to coordinate the policies and programs of the different agencies but also to pay attention to obtaining sufficient funds. Various proposals have been floating around for better coordination, but however the organizational chart is drawn, the key person, usually a senior NSC official, needs to have sufficient clout to deal effectively with the major agencies such as the State Department, Justice Department, FBI, CIA, DHS, Defense Department, and Treasury. The existing mechanism of a Counterterrorism Security Working Group (CSG) at the assistant secretary level that meets regularly seems to have been functioning quite well for a couple of decades. A great deal, however, depends upon the personalities involved

and the White House official who has the President's ear.

Weapons of Mass Destruction: DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff said the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction remains "the highest priority at the federal level." In a meeting with reporters on December 3, Chertoff explained that more people, such as terrorists, will learn how to make dirty bombs, biological and chemical weapons. "The other side is going to continue to learn more about doing things," he said. A Congressionally commissioned task force, headed by former Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Bob Graham of Florida, issued a report in December warning of the threat posed by a bio-terrorism attack, possibly within the next five years.

Department of Homeland Security: These WMD threats pose major challenges to developing preventive measures (which requires good intelligence) and also making tough risk assessment decisions on how and where to allocate resources. DHS needs to be plugged in fully with the intelligence community and also with the interagency research and development group (known as the Technical Support Working Group) which has been functioning effectively for 25 years but originally had been bypassed by the newly formed DHS.

The new Administration also needs to pay attention to DHS's allocation of

financial and other assistance to State and local governments. New York City and Washington D.C. City officials often complain they get short changed because, they say, money that should be allocated to these high profile cities for first responder and other requirements is sometime funneled to less likely target because of political considerations.

DHS itself needs a thorough reassessment. A small group of Bush White House officials with little interagency experience developed the configuration in a hurry. There are real questions as to whether such agencies as the Coast Guard or FEMA really belong under the DHS big tent. The agency also has numerous management and staffing problems.

Judiciary issues: President-elect Obama already has said he wants to close down Guantanamo Bay. It has become a rallying point for critics and potential terrorists overseas who see it as a symbol of American imperialism and those at home who object to the denial of habeas corpus for prisoners who have been held for years.

While it is generally agreed that many of the prisoners were held on flimsy evidence or no longer pose a danger, there is a small group of hard core of terrorists who would not be accepted back by their home country or given refuge by other nations. Whatever solution the Obama Administration develops, it should move quickly to

close down the facility even if has to retain the hard core terrorists somewhere else on a temporary basis. Oh, Elba Island, where are you now when we need you?

The disputes over wire tapping rules and potential problems in the PATRIOT Act also need to be examined and ironed out quickly.

Diplomacy, smart power: On a broader scale, I would expect the Obama Administration to take a more nuanced and diplomatic approach to encourage international cooperation and counter adversaries. Additional efforts to encourage neighboring countries, especially in the third world, to cooperate with each other and develop commonality in their legislation are worth the time consuming work. The U.N.'s counterterrorism efforts also need reinvigorating and this already seems to be happening under former Australian Ambassador Mike Smith, the recently appointed Executive Director of the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Public diplomacy efforts need continued attention and beefing up. The “messages” need to be honed to appeal to the self interests of those who are vulnerable to radicalization and then recruitment for terrorist activities. There was too much time floundering about when the Bush Administration launched a program that was headed by a series of short-term but politically well-connected leaders with little apparent

understanding of the target audiences. An all-out effort is needed to counter the use of the internet by terrorist groups and sympathizers and to encourage moderate Muslims to refute the distortion of their religion by those who use it to justify violence.

Smart Power: The phrase has become fashionable, especially since Defense Secretary Robert Gates gave a key speech in November 2007 urging that more State Department and international development resources were needed. Obama transition team officials reportedly already have been giving consideration to how to better mesh the Defense Department and civilian agency cooperation.

Key countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan clearly need assistance in strengthening their economy and their human infrastructure—especially schools and good governance in order to decrease the appeal of fundamentalist ideologies. The cliché that people become terrorists because of poverty and desperation has been pretty much discredited. Most of the 9/11 hijackers and the terrorist leaders come from upper or middle class backgrounds, often with degrees in medicine, science and engineering. These disciplines tend to encourage (or attract?) those who engage in black and white thinking.

This suggests that for the long term we need an effort to encourage broader liberal arts education to counter the Muslim madras and other forms of rote learning that seem to encourage fundamentalism. At the same time, and this is related to public diplomacy, the U.S. should revive and strengthen the system of USIA libraries and cultural institutions overseas that were cut way back after the Cold War ended.

In short, the Obama regime not only faces many challenges in effectively fighting terrorism, it also has to proceed on a number of fronts and do so simultaneously.



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Obama and the United Nations

By Stanley Meisler *Author of 'The United Nations: The First Fifty Years'*

Relations between the George W. Bush administration and the United Nations dropped so far into the lower depths that it does not take much of a prophet to predict that all will improve under President Barack Obama. Unlike John Bolton, the new president's ambassador, Susan Rice, will not show up in New York determined to humiliate and decimate the U.N. Nor is Obama likely to start a war in defiance of his allies and the Security Council.

Vice President Dick Cheney and the neo-conservatives who dominated President Bush looked on the U.N. as a threat to U.S. sovereignty and on Secretary General Kofi Annan as an affront to American interests. They were elated when Bush pushed the U.N. aside and invaded Iraq in March 2003. Richard A. Perle, a guru of neo-conservatism, wrote an exuberant commentary for Britain's *The Guardian*. "Saddam Hussein's reign of terror is about to end," Perle said. "He will go quickly, but not alone. In a parting irony, he will take the U.N. down with him."

The U.N. did not go down. Even the

Bush Administration, which wanted to regard the U.N. as irrelevant, found that it had to call on the U.N. for help in setting up a provisional government in Iraq and preparing for parliamentary elections there. Nevertheless, the Americans treated the U.N. with more hostility and contempt during the Bush administration than in any other time in history.

President-elect Obama has promised a new era of good feelings. While introducing his foreign policy and national defense team on December 1, he said "the time has come for a new beginning, a new dawn of American leadership..." Instead of Bush bullying and go-it-alone adventures, he pledged, "We will renew old alliances and forge new and enduring partnerships."

Instead of facing the world with military power alone, he envisioned an America displaying a host of strengths, including its diplomacy and "the power of our moral example."

Susan Rice, Obama's ambassador, is African-American, only 44 years old, and

close to him. She has advised the new president on foreign affairs for more than two years and is the only member of the foreign policy team who worked with him during the campaign. She is a former assistant secretary of state for African affairs and understands the developing world well. She has all the qualifications for a first-rate U.N. ambassador.

But it would be foolish to feel euphoric about the future. A Democratic regime does not insure idyllic U.S.-U.N. relations. The mood was bitter and feelings were frayed when Bill Clinton was president. His administration blamed the U.N. for the debacle in Somalia even though that peacekeeping operation was under control of the U.S. Washington belittled the U.N. operations in Bosnia so much that Richard Holbrooke refused to allow the U.N. any meaningful role in the Dayton accords that ended the war. Madeleine Albright, when she was U.N. ambassador, feuded continually with Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and vetoed his bid for a second term even though all the fourteen other members of the Security Council supported him.

It was a little disappointing, in fact, to hear Obama, when introducing Rice, tell us, "She shares my belief that the U.N. is an indispensable and imperfect forum. She will carry the message that our commitment to multi-lateral action must be coupled with a commitment to

[I]t would be foolish to feel euphoric about the future. A Democratic regime does not insure idyllic U.S.-U.N. relations.

reform." Obama's words were tinged with some cliched hokum. There is no doubt that the U.N., like many other institutions, including the U.S. Congress and the American electoral system, needs reform. But the cries for reform from U.N. bashers are so shrill and incessant that they are suspicious. No amount of reform short of emasculation will ever satisfy many U.N. critics. But their noise is so loud that U.N. defenders join the cries for reform to prove they are tough about the U.N. and not soft-headed bleeding hearts.

Nevertheless, no matter how much toughness the Obama team wants to show off, the members of the Obama team believe in the usefulness of the U.N., and that puts them on a different plane than the contemptuous Bush-Cheney-Bolton crowd. The U.N. should benefit from that.

The new team needs to clear away three issues before it can help make the U.N. an effective instrument of multi-lateralism once again. The first and most important

is out of Susan Rice's hands. Obama and his team must reach some understanding with Russia. The present tension, an echo of the cold war, paralyzes the Security Council. Nothing can be done there when the U.S. and Russia are in perpetual opposition.

Second, Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General, must be encouraged, with the promise of enthusiastic American support, to speak out on matters that trouble him. The South Korean diplomat was picked for the job because the Bush Administration wanted someone who shunned controversy and kept quiet. They did not want another Kofi Annan. So Ban Ki-moon has kept in the shadows. But the vast majority of the nations of the U.N., who usually lack a voice on the Security Council, need an active Secretary General who reflects moral force and seems to speak for them. The Obama team should unshackle him.

Finally, Susan Rice should not take her cabinet rank too seriously. Obama restored her post to the cabinet as a way of showing the U.N. that it is now relevant. But U.N. diplomats and civil servants do not care about such symbolism. Their favorite American ambassador—Tom Pickering during the administration of the elder President Bush—did not have cabinet rank. Madeleine Albright, the ambassador during Clinton's first term, irritated and

alienated many U.N. ambassadors with her absences. As a member of the cabinet, she shuttled to Washington continually for meetings of the national security principals—the group that includes the secretaries of state and defense and the national security advisor. The job in New York has become too consuming and delicate for the U.S. to have a distracted ambassador.

In the new era promised by Obama and his team, these issues should not prove too difficult to handle.



Stanley Meisler is the author of 'Kofi Annan: A Man of Peace in a World of War' and 'The United Nations : The First Fifty Years.' He was a Los Angeles Times foreign and diplomatic correspondent for thirty years, and assigned to Nairobi, Mexico City, Madrid, Toronto, Paris, Barcelona, the United Nations and Washington.



Conflict management and realism in the Arab-Israeli conflict: Lessons from the Bush Administration

By Gerald M. Steinberg *Bar Ilan University*

As the Bush Administration leaves office after eight years, the Arab-Israeli conflict remains one of the flash points in a very unstable Middle East. In this period, the United States has lost much of its influence, as a result of weak leadership, collapsing economic power, the quagmire in Iraq and wider international isolation. The removal of Saddam and the Baathists also ended Iraq's role in the regional balance of power, allowing the Islamic regime in Iran to become a major player and source of conflict, close to acquiring nuclear weapons, and with branches on Israel's northern border through Hezbollah in Lebanon, and on the southern border through Hamas. The predictable confrontation at the end of the unofficial truce between Hamas and Israel serves as a reminder of the complexity of this situation, which President Barack Obama will inherit on January 20.

Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have already received plenty of advice of how to pursue peace in this region, but

the recipes are based largely on wishful thinking. The foundation for a significant and lasting change remains very thin, despite the photo opportunities and various initiatives. The problems in this decades-old conflict are far too large to be bridged by a few months of top-down diplomacy by weak leaders. The so-called "Annapolis process" of negotiations never took off—the rump Palestinian Authority headed by Mahmoud Abbas and the remnants of Arafat's Fatah movement are too weak to take and implement important decisions. In parallel, the Israeli political leadership has also lacked public support, and Prime Minister Olmert, who followed Ariel Sharon, has been forced to resign. And while the indirect Israeli-Syrian negotiations that took place via Turkey marked at least a fresh start in this dimension, and gave Turkey a chance to claim a role as peace broker, little is known about the substance of these talks. However, the U.S. did not support these talks, and the White House and State Department sought to isolate the Syrian regime for its role in promoting terror and the insurgents in Iraq.

Many critics argue that the Bush Administration waited too long to enter the Arab-Israeli peace process, but in January 2001, there was no other logical option. Eight years of intensive efforts by the Clinton Administration beginning with the Oslo process, including numerous presidential visits, a Camp David summit that ended in failure and embarrassment for Washington, and growing terrorism demonstrated the dangers of trying to force through an agreement without a wide societal foundation. The conflict is conducted in zero-sum terms, with Palestinian gains seen as requiring Israeli losses, rather than joint problems to be resolved through cooperation. This is particularly true for core identity issues, such as Palestinian refugee claims (the so-called “right of return”, which would end Israel’s status as the Jewish national homeland) and on Jerusalem. And while the territorial issue and Israeli settlements draw a great deal of attention, these are symptoms of the conflict and causal factors, and cannot be resolved without mutual acceptance. Under such conditions, and in the midst of the Palestinian mass terror campaign, a Bush administration peace initiative would have simply ended up like Clinton’s—with no chance of success.

The 9/11 terror attacks in 2001 reinforced this policy, and a few months later, President Bush gave his first major policy speech on the conflict, declaring that Yasir Arafat’s role in terror meant that he could not be considered a partner for negotiations. The U.S. and Israel moved to strengthen Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as an alternative, but it was only after Arafat’s death in 2004 that gave Abbas some level of independence. There was little that external actors, including the U.S. and the other members of the Middle East Quartet (Europe, the U.N., and Russia), could do until the internal political dynamics changed.

In parallel, regional developments had a major impact, particularly with the war in Iraq, and the violence and instability that followed. Initially, the removal of Saddam Hussein also ended a major threat from Iraq against Israel, but then the insurgency in Iraq spilled over into Jordan and beyond. Israel shares a long border with Jordan, and there is significant security cooperation between Amman and Jerusalem, particularly regarding terror plots involving radical Islamists. Bombings in Jordan reflected the widening range of the violence in Iraq, which threatened to spillover in Israel. This environment was not conducive to proposals that would have involved transferring

In this very complex environment, new proposals for a quick and lasting ‘comprehensive peace agreement’ between Israel and the Palestinians should be viewed skeptically.

strategic territory—particularly the West Bank and Jordan Valley—to a weak Palestinian authority vulnerable to a radical Islamic takeover. The last thing Jordan and Israel need is a Hamas-led terror state between them that would attack both governments.

In addition, the Bush Administration’s ideological and almost theological approach to democracy-building in the Middle East has also left some major scars, and warning signs for Obama. In most cases, elections and power sharing means bringing the Islamists to power – they are the only serious opposition to the dictatorial regimes that are in power. In these cases, the cure is worse than the disease. American pressure to open the political process in Egypt helped the Moslem Brotherhood gain ground, and further weakened the tenuous hold on power by the military-economic elite led by Hosni Mubarak. In the Palestinian Authority, the combined European-American demand for elections led Hamas (also part of the Moslem Brotherhood) to victory, in large part in protest against the corruption and failures of the Fatah/PLO leaders. And in Lebanon, quasi-democratic elections increased the power of Hezbollah, giving the Iranian supported Shia terror organization a wider base for launching its attacks. In this very complex environment, new proposals for a quick and lasting “comprehensive peace agreement” between Israel and the Palestinians should be viewed

skeptically. The much touted Arab Peace Initiative reflects some progress, but it remains very vague and was presented to Israel as a “take it or leave it” proposition. The Saudis, who originally tabled this text in the Arab League meeting that followed the 9/11 attacks, have not invested energy or resources in advancing it, and this anachronistic regime has its own major problems.

The bottom line is that Arab-Israeli diplomacy remains a very complex proposition, and stable agreements remain a long way off. Instant peace plans based on compromising Israeli security will result in more terror attacks and responses, and will not serve American interests.

The Obama Administration would be best served by realistic conflict management –steps to increase stability and prevent the conflict from spiraling out of control.



Professor Gerald M. Steinberg Chairs the Political Science Department at Bar Ilan University in Israel, and is also the founder of NGO Monitor.

Ending the informal empire

Interview with Ivan Eland Center on Peace and Liberty

Q: **IA FORUM: One of the key features of the first Bush administration's defense policy was the so-called Rumsfeld doctrine. What did you make of this?**

A: IVAN ELAND: I think he made two positive changes. One was the revolution in military affairs - I think there is some truth to the technology there. And I think he was also trying to kill some weapons systems, particularly in the army, that needed to be axed. So I think he had some good intentions. His doctrine is fine if you're just going to be fighting conventional wars—if you have a force on the ground that can call in air strikes, and although it is a risky strategy, it was definitely worth pursuing. The problem that he ran into in Iraq is that if you're going to invade and occupy a country you need soldiers on the ground to do essentially police work and counterinsurgency work, etc. You need a bigger army, and so now we're going the opposite way from what he wanted. Robert Gates wants to go towards a larger army, and I think Congress does too. So Rumsfeld's doctrine has kind of been discredited. If you're going to fight major countries, major wars, there was

something to it, but it depends on who your enemy is. And now we've decided that we're going to do this other type of war, where Rumsfeld's initial doctrine wouldn't be applicable. It worked in Afghanistan and to some extent it worked in Iraq, although they had more ground forces than he originally wanted to have. So it works in the initial war, but if you're going to do occupation, it doesn't work. I think Rumsfeld would have been fine had they not tried to occupy Afghanistan and if they had not tried to occupy Iraq.

Do you think enough is being done to prepare the U.S. military for the threats it will face in the future, rather than the ones it has faced in the past?

I think first of all, the political leadership has to decide what it wants to do. The army, and the military in general, is trying to be all things to all people because we don't really know what we want to do in the world - we just do it on an ad hoc basis. The Iraq war is a case in point. So I think if you want to fight other great powers—and our vital interests

would usually be wrapped up into that type of a war—then you should probably go more with the initial Rumsfeld strategy. But if you're going to do the counter-insurgency wars, which I don't particularly want to do the counter-insurgency wars, because they don't usually come out very well for great powers.

After the initial taking out of the Taliban, we could have just put special forces and drones in secretly and tried to catch Bin Laden and told the Afghans 'We don't really care what you do, but if you bring back a regime that's actively targeting America, that we'll be back in force.' You don't necessarily have to do nation-building occupations because they're expensive, and I think we're learning that. So I think we should probably go away from those. You can have special forces and counterterrorism capabilities, because we may need to go in for quick raids, especially if we see Al-Qaida being harbored. But really our military should be geared to fight the big threats. So it depends on what sort of foreign policy you want. I'm for a restrained foreign policy - when we go in to do these nation building things, what you're really doing is acting as a lightning rod for terrorism, because countries don't see us helping, they see this imperial invasion force, especially in Muslim countries.

The root problem of all this is non-Muslim forces on Muslim soil – it's the problem with

[We] need a vast restructuring, creating a force that can be used as a last resort against great power enemies and for if we do need to take on terrorists.

Palestine, it's the problem with Chechnya, it was the problem with the Soviets in Afghanistan and is the problem with Iraq and Afghanistan for our forces now. So the more you do this stuff, the more terrorism you're going to have to fight.

To me, if you're going to fight terrorism, you should do it in the shadows with law enforcement assets, special forces, the CIA, covert operations and intelligence and drones – those are fairly cheap. Our military still needs to be configured to fight the bigger threats, even though there are not that many on the horizon at the moment. But you could do that and still drastically cut the defense budget, because counterterrorism is relatively cheap.

But what I would do is just the opposite of what they are doing, which is building up the army and Marine Corps for nation building. We haven't had a good track record on counter-insurgency, because guerilla warfare is the most successful

type of warfare in human history. It's not to say you can't beat guerrillas, because there are cases of it happening. But even if you win, it's nasty, you take a lot of casualties and you take a lot of time doing it in developing countries that are not strategic. Vietnam and these two wars should have told us by now – we should have learned it after Vietnam, but apparently we didn't – we need to identify the strategic areas of the world, which I still think are Europe and East Asia. You don't want a large hegemonic power taking over those regions.

Cross-border aggression and even the number of civil wars has decreased since World War II, probably partly because of nuclear weapons, but also because nationalism has tempered a lot of the nation building by colonial powers, and it should have done so for the U.S. So in that sense, the world has become less interdependent—more interdependent in trade and communications, but less armies going across borders and less civil wars. So we can afford to be a bit more choosy about where we intervene. But we're into this idea that everything is strategic, and everything is a vital interest, which to me is nonsense. I would make the military smaller, with also a capability to go hunt terrorists if they strike.

Obama has pledged to cut tens of billions of dollars in wasteful military spending. Is this plausible?

I think there's a lot of waste—there's probably \$10 billion worth of pork projects. But the real dollars are in cutting some of the systems that we don't really need, like the F-22, missile defense, new submarines. We have the most powerful military ever assembled, both relatively and absolutely when compared with other countries. So to say that we need something like the F-22 in our air force, which is clearly dominant already, our navy is probably ultra-dominant and our army is probably unsurpassed, you know some of these weapons systems could be cut or eliminated.

It depends also on what you define as pork. Most people define pork in a very narrow sense, in that if it is not in the executive branch's budget, and congress adds it, it must be pork. But to me, congress has the right to add and subtract things, and you shouldn't just call it pork because they add it. But the real question is whether we need it, and there is a lot of executive stuff—the V-22, which isn't that effective a plane, the F-22—some of these systems are very questionable. And even with my strategy of preparing to face other powers, rather than counter-insurgencies, we are so dominant now that we can probably have a procurement lull, because a lot of these weapons will anyway be outdated by the time we face a peer competitor or near peer competitor—if we ever do. With pork you get a dollar or two here and there, and

those projects certainly should be cut out. But I'd like to expand the definition of pork to include unneeded systems that the executive branch is requesting too.

It's unbelievable that we have a secretary of defense who is trying to cut the F-22, but can't do it. Dick Cheney, who I thought was a pretty good secretary of defense when he was in that role, tried to kill several weapons systems, including the V-22. You notice that the V-22 is still around. So if the top guy in the department can't stop weapons systems, then there is something wrong and that tells you they are pork, whether they are labeled that or not.

What did you make about the decision to keep Robert Gates on as defense secretary?

I think he's competent, and has good intentions on a lot of these programs, and I think he's about as good as you can get for a conventional thinking person. But I think someone needs to go in there and have some revolutionary ideas, and he's not going to be the person to do that.

I understand why they want to keep him; it's probably good to have some continuity. And there does appear to have been some progress on Iraq, though I think it's probably fleeting. But I think we should get out of Afghanistan because we have done everything we were supposed to do but get bin Laden. Gates is not going to

do that. They may end the Iraq war, but I think they're going to go whole hog in Afghanistan, and I don't think that's such a great idea. And one thing I don't like about Gates is that he talks about how we need to pay attention to the wars we are fighting, but of course there's a decision not to fight those wars that could be made.

Are there any other changes you'd like to see an Obama administration make?

Well, we really need to cut the budget. We're running this informal empire overseas, but we are in financial straits at home. Obama claims he will be looking for deficit reductions after all this domestic infrastructure spending and bailouts etc. So he's going to have to cut defense, but he doesn't want to do that. And there's also the entitlements crisis with the baby boomers retiring. So he really has a national debt problem, and we really just don't have the money to do this empire anymore. And I think it's counterproductive anyway to our security.

So I think we need a vast restructuring, creating a force that can be used as a last resort against great power enemies and for if we do need to take on terrorists. But if we do a lot less foreign interventions, we are going to have a lot less blowback terrorism too. So I think we need to completely rethink foreign policy, and of course that would lead to a complete

downsizing of the armed forces and a more humble foreign policy. I have no indication they are going to do that, because I think they are going to go back to the Wilsonian liberal policy. Obama, although he is good on Iraq, wants to double down on Afghanistan, though I don't know to what extent this is campaign rhetoric to make a liberal Democrat seem tougher—you never know what presidents are going to once they get into office.

But we are overextended—we account for about 40 percent of the world's defense spending, but only about 27 percent of the GDP. To me, a normal country would say 'Wow, we're having this big financial crisis, we gotta really cut back on this stuff, maybe pull out from Korea, from Japan'—some of these countries that are really wealthy and can now defend themselves—and we could be a balancer of last resort. I thought we couldn't afford the empire even before the financial crisis hit. But the special interests keep us overseas in a lot of these places, and policy is still running on the basis of that, rather than admitting we have to cut back because of this financial crisis.

I'm not sure the world would be any better off if the American overextension continues, and Americans have congratulated themselves on being indispensable. But of course even before the United States existed, balances of powers kept the peace, and even

when they didn't keep the peace they evened out the wars, and there were settlements. Balance of power isn't perfect, but it does work, and countries can police their own areas as well—we don't have to do everything. Being a superpower is something of a unique status in history, and being the lone super power even more so. So we now think the abnormality is the rule and that everything is going to fall apart without us, and I just don't see that happening.



Ivan Eland is senior fellow and director of the Center on Peace & Liberty at The Independent Institute and author of the new book 'Recarving Rushmore: Ranking the Presidents on Peace, Prosperity, and Liberty.'

Making development a priority

By Sabina Dewan *Center for American Progress*

The last decade has seen growing recognition that poverty, underdevelopment, and fragile states serve as fertile grounds for pollution, disease, lawlessness, and violent conflict, as well as international crime and terrorism. This recognition has revitalized the discussion on the importance of harnessing economic development not only as a moral imperative, but also as a tool in pursuit of national security objectives. Although foreign assistance for development has increased over the past eight years, the system in its current form leaves much to be desired. The incoming administration must take the necessary steps to ensure that development is appropriately leveraged as an effective instrument for administering foreign policy, and that it is a central priority on par with defense and diplomacy.

The 9/11 attacks provided stark evidence of a changed world order in which militant extremism will pose a challenge to be reckoned with for some time to come. The events on the one hand provoked the Bush administration's military responses in Afghanistan and Iraq, but on the other hand, they prompted analysts to consider the conditions that potentially fuel extremism. These parallel responses came with strong bipartisan support for a dramatic increase in development funding over the last eight years¹ as well as expanding involvement of the U.S. military in civilian assistance activities.²

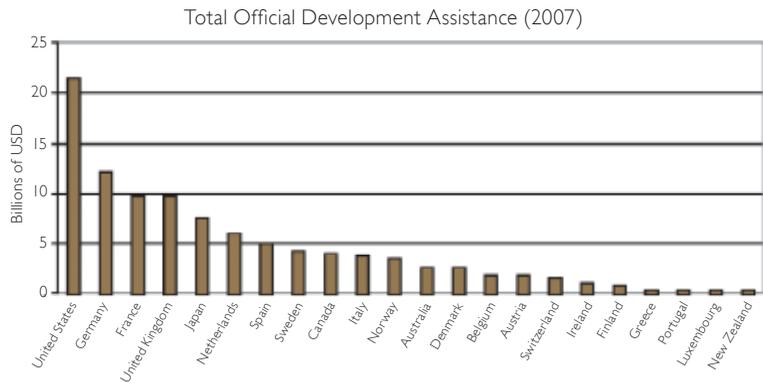
Since the establishment of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in January 2004, the associated programs that provide grants to countries which perform well

¹Smith, Gayle E. (June, 2008) In Search of Sustainable Security: Linking National Security, Human Security and Collective Security to Protect America and Our World. Washington DC: Center for American Progress.

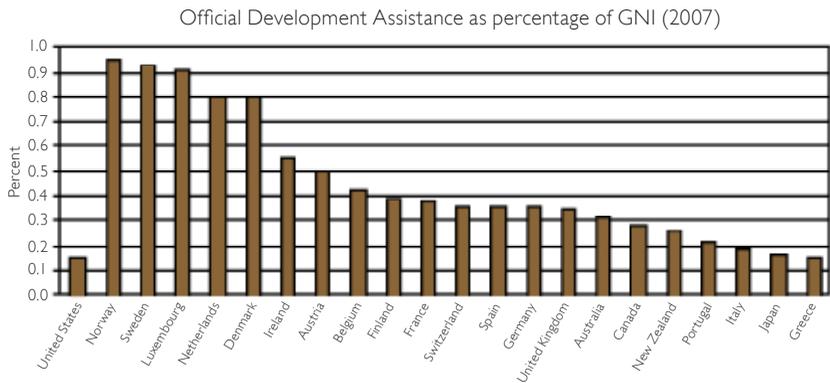
²Brigety, Reuben E. (June, 2008) Humanity as a Weapon of War. Washington DC: Center for American Progress. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/10/20081021-4.html>
— Fact Sheet: Transforming International Development

3,4,5,6 Smith, Gayle E. (June, 2008) In Search of Sustainable Security: Linking National Security, Human Security and Collective Security to Protect America and Our World. Washington DC: Center for American Progress.

against set economic and political criteria, have invested \$6.7 billion in 35 countries around the world.³ There has been bipartisan support for the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and for the plea to double the program's funding.⁴ In response to a call by 186 members of Congress, President Bush increased the fiscal year 2009 budget for international affairs to \$39.5 billion.⁵ Yet despite these increases, the U.S. continues to lag behind other OECD countries in its official development assistance as a percentage of gross national income.



Source: Statistical Annex form the 2008 Development Co-operation Report, OECD



Source: Statistical Annex form the 2008 Development Co-operation Report, OECD

Alongside the latter efforts, the Department of Defense has established a Commanders' Emergency Response program to meet emergency and reconstruction needs in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act crafted the "1206" fund to help countries that engage in counter-terrorism and stability operations. In 2007, the Pentagon launched AFRICOM, a military headquarters for Africa that focuses on war prevention and stability building activities.⁶ But the increasing militarization of foreign aid is not without controversy, not least because military assistance is not always well received by local civilians, it tends to be focused on responding to short-term humanitarian crisis rather than long-term development goals, and it adds further to the dispersion of development funding that is arrayed across various government agencies, departments and initiatives.

Despite consensus on the need to invest in international development, and the aforementioned efforts over the last eight years, the fact remains that the current system of U.S. foreign assistance is outdated, broken and in dire need of a new approach that takes into account the dynamism, interdependence, and mutual vulnerabilities of an integrated world. And as the global economic crisis has blatantly revealed, this

interconnectedness extends beyond the realm of military and conventional notions of security. There is a need for a sustainable security strategy for the United States that combines national security—the safety of the United States; human security—the well-being and safety of people; and collective security—the shared interests of the global community. And development lies at the heart of this new paradigm.

The incoming administration should make development a priority on the same footing as defense and diplomacy. Towards this end, first, a cabinet-level development agency should be created to craft a coherent National Development Strategy that reassesses the currently fragmented foreign aid architecture to ultimately integrate and coordinate U.S. development efforts. Second, extending beyond the aid architecture, development priorities should be mainstreamed into economic policies via responsible trade agreements for example. Trade offers enormous potential for growth and development, but to date the distribution of the gains from trade has been unbalanced. The creation/reform of policies and social protection institutions that allow for a more equitable distribution of the gains from trade such as healthcare, skills training initiatives, progressive taxation policies widen the circle of winners

from trade. As developing economies improve their living standards and expand their middle classes, this will over time alleviate the traditional reliance on the U.S. consumer to propel global economic growth. Rising living standards in developing countries will at the same time generate additional markets and demand for U.S. products and services, leading to improvements in living standards in America.

And third, the United States must move beyond its unilateral approach to re-engage with existing international institutions such as the International Labor Organization and the World Bank to bolster their development initiatives as well as to institute greater policy coherence in their activities. The multilateral platform offers an opportunity to address global challenges such as climate change and terrorism in a global way, and the United States can play a key coordinating role to this end. Development is the foundation of a sustainable security strategy, and it is vital to instituting a virtuous circle of mutually reinforcing gains between the United States and its global community. In this era of global integration, poverty eradication, universal education and social protection for all are no longer simply ideals, but rather imperatives to secure the health and future of the United States itself.



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Britain
China
India
Japan
North Korea
Pakistan
Russia

Obama and the world

“Despite all the years of American investment, despite America’s functioning as a major source of modern technology and as the world’s largest market for Chinese goods, under the skin of many—maybe even most Chinese—is the conviction that the U.S. does not want to see China become a world power.”—*Harvey J. Feldman*

Special relationship out of step

By Sir Malcolm Rifkind *Former British Foreign Secretary*

The relationship between the United States and the nations of Europe has been placed under a tremendous strain over the last eight years.

The Bush Administration's decision to invade and occupy Iraq has rightly come to be seen as the moment when America alienated allies that were not well disposed to pre-emptive military action. Yet it is important to note that the ties between the United States and those nations that did join in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein have also been badly damaged.

The chaos and carnage that erupted following the liberation of Baghdad forced even the closest of allies to question whether the United States retained the ability to act in a wise and competent fashion. The advent of the Obama Administration may be what it needs for the United Kingdom to place as much trust in Washington's capacity for international leadership as it did in 2003. In some respects, the 'special relationship' might well be adjudged to have suffered as much in the U.K. in the last eight years as it did between the United States and France or Germany.

The election of Barack Obama will go a long way toward renewing the Atlantic partnership. The new President's style and tone will ensure a clean break with the bluster of the outgoing administration. On too many occasions, the Bush administration struck a dogmatic line that left open little room for compromise. President Obama is more likely to go out of his way to ensure that this does not happen again.

That is a fact that will be welcomed in London, in part because the health of U.K.-U.S. relations will hinge on the ability of both countries to persuade and be persuaded by one another. Nothing will present a greater test to this pattern of mutual cooperation in the coming months than two challenges thrown up by Britain and America's shared membership of NATO.

The first is the controversial issue of NATO membership. Over the last eight years, the Bush administration adopted a somewhat doctrinaire approach to NATO's composition, regarding every expansion as a positive development. This has certainly been true in some

cases, as the inclusion of former Soviet States did help to solidify the security gains brought about by the end of the Cold War. Yet Washington's desire to push the borders of NATO even further to the east is a troubling one. It must always be remembered that NATO is more than a political alliance. It is an organization that exists for the purposes of mutual defense, and one that is at the heart of most European nations' defense policy. The Obama administration needs to take greater note of this fact, and conduct a review of policy in the wake of last year's conflict between Georgia and Russia.

Over the last eight years, many in Washington had pushed for Georgia's inclusion into NATO. Had that process been undertaken, Russia's invasion would have demanded a military mobilization. The idea that the nations of Western Europe would have been prepared or willing to engage Russia over the issue of South Ossetia's political alignment is wildly misplaced. The U.K. needs to take this message to Washington, and persuade the new President that NATO's effectiveness will only be diluted by admitting states that existing members have no intention of going to war to defend.

The second issue of central importance to U.K.-U.S. relations will be the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. For the better part of a decade, Britain

The strength of the 'Special Relationship' is not dependent upon one President, or one Prime Minister. It is founded on an ability to address and solve common problems by adopting a common approach.

and America have been struggling to bring about a degree of security that has proven remarkably elusive. The next four years will be decisive in that effort. The Taliban have strengthened their position in the southern and eastern parts of the country. Canadian troops are set to leave after sustaining heavy losses. Other NATO members have been unwilling to contribute adequate resources, or provide a mandate to their forces that allows them to participate in combat operations. The United States has already committed itself to doubling its force presence in response to these developments. In the coming months, Barack Obama will almost certainly expect the United Kingdom to increase its direct involvement as well, and do more to encourage European Union partners to follow suit. The U.K. will struggle to maintain its position as Washington's closest European ally if it is unresponsive to such advances.

Barack Obama enjoys a tremendous amount of goodwill in Britain, and his visit to the U.K. during the presidential campaign demonstrated that such regard is reciprocated. Yet that alone will not be enough to ensure good relations between London and Washington. The strength of the 'Special Relationship' is not dependent upon one President, or one Prime Minister. It is founded on an ability to address and solve common problems by adopting a common

approach. At present, the Britain and America's approaches to the issues outlined above are out of step. Only if such differences are reconciled will U.K.-U.S. relations be restored to the extent that those on both sides of the Atlantic would wish to see”.



Sir Malcolm Rifkind is a British Member of Parliament and former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

China: A troubled 30th anniversary

By Harvey J. Feldman *Heritage Foundation*

January 1, 2009 marked the thirtieth anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Kissinger may have made his secret trip in 1971, and Nixon his in 1972 (when the famous Shanghai Communique was issued), but with Watergate and a weak Ford Administration intervening, it was left to Jimmy Carter to accomplish the transfer of embassies from Taiwan to China on that January day in 1979.

As it happens, 2009 marks another beginning as well: the thirtieth anniversary of the “reform and opening” policy, instituted by Deng Xiaoping, which lifted China out of Maoist poverty and, over time, created the world manufacturing hub we see today. China's GDP in 2006 was thirteen times what it was in 1978. In 1978, U.S.-China trade amounted to a few millions. In 2008 our trade deficit with China exceeded \$250 billion. China has become the world's largest holder of U.S. debt. In a very real sense, over these thirty years our economies have become intertwined. But the economic good times of the past

seem vanishing before our eyes. The U.S. faces its worst financial crisis since the 1930s, with unemployment expected to reach almost 10% by year's end. Nor are we alone. The financial disarray has spread world-wide, and even Wall Street scandals like that of the egregious Madoff grow tentacles that have reached into overseas banks including such stalwarts as London's Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

The South China Morning Post, a Hong Kong newspaper, has reported the loss of 2.5 million jobs in the Pearl River delta, the area between Guangzhou (Canton) and the former British colony. Factories producing for export are closing all over China, and villages where almost every family made toys, or umbrellas, or plastic footwear, are without employment.

The usual estimate is that China needs 8 percent annual growth in GDP just to keep up with yearly additions to the job market. But in 2009 that figure is likely to be 6 percent, perhaps even less – though the government may try to put a better face on it. Most who lose their jobs in the cities migrated there from the perennially

depressed rural areas. Indeed, it was their remittances which lifted their village-bound families out of dollar-a-day poverty. Now the remittances have stopped and the workers flow back to their native places. The possibilities for serious disturbances are great and growing greater. And the likelihood is that many of these will not be village affairs.

It is easy enough to say that the Chinese economy, where banking and credit is still government-controlled, must shift toward emphasis on domestic consumption rather than export industries at a time when there is significantly less money abroad to buy Chinese goods. Indeed, the government talks this game, but at the same time it has reinstated export industry subsidies and ceased its painfully slow efforts to bring its undervalued currency (undervalued by between 15 and 25 percent, depending upon the analyst) closer to economic reality. Obviously the aim is transfusions to the anemic export industry. Whether there will be markets remains to be seen.

We know the hard times are not unique to China, and surely families here in America are suffering as well. But just as workers here, and their representatives in Congress, so often blame hard times on China and those firms which relocated their manufacturing there, so the Chinese firms and workers which depended so hugely on a continuing, voracious American demand for their export goods blame their troubles on America.

Here lie the beginnings of what could be a very serious set of problems. Despite all the years of American investment, despite America's functioning as a major source of modern technology and as the world's largest market for Chinese goods, under the skin of many—maybe even most Chinese—is the conviction that the U.S. does not want to see China become a world power. That America looks secretly for ways to contain and constrain China. As the journals of the People's Liberation Army proclaim so often, America has been, is, and will be China's most important enemy.

Communication between the two sides at the top levels has improved greatly during George W. Bush's second term, operating, through mechanisms like the strategic economic and political dialogue sets. Indeed, Mr. Bush can boast in foreign affairs that he has established a vastly improved relationship with China. But it will take major and continuing efforts in both Beijing and Washington to keep that relationship from deteriorating during 2009 as economic stress builds. It is important that neither side say "it's up to you," instead of pulling its own weight. For thirty years now, the U.S.-China economic relationship has been hugely important to both. It has helped to lift millions of Chinese out of the direst poverty, while providing jobs, goods and lower inflation in America. It would be more than a shame to see this relationship crumble into mutual recrimination.

Harvey J. Feldman is Distinguished Fellow in China Policy at the Heritage Foundation. He is a former ambassador to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and has served as alternate U.S. Representative to the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador. He is the editor of two books, 'Taiwan in a Time of Transition' and 'Constitutional Reform and the Future of China.'

India, the U.S. and the 'Greater West'

By Madhav D. Nalapat UNESCO Peace Chair

That Franklin Roosevelt was sympathetic to a free India ought to have ensured a close relationship between the two largest democracies, India and the United States. Instead, the Fabian condescension of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru fused with the Churchillian disdain of John Foster Dulles to ensure a rocky start to ties post-1947. Matters were not helped by the subsequent integration of Pakistan into the security architecture fashioned by Washington and the support given to that country against India in the U.N. over Kashmir.

The 1962 Chinese invasion, coupled with John Kennedy's genuine empathy for India, ought to have resulted in an alliance, but once again, Kashmir proved the spoiler, with the U.S. making a Pakistan-friendly settlement of the issue a condition for closer ties, an error repeated by Bill Clinton in the 1990s, when the collapse of the USSR saw the U.S.-leaning premier, Narasimha Rao, groping towards an alternative grand alliance, with the victor of the Cold War. Clinton made a Kashmir settlement and

de-nuclearization pre-conditions for a genuine strategic alliance, and when the Indians expectedly balked, turned towards the Peoples Republic of China as the new "best friend" of the U.S. The Clinton years witnessed an extraordinary increase in the power and influence of China, even as it saw the decline of Japan.

Although Clinton has been given the credit for initiating the warmth in India-U.S. ties that has characterized the period since the end of the 1990s, the reality is that his administration did all that it could to stunt the myriad linkages that were being formed between the two countries. The State Department continued to highlight India as one of the world's "most dangerous flashpoints," while the country remained far below the radar of the Commerce Department, which was parsimonious in granting permissions to conduct hi-tech trade with India, even as it was generous in the case of China—even in technologies that were essentially military in applications, such as space launch vehicles. Behind the fog of ritualistic

condemnations of Beijing's human rights abuses, Sino-U.S. ties flourished in the 1990s, even as official ties with India remained frosty.

George W. Bush came into office in 2001 as a China-skeptic, and very quickly accepted that unless India too were brought into the alliance matrix, the PRC could not for long be prevented from emerging as the primary power in Asia. Although 9/11 resulted in a significant dilution of the commitment towards building geopolitical checks on China, military linkages with India expanded substantially, and initial steps began to be taken for a partial dismantling of the dense web of technology restrictions on India, with nuclear-related sanctions at its core.

However, after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Bush became preoccupied with the Middle East, thus taking his eye off South Asia and China. As a consequence, the situation in both began developing in ways adverse to U.S. interests. Although the nuclear deal is held up as evidence of the manner in which the Bush administration pushed forward the agenda of making India an ally, this can be seen as essentially a one-off, with ties in education, space, agriculture and defense still very far from a level that would better serve the long-term interests of both countries. While Clinton basked in the hype created by his visit to India (in the final leg of his second term), Bush has done much more to begin the creation of an alliance architecture between the U.S. and India.

Such a partnership would serve the interests of the international

A plausible case can be made that India is not part of the “Greater Middle East” (as is being suggested in some think tanks) but forms the Asian component - together with Turkey, Israel and Singapore - of the ‘Greater West.’

community. Indeed, a plausible case can be made that India is not part of the "Greater Middle East" (as is being suggested in some think tanks) but forms the Asian component - together with Turkey, Israel and Singapore - of the "Greater West". A group of countries bonded less by ethnicity than by shared values and interests. Now that Barack Obama has been elected the chief executive of the world's most powerful country, the efforts—within the EU, especially by Germany—to fuse ethnicity to the definition of a Westerner may get replaced with those that have not the skin but the mind as the core of the distinction between insiders and others. With its growing population of English-language speakers (more than 200 million, and counting), its embrace of democracy and secularism, and its ability to be a swing state in Asia, India presents a unique opportunity for the West, one that the 44th President of the U.S. may be able to actualize.

While U.S.-China ties grew from a "top-down" process, being led by the interaction between the higher levels

of the two bureaucracies, India-U.S. relations have blossomed despite the many sandtraps erected by both establishments, each of whom has a history of tensions with the other. A prime mover has been the reality of India being the single largest contributor to the pool of overseas students on U.S. campuses, a back-and-forth flow that has been going on throughout the past six decades, despite long periods of chill between the two states. U.S.-educated engineers and those with other skills have put their acquired knowledge to good effect in India, and these days, there is a flow of manpower traffic between the two countries that dwarfs any U.S. relationship outside Europe. In addition, a growing (and politically awakened) Indian American community has acted as the foundation for better ties, lobbying strongly in both countries for official policies that would promote rather than retard the deepening of ties. While India-U.S. ties grew despite the policies of the Clinton administration, and speeded up even in the maelstrom created by the occupation of Iraq, they have reached a stage when the forward momentum is

close to being irreversible.

Barack Obama, in contrast to Bush, who seemed oblivious to the nature of his presumed ally, the Pakistan military, has in his public statements shown a skepticism of the promises made by the generals in Islamabad and a willingness to use force in Pakistan to ensure the survival of U.S. interests and assets that the Soviet Union lacked the courage to do during the decade of its occupation of Afghanistan. Had Moscow targeted Peshawar, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Quetta with precision bombing raids, the Taliban may have been deprived of the supply lines from Pakistan that enabled them to succeed in countering the Soviet armies. The road to victory in Afghanistan lies through Pakistan, and the shutting down of the relief and replenishment pipeline in manpower and materiel between the Taliban and its allies in Pakistan is a pre-condition for stability in South Asia

Although reasons of regional chemistry mandate that India keep away from a necessary NATO attack on the Taliban's supply lines and support infrastructure in Pakistan, the fact that the country is on the front lines of the War on Terror indicates the need for a robust commitment in manpower and materiel in order to help rebuild Afghanistan, a commitment that may need to extend to the dispatching of military units in order to help the Afghan

administration roll back the Taliban. There is no free pass in a war, and all participants will need to deploy the strengths each has in order to ensure victory. Should the Pakistan army continue to clandestinely support the Taliban while getting billions of dollars in aid from the U.S., India may be left with little option beyond intervention in Afghanistan, to prevent a Taliban takeover in Kabul

The years ahead ought to herald an 'Obamadawn' in India-U.S. relations, provided the sorry legacy of the Clinton period is not repeated by what seems a Clintonesque foreign policy team in the Obama administration. Hopefully, the increasing linkage between Indian and U.S. universities, Indian and U.S. businesses and the Indian and U.S. military will ensure that after six decades of frost, the period ahead will witness what is a natural alliance, between the U.S., the country with the largest speakers of the English language in the world, and the country that has the next largest number, India.



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Uncertainty marks U.S.-Japan ties

By Koji Murata *Doshisha University*

Barack Obama's victory in the U.S. Presidential election was widely and warmly welcomed by the international community. Japan was no exception.

Some Japanese commentators and decision makers have some concerns, however, that a Democratic administration may be protectionist and pro-China. As a matter of fact, while Mike Mansfield, former U.S. Ambassador to Tokyo, once called the U.S.-Japan relationship the most important bilateral relationship in the world, during her campaign, Hillary Clinton, former Democratic Presidential candidate and next Secretary of State, clearly said that the Sino-U.S. relationship was the most important one, which is probably true.

The Yomiuri Shimbun, the largest newspaper in Japan noted in its editorial on November 6th that there was a concern of rising protectionism in the United States and that Mr. Obama had not yet personally mentioned the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Similarly, The Sankei Shimbun, a more conservative paper, in the same day's editorial, urged the incoming U.S. administration not to fall into the temptation of protectionism.

While these concerns and comments are mainly based on the experiences of the Clinton years and are no longer valid, there may be some psychological distance between Japanese policy elites and intellectuals, and U.S. Democratic administrations. A former senior Clinton official told me that Japan was considered to be a "Red State" for many Democratic foreign policy specialists. Tokyo and Washington should do their best to shorten this psychological distance.

In practice, the U.S.-Japan alliance is faced with various tasks and challenges.

First, there seems to be a delay in U.S. military realignment in Japan. In particular, the transformation of Futenma Air base to the offshore Henoko area is an overdue piece of work. This mission was agreed upon between the two governments in 1996, during the Clinton years. The implementation

The U.S.-Japan alliance is faced with various difficult challenges. At the same time, however, it has opportunities for strengthening its ties over global issues such as on the environment, energy, and nuclear disarmament.

has been delayed mainly because of failed coordination between Tokyo and Okinawa. Those who were involved in this agreement in the Clinton administration will be back in the Obama Administration, and will be more frustrated by this issue.

Second, North Korea is an extremely difficult and sensitive topic for the U.S.-Japan alliance. In October 2008, President George W. Bush, who once cited North Korea as one of the “axis of evil,” lifted economic sanctions on it as a terrorist supporting nation. This decision also was welcomed by Barack Obama. For Japan, North Korea poses three challenges: nuclear weapons, missiles, and abduction issues. While North Korean development of nuclear weapons is a common concern for Japan and the United States, the abduction [of Japanese by North Korean agents] issue is very sensitive, mainly on the Japanese side. If the Obama administration further promotes negotiations with North Korea over nuclear issues, Japanese may feel that we are going to be abandoned by the United States over the abduction issue.

According to a Yomiuri-Gallup joint opinion survey in November 2008, while 77 % of American respondents consider the U.S.-Japan alliance to be useful, only 60 % of Japanese respondents say so, decreasing 5 points compared to last year's survey. Also, while about 40 % of American respondents believe that U.S.-Japan relations in the future will become better, only 25.7 % of Japanese respondents did. One of the major reasons why Japanese are now more pessimistic about the U.S.-Japan alliance than the Americans may be the U.S. policy shift on North Korea.

Although the two countries need more policy coordination over North Korean issues, Japanese political leadership must make clear what is the definition of a resolution of the abduction issue, and what kind of resources and strategy we have for achieving a solution. Otherwise, the abduction issues will become another Northern Territories issue—a deadlock under which no one has pragmatic imagination, strategies, and solutions. I am afraid that the abduction issues may have already reached the Pareto optimum. Under the current situation, all

kinds of sentiments including patriotic, humanitarian, anti-Chinese, anti-American as well as anti-North Korean are satisfied with the condemnation of the abduction issue. As a consequence, in order to maintain this balance, no one really wants a pragmatic solution. If it is true, political leadership must definitely overcome this nightmare.

Third, the Obama Administration will more and more focus on Afghanistan, which may be more dangerous than Iraq. While it may consider dispatching helicopters and transport planes for rehabilitating Afghanistan, due to Constitutional and domestic political constraints, so far, Tokyo cannot send any troops there. Thus, financial assistance is, so far, the only way for Japan to contribute to the peace and security in Afghanistan. This will be frustrating for both the Americans and the Japanese. For, the Japanese may feel entrapped in the U.S. global strategy.

Aside from a policy judgment over Afghanistan, however, Tokyo must proactively reexamine Japan's international contributions as a whole. The number

of Self-Defense Forces (SDFs) personnel all over the world under U.N. Peace-Keeping Operations (PKO) is only about 40. That of Chinese armed forces, including engineering forces, is more than 10,000. Also, the Chinese government recently announced it was dispatching its navy to the Indian Ocean for anti-piracy activities. Even in terms of Official Development Aid (ODA), Japan, who was the top donor in the early 1990s, is just the fifth largest donor country in the world. Unfortunately, the Japanese ODA budget is getting tighter. Under these conditions, it is extremely difficult for Japan to obtain permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council. Tokyo should not forget that the G-8 Summit is going to be expanded to the G-20 Summit, which includes China. As mentioned above, the U.S.-Japan alliance is faced with various difficult challenges. At the same time, however, it has opportunities for strengthening its ties over global issues such as on the environment, energy, and nuclear disarmament.

In particular, future U.S. initiative in promoting substantial nuclear disarmament among nuclear powers will be more than welcomed by Japan. Such action will help stabilize the U.S.-Russian strategic relations and East Asian security environment, and increase international legitimacy and pressures for asking Iran and North Korea not to develop nuclear weapons.



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As Martin Luther King said in 1963, “I have a dream.” In September 2008, U.S. Speaker of House Nancy Pelosi visited Hiroshima to attend the G-8 Speakers of House meeting. Why not President Obama next? If he delivers an eloquent policy speech, as he usually does, for promoting nuclear disarmament in Hiroshima, it would certainly provide great moral power to American diplomacy and strengthen U.S.-Japan relations further.

So, we have various opportunities as well as challenges for our future relations. The fundamental problem lies in fragile Japanese domestic politics, however. “Yes, we can”—Can we really say so for changing Japanese politics? That is the problem.



U.S. policy on North Korea and U.S. relations in Northeast Asia

By Gilbert Rozman *Princeton University*

Recent signs suggest that North Korea will test the new Obama Administration with tough demands and readiness to hunker down in almost complete isolation, relying on nuclear weapons and missile development as part of its widening threat capacity.

Despite the Bush administration's decision to remove the North from the list of terror-sponsoring states, the Six-Party Talks in December 2008 reached an impasse, leaving in doubt the completion of the delayed phase two of the February 2007 Joint Agreement. The North is ratcheting up pressure on South Korea with the prospect of severing all ties—diplomatic, tourist, and industrial park—built up over a decade. It is warning Japan of dire consequences should a decision be taken to make economic sanctions even more comprehensive. As the world economy slumps, the North's exports to China concentrated on natural resources are declining sharply, affecting imports too. While rumors swirl of Kim Jong-il's slow recovery from a stroke, tensions with this pariah state are intensifying.

While many worry that Obama's first big security test could come elsewhere, North Korea seems intent to up the stakes quickly with belligerent rhetoric and actions that allow little time for deliberating on a broad strategy.

As Obama was still forming his team of officials, he received two types of advice. One, premised on the much misunderstood comment about his willingness to meet with the most demonic world leaders, optimistically appealed to him to make a more attractive offer to the North Korean leadership building on the progress

achieved by Chris Hill and look forward to robust negotiations in 2009 even if few expect signs of denuclearization in the near future.

The other, consistent with a warning by Joe Biden during the campaign that Obama could expect to be seriously tested in his first months, urged Obama not to let himself appear weak as the North whittled away at the oral understanding on what kind of verification had been approved in bilateral talks with the United States. Both types of advice center too narrowly on what the United States is likely to accomplish on its own in difficult bilateral meetings rather than pointing to the importance of the Six-Party Talks and attendant two-way diplomacy with each of the “Other Four” in managing the North.

South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia all consider themselves well entitled to have a major say on policies involving North Korea. Upset at unilateralism when Bush placed the country in the “axis of evil” in January 2002 and again when he voided the Agreed Framework in October, each feared that U.S. behavior could endanger the region. Yet, in 2007-08 when Chris Hill’s direct negotiations with the North produced a series of agreements, many suspected that U.S. preoccupation with commitments elsewhere led it after the North’s nuclear test to tolerate the North’s possession of some weapons of mass destruction despite their destabilizing

impact on the region. These states are within range of the North’s destructive arsenal. Over time they have bankrolled the North’s economy through trade, assistance, and remissions. However much Americans may be distracted by challenges in other regions, these countries (excepting Russia) see a clash involving North Korea as the foremost security challenge they face. Given this situation, and the lack of meaningful sanctions the U.S. could impose, a multilateral approach is needed.

Obama should upgrade the existing 5 + 1 strategy with the appointment of a super presidential envoy committed to intense consultations and ready to put dismantling of the North’s nuclear assets in the broad context of the five working groups already established. The envoy must first coordinate with Seoul and Tokyo, avoiding saber-rattling that would alarm the former or disengagement that would heighten the latter’s sense of vulnerability. Second, the envoy should reassure Beijing and Moscow of U.S. readiness to reward Pyongyang in all the ways already identified by Chris Hill, while also alerting them to intensified expectations to apply pressure at each stage when it balks at “action-for-action” agreements indicative of a true commitment to denuclearization. Sino-U.S. ties have improved since 2003 through coordination on North Korea, but the biggest test is likely to come soon in dealing with the North’s attempts to

extract maximum economic benefits in drawn-out negotiations without clarifying its readiness to dismantle all of its facilities and to give up all of its nuclear assets.

While many worry that Obama's first big security test could come elsewhere, North Korea seems intent to up the stakes quickly with belligerent rhetoric and actions that allow little time for deliberating on a broad strategy. It is unlikely that its demands will be acceptable. Two types of multilateral responses may become the focus for U.S. policymakers.

First is to test China's seriousness about being a "responsible stakeholder" and sustaining the momentum in bilateral ties achieved in recent years by applying real pressure, in proportion to the North's provocations, to get it to dismantle and abandon its nuclear assets. At the same time, Obama will have to test Russia's intentions to see if it intends to be helpful on this matter at the same time as Russia is also tested on Iran's nuclear program. These tests may set the tone for U.S. relations with each of these states during Obama's presidency.

Second is to determine how far Japan, racked by political divisions in a critical election year, is prepared to transform itself into a true military ally of the United States in the face of an imminent threat. Given [South Korean President] Lee Myung-bak's moves to consolidate

his conservative leadership and the U.S. alliance and his eagerness to host [Japanese Prime Minister] Aso Taro prior to Obama's inauguration, the time may be ripe to solidify a three-way alliance in the face of the North's belligerence to all of these states. Even should there be an early agreement between Washington and Pyongyang that allows the second phase of the Joint Agreement to be completed, a breakdown may follow later in 2009 that would similarly test U.S. ties to the most suspicious great powers and to recently doubtful allies as well. With no clarity on how to proceed in case of trouble, all of the states in Northeast Asia may soon have to make difficult decisions in response to U.S. leadership.



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Perception, reality in Pakistan-U.S. relations

By Samina Yasmeen *Centre for Muslim States and Societies*

U.S.-Pakistan relations exist as much in the realm of perceptions as that of reality. Events and interactions between the two states are perceived, interpreted and assigned meanings by Pakistanis. These meanings are then validated and revalidated with every subsequent interaction between them with the purpose of developing an image of the United States. These perceptions and portrayals range from the U.S. being a reliable, conditionally reliable, to being a completely unreliable patron that is either willingly or inadvertently creating conditions for the ‘balkanization’ of Pakistan. Differing notions of Islamic identity provide another prism through which the U.S. identity is perceived and constructed; Washington is often portrayed as aligned to Zionists and Hindus in a well-orchestrated and designed strategy aimed at undermining the only Muslim nuclear state, Pakistan.

The voracity of these views has increased since 2001 when Pakistan joined the U.S.-led war on terror. The predominant view has swung towards the unreliable end of

the spectrum. This is no longer restricted to religious, right wing or uneducated sections of Pakistani society: even educated and liberal Pakistanis from both middle and upper economic classes appear to entertain such notions about the United States.

The situation can be directly ascribed to policies pursued by the Bush administration in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001.

Pakistan was coaxed into becoming a frontline state in the Bush administration’s War on Terror. Pakistan’s geographical proximity to Afghanistan, its links with the Taliban regime since its inception, and realization of possible costs of non-compliance bound Washington and Islamabad into a close working relationship. Identified as a major Non-NATO ally, Islamabad received more than \$10 billion in military and economic assistance from the Bush Administration. The uni-dimensional commitment to the War on Terror, however, was pursued without due reference to the need for introducing real democracy in Pakistan—the second-largest Muslim state with a population of more than 140 million people.

Open, strong support for democratic institutions and practices combined with accountability in Pakistan would gradually build the necessary conditions for a strong U.S.-Pakistan relationship in the long term.

Washington avoided any overt criticism of domestic policies pursued by the Musharraf regime. Stability of a military regime was considered more important than the dictates of fairness and justice in Pakistan. The attitude was apparent during the manoeuvred elections of 2002, and the killing of a Baloch leader, Sardar Akbar Bugti in 2005. But it was most obvious during the Judicial crisis of 2007: while lawyers and the media in Pakistan struggled against President Musharraf's 'dismissal' of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in March and the imposition of Emergency in November 2007, the Bush administration remained silent at these unconstitutional actions. Its active involvement in designing an arrangement between President Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto also reflected a preference for stability at the expense of real democracy. That these steps were taken while the Bush administration talked of the need for democracy has created an image in Pakistan—both among the

ordinary masses and large sections of intelligentsia—that the United States is not interested in facilitating the emergence of real democracy in their country.

The tendency to treat Pakistan simultaneously as an ally and a target of the War on Terror has also contributed to rampant anti-Americanism in Pakistan. The Bush administration shifted attention away from Afghanistan towards Iraq soon after the defeat of the Taliban regime. This created the space for Islamic militants and Taliban to establish their influence in Pakistan. Supported by factions within the intelligence community and groups in other government agencies, these militants have posed a threat to Pakistan as much as the neighboring states.

The inability of the Bush administration to fathom the dynamics that have created such a negative situation has resulted in an erroneous policy of launching often-undeclared attacks on the Pakistani tribal areas. The targeting is paralleled by a cooperative arrangement with the Pakistan government as a participant in the war on terror. Such inherently contradictory policy has reinforced the ability of Islamic militants to authenticate their thesis of a Christian-Zionist-Hindu conspiracy against Muslim Pakistan. Militant Islamic groups have gained support in Pakistan, which experienced a sudden upsurge in suicide bombings in

2007 and 2008. The duality of being an ally and a target has also disillusioned the educated elite: there are increasing references to a 'Grand American design' to break up Pakistan. As these ideas circulate among civil society, they are likely to contribute to more imagined or real reasons for anti-Americanism in Pakistan.

The Obama administration needs to fully appreciate the relevance of this perceptual context in order to bring stability to the region, and Pakistan. Open, strong support for democratic institutions and practices combined with accountability in Pakistan would gradually build the necessary conditions for a strong U.S.-Pakistan relationship in the long term. Ensuring the independence of the judiciary in Pakistan remains an essential precondition for reducing and removing the democratic deficit in Pakistan. The Obama administration would need to focus on providing training programmes and institutional support to improve the judicial system in Pakistan. In addition to creating space in which timely and impartial justice could be provided for ordinary citizens, a strong and independent judicial system may also reassure foreign investors to invest in Pakistan. At a crucial juncture in history, when its economy is suffering due to energy, water and food shortages, this kind of investment is needed if Pakistan is to climb out of its current downward spiral.

The agenda of countering militancy and stabilizing Afghanistan also requires a more nuanced approach: instead of undertaking aerial attacks on Pakistani territory, a regional strategy needs to be devised where all parties, including India, are engaged as equal partners. Given the history of regional conflicts and the role of state and non-state actors in the dynamics, it will not be easy to devise and manage a regional approach. But its salience cannot be ignored. This, in turn, necessitates a workable solution to the Kashmir issue without falling hostage to attempts by those determined to undermine rapprochement in the region. The Obama administration would need to establish its credentials as a genuine and fair facilitator in South Asia. This would extend to not supporting any notion of surgical strikes on Pakistan to take revenge for Mumbai attacks. Not only would the attacks be counterproductive but they would be more dangerous in the long term for the United States and its emerging global partner, India.



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Understanding Russia

By Dr. Klaus Segbers [Center for Global Politics](#)

It is easy to get U.S.-Russian relations over the last 20 or so years wrong. There is a lot of confusion in the public discourse. While there is less emotion than during the Cold War, there still are stereotypes, not always so different from previous times.

You may make unitary actor assumptions and subscribe to realist concepts. In this case, you may gain a rather coherent picture but miss an ever more complex, fragmented reality. Alternatively, you may try liberal/plural, domestic structures or constructivist approaches, and end up with over-complex sets of variables. So this is not a decision you would like to make lightly.

In any case, we are facing a very new structure of global politics (formerly: international relations). The East-West conflict and the Cold War are gone, and with them the bipolar structure of international relations has disappeared. Instead, we have a multitude of actors, non-state and state, and multilevel games. Also, sadly gone are the big narratives of explaining important “whys”. They have to be replaced by complementary

or competing smaller stories. Or, even worse, by “stumbling,” with the many small moves by different actors producing an outcome, but not adding up to intentional big-scale politics.

Against such a background of inconsistency, it would be surprising if U.S.-Russian relations would qualify as something more coherent. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations did not have a clear roadmap of handling the difficult Russian internal transformation. Also, there was no clear and coherent strategy for socializing and integrating Russia into a multipolar, complex world in a meaningful and constructive way. Scrapping the ABM treaty, extending NATO twice, not signing Kyoto, sabotaging the ICC treaty, and coalition building after 9/11 could all be debated on their respective own terms. But they did not betray any coherent strategy regarding the Russian Federation.

At the same time, Russian actors were so deeply involved with their difficult domestic business of institutional change, of watching roving bandits and converting them into stationary bandits,

that external affairs were second rate or even of lower importance. Basically, the international dimension was mostly a currency of domestic actors for infighting on the home front. There were often wild declarations (like in the case of NATO expansion); only to be dropped at the very moment the matter occurred. There was a brigade sent to Kosovo, without the apparent knowledge of the cabinet ministers in charge. There were volatile and inconsistent moves regarding the so-called near abroad. There were ill-conceived and unprofessional military operations in Chechnya and Georgia. And a successful bid for the winter Olympic Games in a summer resort.

Russian citizens, meanwhile, were engaged in other aspects of transnational relations: traveling, fueling money in and out of the country, sending kids abroad to acquire a meaningful education, and leading, for the first time in more than 70 years, a decent private life.

Personal, direct relations, particularly Clinton/Yeltsin and George W. Bush/Putin, may have contributed to some form of a minimal mutual official understanding. But there clearly was a deficit of strategy and structure.

It may be that both sides (complex “sides” to be sure) were not sufficiently aware of important aspects of change in the macro political global configuration. I will just name a few. The Westphalia system of an

international order resting solidly on the dominance of nation states is undergoing significant change, to put it mildly. Governments are being demoted, their impact on global politics is decreasing. Flows of capital (well, yes, look around), of content (both information and entertainment) and people (migration) are increasingly bypassing national governments. Investors find their ways around regulations, and no bright kid is scared or deterred by some blocked web pages.

In this new global disorder, Russians are, by and large, prepared to play a role. But it hardly will be a dominant one.

By another measure, the U.S. is in relative decline, China rising relatively, and Europe is also on the rise, but slowly. All this indicates a new, emerging global landscape. The Bush administration was rather muddling around and through this new global patchwork, rather than shaping it. Certainly, some policy moves had an impact—like the two wars, the anti-proliferation rhetoric and to a certain extent policy, the tendency to opt for “alliances of the willing” instead of working through existing institutions and organizations, and similar decisions or outcomes. But this outgoing administration is far from having implemented or even having shaped a new world order.

There were serious disagreements inside

this administration; there were competing mindsets and world views. The Bush government was mostly overburdened by simultaneous and competing challenges, from external wars and crises to domestic tasks such as hurricane Katrina. This kind of reading of the Bush term performance is not meant as a defense of it, but to make another point – politics in global times is not so much about failures of individuals and groups, not so much about getting something wrong (and they got a lot wrong), but it is about how to respond in a meaningful and not simply ad hoc way to ever more complex challenges.

There is no point in exaggerating the impact of the new U.S. administration on American-Russian relations. The Obama presidency will be buried in tackling domestic issues, plus two ongoing wars, plus China, plus natural disasters. As long as there is nothing dramatic, Russian relations will take a back seat. The new ABM to be located in Poland and the Czech Republic will not be deployed quickly. The inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO is on hold.

Chances are the ad hoc, piecemeal style of handling Russia may prevail in the Obama administration as well. And, in a way, why shouldn't it? Russia is busy internally, it has to reflect upon the effects of the global financial and economic crisis on its infrastructure.

Both the Clinton and Bush administrations did not have a clear roadmap of handling the difficult Russian internal transformation.

There is no easy recipe for proceeding with U.S.–Russian relations. An important point to start with is to accept that for most relevant global questions, Russia is still rather more part of the solution than of the problem. This is a view that should not just be held in narrow circles. It should be communicated to Moscow and beyond. Unless Russian decision makers get the feeling that they are being taken seriously, they will continue to behave in a way that over-accentuates this point. Only when Western actors and media accept Russia as an important part of the new global landscape can Russians be expected to behave in a constructive way, and to accept the obligations they actually have for stabilizing the global political and economic fabric.

This something in which Russian actors have to invest a lot of work themselves. There is paranoia, such as that “the West” is preparing a color revolution for Russia. There is, as always, the habit of developing conspiracy theories. Here there is a strong tendency to confuse effects produced by globalization with well-designed Western policy strategies. And there is the love of outdated and dysfunctional theories, like geopolitics, balance of power, an overestimation of “hard power” and heavy-handed diplomacy, and the like.

If this sounds like we are in need of a lot of symbolic politics, it sounds about right. What is needed in addition to a better climate are two or three concrete successes, such as on European security (ABM, conventional forces), international financial organizations (Russia may have to turn to them again, a move very much detested in Moscow), or a joint new policy toward Iran. We will see if a new administration in Washington that can afford a new and unbiased look at global issues will be ready to re-engage with a difficult Russia.



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"[Obama's] offer to speak with no pre-conditions with Iran's leadership is a positive move. It will make it easier for the U.S. to build international consensus, and to isolate right wing Iranians who have tried to demonize the U.S. as an arrogant power who is not interested in negotiations."

—Meir Javedanfar

Regional issues

Africa

Latin America

Asia

Middle East

Bush's legacy and Obama's Africa challenge

By Gerald LeMelle *Africa Action*

President-elect Barack Obama faces the enormous challenge of reestablishing the United States' standing around the world. The global outpouring of joy over Obama's victory serves as testament to George W. Bush's hugely unpopular foreign policy. By the time the Bush administration started to adjust its highly ideological "cowboy in the saddle" approach to international relations, the damage had already been done.

Many argue that Africa represents President Bush's greatest foreign policy success. Indeed, Bush did invest more time and money in Africa than any other U.S. President. His most recognized positive investment is the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which now totals \$63 billion in pledges from 2003 to 2013. Aimed to fight HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, the Global AIDS Initiative was a far from perfect response to activist pressure, with funding for HIV prevention programming is limited according to ideology and too much reliance on major pharmaceutical companies rather than cheaper generic drug manufacturers. In spite of these

weaknesses, PEPFAR represents the first serious attempt by the U.S. to make a dent in Africa's AIDS pandemic. It offers a strong platform to build on for future U.S. global health policy.

Bush's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) proposed a fresh look at the way American aid was distributed to the world's poorest countries. To be eligible for MCC grants, nations must demonstrate a commitment to policies that promote political and economic freedom, investments in education and health, the sustainable use of natural resources, control of corruption, and respect for civil liberties and the rule of law. The use of economic indicators like inflation rates and trade liberalization as calculated by the Heritage Foundation is hardly innovative. However, tying assistance to "Ruling Justly" and "Investing in People" is a step in the right direction, for a continent frustrated by years of donors ignoring corruption and misuse of development assistance funds.

Still, development is not the only aspect of George Bush's Africa policy. Bush will be remembered across the continent not

Unfortunately, the reality facing Obama is that overarching U.S. strategic interests in Africa continue to be defined by free market ideologues rather than civil society.

just for PEPFAR, but also for his unilateral approach to conflict. While the United Nations is a flawed institution, it is one that African countries have enjoyed a strong relationship with for 50 years. Cutting funding for U.N. peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere simply marginalizes the U.N to the detriment of people suffering on the ground.

He will be remembered for suspiciously bringing his Global War on Terror to all of Africa despite little evidence of terrorist cells. Under Bush, the U.S. worked with undemocratic leaders like Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and accused genocidaires like Abdallah Gosh, the head of the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service.

Bush will be remembered for his disastrously miscalculated response to Somalia. Counter terrorism operations in the Horn of Africa and U.S. support for Ethiopia's 2006 invasion of Somalia have contributed to a massive humanitarian crisis and energized a new

generation of anti-American youth in the horn of Africa.

He will be remembered as the man who brought the Joint Unified Military Command for Africa or AFRICOM. Since 2001, the U.S. military budget for Africa has gone up by over 1000%. In February 2007, Bush announced the creation of AFRICOM without any consultation with African governments. There were protests from many African leaders, civil society groups and a general populace fed up with military solutions. While the stated mission of AFRICOM has undergone several revisions, there has been no indication that the U.S. will reconsider.

Bush will also be remembered for his unwavering support for the interests of U.S. oil companies. Bush is an oilman and for decades the oil industry has benefited very few Africans. Nicholas Shaxson's "The Dirty Politics of African Oil" suggests that relations in oil producing states are defined by who will protect the oil companies. So the U.S. is now aligned with "good friends" like

Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea and Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of Angola.

Upon looking critically at Bush's legacy, his first commitment was clearly to secure access to Africa's resources, especially oil, by any means necessary. This has never, and will never, sit well with the people of Africa.

During his campaign, President-elect Obama articulated some creative ideas to address agriculture, health, education, natural resource management, and support for African civil society. He committed to prioritizing peace for Darfur and all Sudan, "recalibrating" the U.S. approach in Somalia and providing significantly more support for U.N. peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). All these issues should remain priorities despite the financial challenges Obama faces.

Unfortunately, the reality facing Obama is that overarching U.S. strategic interests in Africa continue to be defined by free market ideologues rather than civil society. Whether it was the cotton planters, the cold warriors, gold, diamond and other metal distributors or the oil companies, profits of U.S. multinationals and military alliances to protect them have long outweighed the impacts of U.S. policies on the African people. This power structure engenders a flawed, short-term approach to development. U.S.-Africa policies, including

humanitarian assistance, are more often than not programs done to Africa rather than for it or with its people. So far, the free market approach to development has yielded 87% of sub-Saharan Africans making \$2 or less a day, 30% to 40% unemployment rates, a major food crisis, and worsening conflicts across the continent. Meanwhile unregulated private banks jealously guard the estimated \$700 to \$800 billion dollars illegally siphoned out of Africa.

To succeed in addressing the root cause of conflict in Africa—poverty—Obama must break the stranglehold of business interests on U.S.-Africa relations and abandon the unilateral militarism embodied by AFRICOM. He should expand debt cancellation and develop a responsible system for global financing for development, reform the World Bank and IMF, promote fair trade policies and multilateral conflict resolution and prevention mechanisms. He must also establish human rights as a clear and consistent pillar of our foreign policy. The failure to honestly and meaningfully address poverty will lead to more violence and failed states.

Gerald LeMelle is the executive director of Africa Action.



From the Cowboy to the multicultural summit: Bush, Obama and Latin America from a Peruvian perspective

By Alvaro Henzler *Consultant*

During his campaign in 2000, Bush's foreign policy platform included support for a stronger economic and political relationship with Latin America, especially Mexico. Indeed, Mexico was the first trip that the new President George W. Bush made abroad, breaking the U.S. Presidential tradition of visiting first the other neighbor: Canada. The former neighbor governors, Fox and Bush, named the visit the 'Cowboy Summit'. The Republican Administration began with priorities focusing on the internal agenda and with a foreign policy where Latin America played a relevant role. However, during the last 8 years and from the very beginning, the U.S. faced unexpected and complex situations such as 9/11 and the current economic crisis that forced President Bush to redefine priorities.

During these years, the bilateral relationships between the U.S. and the countries from the region had a mix of developments. Mexico and Central America were mainly frustrated with the failure of comprehensive immigration

reform. Countries such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua reunited forces to build a hemispheric axis against U.S. values and practices. Brazil and Chile practiced a pragmatic approach signing deals beyond a traditional democracy and trade focus: Brazil signed a MOU related to renewal energy and Chile fostered a program for educational opportunities in the U.S. Peru, Colombia and Panama worked for obtaining U.S. Free Trade Agreements.

The case of Peru is particularly relevant. The last eight years constituted a period of great engagement and of exponential improvement in the relationship between the U.S. and Peru. In the past decades, the U.S.-Peru relationship has been focused mainly on a one-way trade preference program and on drugs cooperation. In late December 2007, after years of negotiations, the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement, which incorporated for the first time ever environmental and labor provisions to comply with and enforce international standards, was approved by the U.S. Congress and promulgated by President Bush.

This FTA represents a milestone in the bilateral relationship. Since then, Peru has been upgrading its relationship with the U.S. in a comprehensive manner. In only one year, Peru and the U.S. successfully worked on a broader alliance that included development, energy, environment and military topics. The Millennium Challenge Corporation approved a \$36M-threshold program for Peru. Peru and the U.S. signed a memorandum to advance cooperation in renewable energy. The U.S. Treasury and Peruvian Finance Ministry signed a \$25 million Debt-for-Nature Agreement to Conserve Peru's Tropical Forests. Finally, the U.S. Congress approved the "Naval Vessel Transfer Act of 2008", which covers cooperation between three U.S. allies: Pakistan, Chile and Peru.

From now on, what should we expect from the new Obama Administration in terms of its relationship with Latin America? In the near future, Obama must face an increasingly complex international panorama regarding the geopolitics situation in the Middle East and Russia and the handling of claims for more power from China and India as global emerging economies. Moreover, the new U.S. administration must face the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. In that context, Latin America will not be a priority for the new administration, and even could have less attention than during the Bush

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years. However, there is a window of opportunity for real change beyond the traditional agenda of trade, migration and drugs.

Obama could foster a change in U.S. style and attitudes in how to approach Latin America. In a presidential campaign speech at Miami, President Obama drew up two general principles: "in the 21st century, we cannot treat Latin America and the Caribbean as a junior partner" and "we will pursue aggressive, principled, and sustained diplomacy in the Americas from Day One". The first test for this new sort of style would be Cuba. In his Miami speech he mentioned more than 50 times different names of countries from the

region. Almost 50% of the times were related to Cuba. And the moment could not be better. In early 2009, the Castro brothers will celebrate 50 years of the Cuban Revolution. One president, Fidel Castro, has led Cuba during a period of time in which ten different presidents led the United States. Obama could be an agent of change in promoting freedom on the island and thus reengaging with the region, at a moment when the Latin American population qualified President Bush as one of the worst leaders in the Western Hemisphere, only above Daniel Ortega from Nicaragua.

Obama could also introduce a new agenda for development focusing on energy and education. In the next years, the U.S. will promote globally clean and renewable energy and sustainable management of the environment.

Moreover, President-Elect Barack Obama stated during his campaign his desire to launch an “Energy Partnership for the Americas”. Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru are the top 5 in the world as countries with the most mega-diversity. In addition, the Brazilian and Peruvian Amazon geographic area is one of the biggest and richest forests in the globe. In the Western Hemisphere, Peru, Chile and the U.S. are the most important sources of minerals. Uruguay, Bolivia and Colombia are in the top 10 in terms of quantity of freshwater worldwide. Finally, the Western Hemisphere, lead by Brazil, today produces more than 80% of biofuels.

Obama understands the hemispheric inequality problem. He stated: “But every day, all across the Americas, there is a struggle...against the deadly threat of hunger and thirst, disease and despair. That is not a future that we have to accept...”

We can do better. We must do better”. Despite the fact that America is passing through a severe economic downturn and complex military wars, it has a more transcendent force: its innovation and educational soft power. U.S. laboratories will remain as the main source of inventions in the world. U.S. universities will remain the most prestigious ones, with the best professors worldwide.

The U.S. must promote human capital and capacity building programs for young leaders, small business, local communities and regional governments in the region. The U.S. could extend the Peace Corps and Fulbright scholarships. For instance, the Chilean case could be an example. The United States and Chile signed recently a 10-year cooperation program, the “Equal Opportunity Scholarships”, which will train annually 100 Chilean Ph.D. in science, technology, environment and public health at 50 prestige U.S. universities, 100 Ph.D. per year in science, technology, environment and public health.

Intergenerational political change and groundbreaking development issues could be a contagious trend that passes from the U.S. to Latin America. Both

must jointly face global challenges. Both share several values. And for the first time in history, the multiculturalism that characterizes people from Mexico to Argentina is personal to the new U.S. President. The Summit of the Americas at Trinidad y Tobago in April is a window of opportunity for the kind of change that the Americas deserve.



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Views on U.S.-Latin America relations

By Mateo Paz-Soldan *DTB Associates*

Many challenges await the U.S. in Latin America as President-elect Obama takes over the presidential reins on January 20. And, while expectations in Latin America for improved relations are high, they are also tempered by previous disappointments with incoming U.S. administrations and the awareness that the U.S. must first get “its own house in order” before it can credibly engage with the region on issues of mutual concern. Among the top contenders are: drug trafficking and organized crime, which are undermining the democratic and institutional stability of the region and are increasingly spilling over the U.S. border; a souring global economy that is likely to strengthen populist governments and leaders; the approval of pending free trade agreements which may require a prior reformulation of the U.S. trade agenda; and, finally, long overdue immigration/migratory labor reform which will probably have to await for a significant improvement of the U.S. economy.

More significantly, though, from a global

perspective, Latin America has matured, gained a new sense of self-awareness, and is actively engaging the rest of the globe on its own terms. The time when the U.S. could consolidate its position in the Western Hemisphere under a U.S.-led framework or community of nations appears to have passed. While the U.S. remains a key player and partner to most of the countries in the region, China, Russia, the EU, and the rising powers of the Middle East and Asia have made important commercial and political inroads in the past eight years.

Within the region, Brazil has positioned itself as South America’s primary interlocutor in the emerging multipolar global stage. Brazilian initiatives such as the creation of UNASUR (the South American Community of Nations), its pragmatic leadership within Mercosur and in the Doha Round of WTO negotiations, and the recently hosted Summit of Latin American and the Caribbean nations, point to a broader objective: securing its own backyard. South America’s abundant mineral, energy, and water resources; its vast reserves of carbon sequestering,

oxygen producing rain forests; its relatively low population density, and its extensive arable lands, make it likely to emerge as a key source of energy, a natural resource storehouse, and a breadbasket for the rapidly expanding populations and economies of Asia and the Middle East. South America, under Brazilian leadership, should therefore be well positioned to play a more prominent role in global affairs in coming decades.

Other countries in the region, motivated by different objectives, have also displayed a remarkable level of activity on the global stage. The Pacific Basin countries of Mexico, Chile, Peru, and Colombia, have aggressively pursued trade agreements with the Far East, as well as with EU, the EFTA, and Canada. Symbolic of the times, China has surpassed the U.S. as Chile's largest foreign market and through a recently concluded FTA may soon occupy the same place in Peru. Venezuela, for its part, has sought to counter perceived U.S. influence by fostering political and military ties to strategic rivals such as China, Russia, and Iran. In Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andes, Venezuela has increasingly leveraged its oil-wealth through initiatives such as Petrocaribe and ALBA (the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas) to become a significant challenge to U.S. interests, and has already had a decisive influence in the ongoing Cuban transition.

U.S.-Latin America relations appeared to be headed for an auspicious era shortly after the election of President Bush, who as former governor of Texas—a border state hosting a sizable Hispanic population—had made clear his comfort with Latin American culture, his affinity for strengthening ties with Mexico and the rest of the region, and his interest in seeking greater integration through trade and immigration reform. The 9/11 attacks largely derailed this agenda and reoriented U.S. attentions externally towards the “war on terrorism” in the Middle East and domestically towards securing the U.S. “homeland.” U.S. prestige and leadership in Latin America have suffered greatly in the intervening

It will be critical to the success of the Obama presidency in Latin America to acknowledge the new regional realities and treat Latin American nations as true partners.

years to be capped in the last months of the Bush presidency by the U.S. economic debacle.

Nonetheless, significant advances were made in specific areas during the Bush years. Free trade agreements were negotiated with 10 Latin American countries and with the exception of two—Colombia and Panama—were approved by the U.S. Congress; continued economic and military support to Colombia through Plan Colombia succeeded in stabilizing that country and reversing its descent into the status of a failed state; investment and migratory flows in both directions increased substantially; and important understandings were reached with regional powers Brazil and Mexico in a number of areas including energy and regional security matters.

It will be critical to the success of the Obama presidency in Latin America to acknowledge the new regional realities and treat Latin American nations as true partners, while building on the positive aspects of the Bush legacy. The common bonds among the Americas are far stronger than they are with other parts of the globe and should provide fertile ground for progress on areas of shared interest such as trade and immigration, while jointly tackling the mutual challenges facing the nations of this hemisphere.



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The changing focus of U.S. policy

By Kavi Chongkittavorn *The Nation*

As the first black U.S. president, President Barack Obama has to manage rising expectations concerning what he can and cannot do in U.S. policies towards Asia. For the region, views are varied on what is in store with Obama's diplomacy.

Obviously, Obama has made clear that China would remain the center of its Asian policy due to the middle kingdom's growing political and economic clout. As China learns to assume an international role beyond its immediate neighbor, which used to be the main focus, the U.S. can work closely together with China in shaping an international environment conducive to conflict resolution and management.

With the new U.S. leadership, China understands the new opportunity to increase mutual trust to face common international challenges. The first two years will be crucial for Obama's diplomacy. His diplomatic portfolio will be tested. China will be the key determinant in the success or failure of the U.S. policy worldwide, in particular in Asia. Therefore, mutual cooperation in

the issues related to North Korea, nuclear proliferation in Iran and Pakistan, climate change and Afghanistan will be pivotal.

With closer U.S.-China relations, U.S. traditional allies such as Japan, Korea and Australia, and to a lesser extent, Thailand and Philippines, will feel jittery in assuming subsidiary roles. Throughout the post World War II, the U.S.-Japan security alliance has served as the backbone of Washington's global strategy, enabling the countries in the region to focus on economic development and bring about impressive economic growth.

After the successful Olympic Games, China continues to rise and its perceived international roles in the U.N. and positions on key international issues are under close scrutiny. In the past two decades, China's diplomatic horizon has expanded meteorically covering the four corners of the world. On certain issues, China's role and international responsibility is still found wanting, especially in the various African conflicts and humanitarian disasters. Closer to home, the situation in Burma has haunted Chinese

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foreign policymakers concerning their perceived influence and limitations.

The new U.S. administration's biggest challenge would be its own perception of Asia--whether Obama perceives China's role as complement to its global strategy or as a spoiler. His preference for dialogue and negotiations provides fertile grounds for avoidance the use of force and pave the way for better and closer ties with China. Obviously, trade conflict, violations of human rights and freedom of expression-related issues will

feature in sporadically in the bilateral matters. Both sides have to manage their relations to avoid serious ruptures or breaking points.

The Asian region will benefit hugely from U.S.-China collaboration rather than confrontation. Stable and predictable U.S.-China ties would encourage and accelerate regional cooperation in all aspects, especially in security and defense matters. The advisors on Asian affairs of the Obama administration have recommended U.S. ascension to the non-aggression pact, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and join in the East Asian Summit. If these plans are realized, the U.S. position in the overall Asian scheme of things would be even firmer. Washington's voluntary acknowledgement of regional codes of conduct definitely will boost ASEAN's overall confidence of the U.S. and pave the way for deeper and broader collaborative efforts in the future.

New focus on China by the Obama administration will certainly impact U.S.-Japan relations. While the longstanding friendship remains crucial, their net value could not be overstated. For one thing, the five-decade old security partners have a narrow focus which does not take into consideration the rise of China and its growing influence. With mounting domestic issues and political turmoil, Japan's international role will be rather

limited and inevitably assume a subordinate role to China.

This new paradigm will impact on Japan's diplomatic confidence and outlook. In years to come, Tokyo needs to redefine its foreign policy objectives and work out a pro-active approach that will augment regional stability. With more prudent policies, Japan can and will be able to craft new diplomatic initiatives.

As such, Japan will have a new maneuverability going beyond the U.S.-Japan defense pact. From the regional point of view, Japan's post war diplomacy has been viewed as part and parcel of U.S. global strategic blueprints. From the early 1990's, Japan's diplomacy has indeed changed dramatically with new initiatives that allowed Japan to contribute more to peacekeeping and humanitarian activities in conflicting zones beyond the scope of the U.S.-Japan alliance. Japan's role in the Cambodian conflict and East Timor portended the diplomatic potential and capacities of the region's most powerful economic giant when it was left to act independently.

In more ways than one, growing U.S.-China global partnership will encourage Japan to reinvent its policy towards Asia. The revival of the Fukuda Doctrine after a lapse of three decade could serve as a new platform for Japan's proactive diplomacy in this part of the world. Despite his brief period in power, former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda left a legacy for Japan's diplomacy in two areas. First of all, he established a foundation for the establishment of stable Japan-China relations that is a beacon for peace and economic stability in the region. Secondly, like his father, Takeo Fukuda, he envisaged the bridging of economic gaps within the region as a prerequisite for closer all-around cooperation enhancing economic progress.

In years to come, Japan has to take the advantage of more predictable U.S.-China relations in constructing its independent policy, which will pave the ways for a more engaging Japan as a genuine regional partner.



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Bush's legacy, Obama's opportunity

By Meir Javedanfar and Ori Slonim

The definition of President George W. Bush's legacy can best be based upon his reaction to the September 11 attacks. Reeling from the shocks and the massive civilian casualties, he embarked upon an extensive military campaign. President Bush's stated goal was to eliminate the threat of terrorism, when first he underlined Afghanistan and Iraq as prime targets for this campaign. Bush's vision saw the replacement of Taliban and Saddam Hussein regimes with viable democratic regimes a key element in the war against terrorism. Both cases proved to be very cumbersome. President Bush relied on advice from right wing neo conservative officials who relied heavily on hard power and terminology. Within that school "Soft power", entailing help to rebuild social facilities and services was not as well planned and executed. In fact, according to a BBC Documentary, "No Plan, No Peace," the post war documentary shown on BBC World in mid-2005, reconstruction plans in Iraq were not even started until two weeks prior to the invasion of the country. The result of this strategy was that the U.S. won militarily in both countries, but not

the peace. The security situation in Iraq improved somewhat in 2006 after the massive "surge", however, the situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating.

Iran had an important role in Bush's war and it was tagged as a member in the "axis of evil" states. Excessive application of sticks has also meant that president Bush did not leave a positive legacy on his efforts to curtail Iran's nuclear program. There is no doubt that incentives and disincentives are needed in order to dissuade Iran from embarking on its controversial nuclear program. But, here again there was an over reliance on sticks. A prime example was shown during Ayatollah Khatami's term as president, during which Iran suspended Uranium enrichment. In return, Iran asked for an economic package from the EU, including spare parts for its airliners. However the U.S. refused the EU permission to acquire spare parts for Boeing aircraft which Iran operates. When Ahmadinejad came to power, he suspended enrichment of Uranium, and he used the inability of the EU to reciprocate as justification. Once he did that, the U.S. decided to change its mind and stated that if Iran suspends

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Uranium enrichment, this time the U.S. will provide Iran with spare parts. This incident provided an important lesson to the Iranian leadership when dealing with the Bush administration. It was understood that the only way to extract concessions from America is by being conservative and not reformist, such as Khatami. At the same time, boycotting of talks with Iran provided limited results. U.S. unilateral action in boycotting Iranian companies was useful. However, in terms of building coalitions, this created problems as unilateral policies hampered efforts to create international consensus.

BARACK OBAMA: NEW OPPORTUNITIES

What is important to note is that when it comes to the Middle East, Obama may not be able to dedicate the same amount of energy as President Bush, due to other priorities such as the economic crisis and India-Pakistan tensions. There is also the U.S. entanglement in Afghanistan where the situation is becoming worse.

However when it comes to Iran, Obama has so far announced policies including his intention to re-initiate direct talks between the two sides. His offer to speak with no pre-conditions with Iran's leadership is a positive move. It will make it easier for the U.S. to build international consensus, and to isolate right wing

Iranians who have tried to demonize the U.S. as an arrogant power who is not interested in negotiations. Even if such talks fail, it will be easier for the U.S. and the EU to isolate Iran. Furthermore, the offer of bigger carrots to Iran will strengthen the relationship between the people of Iran and the government of United States.

Another important initiative by the U.S. which may help America' position in the region is the expected increase in Soft Power activities. This includes the promised increase in U.S. budget to organizations such as the Peace Corps. The existence of such organizations will improve America's image. It will also become a competitor to countries such as Iran, who through the application of similar initiatives has managed to increase its influence in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Last but not least, increased U.S. involvement in the Arab Israeli peace negotiations will also be a positive factor. While America does not have the power to force both sides to make peace, increased U.S. incentives, such as Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ), where local goods are imported into U.S. tax and quota free, will push local economies in the right direction by creating jobs. This would be a crucial blow against extremist movements who use poverty as justification to recruit and kill.



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Barack Obama's South Asia challenge

By Harold A. Gould *University of Virginia*

Incumbent President Barack Obama has already taken a public position on Afghanistan and by implication the South Asia region in general.

During his candidacy, Mr. Obama made it clear that as President he intends to shift the strategic focus of America's war on terrorism from Iraq to Afghanistan. This new direction, he declares, will mean virtually doubling America's military presence in the Afghan theater of operations, and urging the participating NATO powers to increase their contributions to the cause as well. His reasoning is that this is where Osama bin Laden is hiding; where Al-Qaida is entrenched, where Mullah Omar and the Taliban have succeeded in creating an alternative terrorist state in the mountain fastness of the Hindu Kush. In his view, the Iraqi adventure was a strategic blunder based upon naive neoconservative political evangelism which he intends to terminate as expeditiously as possible so that American military power can be redeployed where the terrorist threat is most relevant.

Mr. Obama has made it clear that he

endorses the strategy, already in being, of selectively targeting terrorist formations that headquarter themselves in the tribal regions (FATA) that are ostensibly under Pakistani sovereignty although, in de facto terms, they are nothing of the kind; they are under the control of the Taliban and Al-Qaida 'Emirate' which Osama and Omar have established in the Hindu Kush. And to the degree that there is a Pakistani presence in the region, at the grass-roots level, at least, it is more as a sweetheart relationship with the jihadis than real political suzerainty. So much so, in fact, that Bruce Riedel, a noted political analyst on things South Asian, in a recent NYT interview about his latest book, "The Search for Al-Qaida," says that America was snookered by a savvy military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, who took the U.S. for billions of dollars, "even as [he] allowed Al-Qaida to regroup in Pakistan's tribal lands." Musharraf and his ISI cohorts, in short, was more an enabler than a foe of terrorist state formation in Waziristan!

Because the Pakistan government, even its recently installed democratically chosen regime, refuses to countenance

a working relationship with the United States that would enable American and UN forces to operate in conjunction with Pakistani forces inside the tribal area, where Bin Laden and Mullah Omar are successfully operating their jihadi quasi-state, the President-elect has been compelled to declare that he will condone surgical military strikes into Waziristan whenever Osama or Omar are actually sighted. This assertion has introduced an air of tension between the Zardari regime and the incoming Obama regime even before the latter has been officially installed. It does not bode well for future U.S.-Pakistan relations. A preview of what can go wrong has twice been supplied by the Pakistani regime where they have pointedly interdicted the Khyber supply line into Afghanistan, necessitating that the U.S. begin thinking about establishing an alternative supply route originating in the north via Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, Uzbekistan. In the words of Thom Shanker: "The plan is to open new paths through Central Asia [that] reflects an American-led effort to seek out a more reliable alternative to the route from Pakistan through the strategic Khyber Pass..." (NYT, December 30, 2008)

As the future unfolds, an important issue is going to be who in the last analysis has the President's ear on South Asian policy, especially as it pertains to that crucially important northwest quadrant of the Subcontinent where the jihadi quasi-state

holds sway up in the Hindu Kush. What is disquieting is that none of the persons identified as possible advisors to Mr. Obama appears to be outside the circle of who in the first place got America into the mess it is in, especially with regard to Pakistan.

Most if not all have been in one way or another associated with such outmoded and counterproductive policies as treating Pakistan as America's principal non-NATO Ally in the war on terrorism, which in fact meant condoning the political dominance of the Pakistani military at the expense of the evolution of democratic political institutions, in the name of short-run strategic convenience; then, when Musharraf was unfrocked anyway by the Pakistani people, and democratic elections were successfully held despite all the doubts, there has remained a chorus of policy-wonk detractors who have consistently denigrated this achievement; instead they intone the mantra that Pakistan is a "failed state" beyond political redemption; most think in terms of the circumstances which originally led to this state of affairs arising from the Cold War, the Soviet invasion and the rise of the Taliban in the aftermath.

Most of the potential advisors seem inclined to take a dim view of numerous changes that have been taking place in Pakistan which suggest that deeper processes of change are underway. There

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is the hint that some of the present political turmoil in Pakistan may actually be reflecting the stirrings of a new kind of political synthesis which is having a positive impact in terms of the kind of change that the civilized world hopes for. That is, the acceptance of pluralism not as political blasphemy which threatens the notion of a unitary Islamic state based upon a single-language (Urdu) and a fundamentalist version of Islam, but one where the plethora of interest formations are allowed to compete and bargain in a democratically structured political environment free from the fascistic intervention of the Army.

This is what seems to be taking place in the federally structured open political arena which has been evolving since the demise of General Musharraf. It resembles the process of democratization that took place in the early stages of the rise of India's post-Independence political system, where the transformation of caste and other primordial social formations crystallized into ethnically structured interest-groups that yielded coalitions operating under the rubric of political rules which sorted out rather than exacerbated the material and doctrinal differences among them.

Having advisors surrounding Mr. Obama that appreciate the significance of these developments and who avoid an excessively cynical view of them that is

mired in past perceptions will be crucial to President Obama's quest for more flexible, imaginative ways of viewing and managing the U.S.'s political relationship with Pakistan. He must avoid being subject to more of the 'conventional wisdom' which in the name of 'strategic realities' reverts back to selling F-16s to the Army as well as other militarized policies toward the region whenever open politics looks too messy.

For example, it could be useful to regard President Zardari not so much as a debased practitioner of past political wheeling and dealing as a pragmatic, non-ideological manifestation of the new transactional politics that is struggling to be born in post-Musharraf, post-ISI Pakistan, which bears much resemblance to the Indian model. Mr. Obama could use an advisor or two who provide a serious and informed perspective on these emergent processes, instead of hackneyed rhetoric about "failed states" and "mindless corruption," and certitudes about the Army panting in the wings awaiting a chance to restore military dictatorship. Mr. Obama's advisors must be people whose sophistication about the intricacies of South Asian politics urge patience and against rushing into fatalistic despair and precipitous retribution if the process takes temporary turns toward the old patterns. The signs are out there that the main body of moderate, middle-class Pakistani society is growing increasingly capable of righting their ship of state when the political storms approach gale force.

Another caution concerns nuclear policy. Most if not all of the members of the 'policy pool' have ranged from lukewarm to openly hostile to the U.S.-India nuclear agreement which has critically depended on abandoning the old perceived interlock between India and Pakistan in the South Asian political spectrum. It is to the eternal credit of Bill Clinton and George Bush that this longstanding status quo was dismantled so that India and Pakistan could be treated as the separate strategic entities which in fact they always were.

Whatever may be his virtues, Bruce Riedel's strong antipathies to nuclear proliferation have made him a noted skeptic about the U.S.-India strategic relationship whom architects, like Nicholas Burns, regard as one of the great breakthroughs in altering America's policy orientation toward the Subcontinent. If true, this is a negative which would seem to be in marked contrast to his alleged view about Pakistan's emergent domestic political situation. According to Mark Mazzetti's review, Mr. Riedel advises a "subtle and deft touch" to try and strengthen the civilian government of President Zardari in order to "act as a counterweight to Pakistan's military and intelligence apparatus which still dominates Pakistan's political life." On nuclear policy, he is matched in the U.S. Congress by many skeptics who might indeed steer the new President toward a return to reviving the Kashmir conundrum, and other sterile policy-interlocks that could propel India and the U.S. back toward the pattern of 'estrangement' which stood in the way of a healthy, expanding and needed constructive relationship between the world's two largest democracies. Let us hope that my forebodings on these matters turn out to be exaggerated.



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