

# NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE MILITARY

## The Strengthening America's Future Initiative Issue Paper

A Project of the  
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## **Strengthening America's Future Initiative (SAFI)**

### *National Security and the Military*

#### **Introduction**

When Barack Obama entered the Oval Office a year ago, he confronted an array of challenges with few precedents in the modern American presidency. There was the “Great Recession” to manage in hopes of containing the worst economic slump and global financial contagion in more than half a century. An unfinished war in Iraq and a faltering war in Afghanistan demanded immediate attention, as did an increasingly unstable and nuclear-armed Pakistan beset by extremism and insurgency. Al Qaeda remained a potent threat, with major terrorist plots in the United States and Europe still showing links to its core group of leaders and base camps in Pakistan’s lawless tribal areas.

A long-brewing crisis loomed with Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons program, and talks with nuclear rogue North Korea were stalemated. The Middle East peace process between Israel and the Palestinians remained deadlocked, sapping goodwill for the United States in the Arab and Muslim world. President Obama also confronted major challenges in great power relations, with trade tensions rising with China in a time of economic crisis and a newly assertive Russia willing to use intimidation to carve out a sphere of influence in the region.

In this era of “globalization” each of those challenges is interrelated. Globalization has proven an engine of unprecedented prosperity. Yet it is also increasingly defined by the swift movement of pandemics -- economic, viral, extremist, criminal – sweeping across a world with weaker national borders, and fewer natural firebreaks. Coping with the complexities of this era of rapid change and dislocations will challenge any modern American administration.

As fate would have it, the Obama administration also took office at a time when the tools of American power were and continue to be under great strain. The all-volunteer U.S. military is showing significant stress fractures, from rising rates of suicide and divorce to increased post-traumatic stress injury. The State Department and other related foreign-aid agencies have proven under-resourced and poorly organized for the kinds of diplomatic and nation-building tasks they’ve been asked to perform particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq, doubling the burden on an already over-stretched military. The National Security Council has struggled in recent years to coax coordinated policy execution out of a stove-piped, multi-agency landscape to meet complex new challenges.

Perhaps most importantly, America is facing these existential challenges as a nation divided. Eight years of war have left “our unity on national security issues in tatters,” as

Obama said in his December 1, 2009 speech on Afghanistan, creating a “highly polarized and partisan backdrop” to his young presidency.

These challenges have emerged as Americans seem to be looking more inward. A December 2009 Pew Research Center poll recently found Americans more isolationist than at any time in 40 years of polling, Pew found that a plurality of respondents (49%) said that United States should “mind its own business internationally” and leave it to other countries to fend for themselves. That growing weariness with the burdens of global leadership at home is matched by a growing tide of anti-Americanism abroad, with numerous polls in recent years showing a majority of even allied countries no longer trusting American leadership. Or as the bipartisan Smart Power Commission put it, “America may be less well regarded today than at any time in its history.”

### **America Reaches a Cross-Road**

The world is enduring a period of profound strategic transition. After the post-Cold War “strategic pause” of the 1990s, there is a renewed competition underway in terms of ideas, influence and global power. While America looks more to itself, other players are repositioning themselves on the field, while new non-state actors elbow their way into the game. American leadership will be judged on our strategic vision and its ability to lift many boats and to advance stability and peace.

Given the complex challenges we confront, some have argued that this will prove an era of relative decline for the United States. We firmly reject such self-fulfilling defeatism. The world is beset by problems that defy the power of any one nation, whether it’s a global economic recession, climate change, nuclear proliferation or the spread of nihilistic terrorism. And in terms of mobilizing the world to cooperative action to address any of those challenges, the United States remains the indispensable nation.

In fact, changes now underway provide a real opportunity for the United States to reset the international order, and reposition our country in ways that will advance both our interests and our core values. To fully seize that opportunity, however, the Obama Administration will have to craft and articulate a strategic vision that inspires the American people, once again rallies a powerful global collective to our cause, and taps all sources of our national power.

### **A Promising Start**

The Obama administration has already made some promising steps in that direction. President Obama’s decision to surge 30,000 additional U.S. forces to Afghanistan to support a counter-insurgency campaign there, even while withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq, recognizes that the United States must succeed in the wars we find ourselves in. The administration has also endorsed a permanent increase of 92,000 personnel in the Army and Marine Corps to help relieve the burden on U.S. ground forces.

The firm rejection of harsh interrogation techniques has helped America reclaim the moral high-ground from which it can lead. Obama’s June 4, 2009 speech in Egypt

represented an important outreach to the Muslim world, and the administration has strengthened ties with moderate Muslim states such as Turkey, Egypt and Indonesia.

Though difficult, efforts to reach a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are important for America to reclaim the mantle of peacemaker. The administration has also attempted to “reset” relations with Russia, including a return to treaty-based nuclear weapons reductions. It has committed to the goal of a nuclear-free world in an attempt to reinvigorate international support for the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The administration has offered the hand of engagement even to regimes considered hostile to America such as Iran and Syria, to which it is returning an Ambassador (former Deputy Director of Mission in Iraq, Robert Ford, pending confirmation). Resources have increased marginally for non-defense tools of national power such as diplomacy and development, and an important interagency review of cyber vulnerabilities has been launched and a cyber command established.

Perhaps most importantly, Obama’s Cabinet and advisory teams have been stocked with officials of considerable experience in both the diplomatic and national security realms, all of whom seem to share a common vision of enhancing what they call American “smart power.” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explained that vision in a speech on December 7, 2009.<sup>i</sup>

“For too long we have focused more heavily on one of the so-called three Ds – namely defense – and less on the other two, diplomacy and development. Now, we obviously must never undermine our capacity to defend our nation and our people, but I believe that these three tools are mutually reinforcing. And it has been my goal since becoming the 67<sup>th</sup> Secretary of State to do all that I could to make sure that diplomacy and development were elevated alongside defense. That is the essence of smart power,” said Clinton. “We have also been talking a lot in the last months about the need to commit American leadership to building a new architecture of global cooperation. And fundamental to that idea is that the 21<sup>st</sup> century not only presents many shared challenges, but it also demands shared responsibility. No nation can meet today’s challenges – or seize its opportunities – alone. Leadership in this era means stepping up to the plate and galvanizing others to do the same.”<sup>ii</sup>

## **Recommendations**

### **#1: Articulate a Unifying Vision for American Leadership**

The working group supports the emphasis on “smart power” and many of the initiatives undertaken by the Obama administration, but we firmly believe more must be done. Particularly in this period of war and profound economic insecurity, president Obama needs to articulate a vision of America’s unique role in the world, put the complex challenges we face as a nation into that strategic context, and describe to the American people how he intends to lead the world toward solutions. This vision needs to provide a clear “grand strategy” from which a workable new definition of *national security* can be articulated as suggested by Secretary Clinton at the January 2010 NATO Conference.<sup>iii</sup>

In his December 1, 2009 address to the nation on the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan, President Obama outlined his view of the immense stakes involved in that region.<sup>iv</sup> That reinforced Defense Secretary Robert Gates' campaign to refocus Pentagon energy and resources on the near-term challenge of winning today's wars.

From the appointment of Special Envoys for Afghanistan-Pakistan, the Middle East Peace process and Iran, we infer that the Obama administration considers these diplomatic priorities. The "reset" in the U.S.-Russian relationship, Obama's trip to China and intense diplomacy with India all indicate the importance the administration places on managing relations with great and emerging powers. The fiscal year 2010 budget also helpfully included a modest increase in funding for the State Department and development aid as a down payment on "smart power."

What is still urgently needed is a vision that puts all of those initiatives into a coherent context, however, and a clear strategy for how President Obama plans to reshape the international order in ways that advance U.S. interests and core values. His December 11, 2009 remarks at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, Norway offer a useful first draft of such an "Obama doctrine."<sup>v</sup>

After World War II, Obama noted, "America led the world in constructing an architecture to keep the peace: a Marshall Plan and a United Nations, mechanisms to govern the waging of war, treaties to protect human rights, prevent genocide, and restrict the most dangerous weapons." While that architecture succeeded in deterring World War III and advancing the cause of liberty, "a decade into a new century, this old architecture is buckling under the weight of new threats. The world may no longer shudder at the prospect of war between two nuclear superpowers, but proliferation may increase the risk of catastrophe. Terrorism has long been a tactic, but modern technology allows a few small men with outsized rage to murder innocents on a horrific scale. Moreover, wars between nations have increasingly given way to wars within nations. The resurgence of ethnic and sectarian conflicts; the growth of secessionist movements, insurgencies, and failed states – all these things have increasingly trapped civilians in unending chaos... Meeting those challenges will require the same vision, hard work and persistence of those men and women who acted so boldly decades ago."<sup>vi</sup>

Obama has noted the importance of maintaining a strong military ("The United States of America has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms. So yes, instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace."); recommitted the United States to adhering to global norms such as the Geneva Conventions ("America – in fact, no nation – can insist that others follow the rules of the road if we refuse to follow them ourselves."); expanded the legitimate use of force from simply self-defense to include humanitarian interventions ("I believe force can be justified on humanitarian grounds, as it was in the Balkans."); acknowledged that even the United States is not powerful enough to police a fractious world alone ("America's commitment to global security will never waver, but in a world in which threats are more diffuse, and missions more complex, American cannot act

alone to secure the peace.”); called for a united response to those nations who flaunt global norms and international law, whether it’s North Korea and Iran pursuing nuclear weapons or the government of Darfur committing genocide (“In dealing with those nations that break the rules and laws, I believe we must develop alternatives to violence that are tough enough to change behavior. Sanctions must exact a real price. Intransigence must be met with increased pressure – and such pressure exists only when the world stands together as one.”); and defended diplomatic engagement even with adversaries (“I know that engagement with repressive regimes lacks the satisfying purity of indignation, but I also know that sanctions without outreach – condemnation without discussion – can carry forward only a crippling status quo.”)

As President Obama defines his strategic vision to the American public, the Administration needs to develop a national security strategy that enables government to establish priorities and to allocate resources to support it. That requires a holistic national security budget that rationalizes expenditures across multiple agencies, and addresses the current imbalance between “hard” and “soft” instruments of national power.

Reforms are likewise needed to eliminate disconnects in a stove-piped, calcified national security system. Our overburdened military needs to refresh and refit after the toll extracted by eight years of warfare abroad. The evolution of the National Guard and Reserves from a strategic mobilization force into an operational reserve must be completed and institutionalized. International forums and organizations strained by divisions over the Iraq war and the demands of nearly a decade of operations in Afghanistan must also be reinvigorated. If the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) is to survive as the bedrock security structure of the Western alliance, institutional weaknesses exposed by the Afghan war must be fixed.

### **Action 1: Define the Strategic Landscape**

We need to define the strategic landscape and identify key challenges and threats. The CSPC working group highlights six priorities that we believe must be addressed: cyber attacks, deterrence, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While these are not the only critical national security issues the Administration must manage, each is a potential game-changer.

#### *Prepare for Cyber War*

Though they rarely make headlines, cyber attacks and information warfare are already mainstays on the field of conflict. Russia launched cyber attacks on Estonia in 2007 and Georgia in 2008 as part of conflicts with those countries, China routinely tests U.S. national security computer networks with sophisticated “hacker” probes, and in 2007 the U.S. National Security Agency successfully launched a cyber attack on the communications networks used by Iraqi insurgents. Cyberspace is already quite literally the “fifth domain” of warfare (after land, sea, air and space).

Cyber War presents new challenges. Perhaps no other military is as dependent on the functioning of advanced information and communications systems. In that reliance lies a vulnerability that has not escaped potential adversaries.

We commend the Obama Administration for taking assertive steps to improve U.S. cyber capabilities and plug vulnerabilities. The Pentagon decision to establish U.S. Cyber Command to act as the vanguard for the government's Cyber War efforts, both offensive and defensive is an important step forward. The task is daunting: develop U.S. cyber dominance and secure U.S. cyber systems, while protecting the privacy and civil liberties of American citizens.

### *Preserve Deterrence*

The ability of the United States to maintain global stability, deter attacks on itself and the more than 30 allies with whom we have treaty obligations, and, if necessary, powerfully respond to attacks is the bedrock of American national security. U.S. military superiority is the most powerful stabilizing force in the international order.

Yet the ability of U.S. military power to deter aggression and promote global order is eroding. The proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological "weapons of mass destruction," threatens to undermine U.S. strategic deterrence. The Cold War's carefully calibrated calculus of "mutually assured destruction" that helped deter World War III between the United States and the Soviet Union applies far less certainly to a more complicated world in which less rational or non-state actors acquire nuclear weapons.

That prospect of a "cascade" of nuclear proliferation is behind the Obama Administration's push for a new, verifiable strategic arms reduction treaty with Russia, and ongoing confrontations with Iran and North Korea over their nuclear programs. The prospect of greater proliferation has also raised the value of defenses in many forms, including missile defenses, research and development into detection technologies, improvements in intelligence capabilities and more capable means of both defense and counter-attack. A many-layered, redundant system of verifiable arms control treaties, missile defenses, a solid intelligence apparatus, and offensive counter-strike capabilities represents an important form of deterrence in itself, sowing doubts in the minds of would-be attackers about the efficacy of any strike.

Eight years of costly counter-insurgency warfare is also eroding the U.S. military's conventional superiority, and thus potentially its capacity to deter future aggression. We support Secretary Gates' intense focus on winning the wars at hand, but no one should doubt that it will exact a price in long-term conventional capabilities. We've already seen the cancellation or capping of major conventional weapons systems such as the Air Force's F-22 fighter, the Army's Future Combat System, and the Navy's DDG-1000 destroyer. The United States may not face an immediate challenge from a peer competitor that rivals our military strength in certain regions of the world, but there are good reasons to plan now for that eventuality. Building conventional military capability takes many years, and the United States' record of predicting when and where threats will emerge is not encouraging.

Deterrence has also been eroded by the emergence of nihilistic terrorism. In this era some adversaries defy deterrent principles, either because we do not understand their

motivations or cannot put at risk that which they hold dear. Put simply, in the face of suicide terrorists bent on our utter destruction, the traditional calculus of deterrence no longer adds up. That puts a premium on preemptive actions, sound intelligence, and tougher homeland security measures.

### *Bolstering Nonproliferation*

Many worry that the international nonproliferation regime may collapse. Iran and North Korea becoming established nuclear-weapons states could provoke a cascade of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and Asia, overwhelming the current nonproliferation structure of arms control treaties, multilateral and bilateral agreements and threat reduction and counter-proliferation programs.

In his April 5, 2009 speech in Prague, President Obama outlined the agenda his Administration will pursue to put the United States back on “the long road toward eliminating nuclear weapons.” While ambitious, his position is endorsed by what are being called the “Four Horsemen of the Anti-Apocalypse,” former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Schultz, former Defense Secretary William Perry, and former Chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee Sam Nunn. We commend the Administration’s negotiation of a new and verifiable strategic arms reduction treaty (START) with Russia. It will increase our mutual security and set a positive example as we enter the Non-Proliferation Review Conference in 2010. We also endorse further treaty restrictions on tactical nuclear weapons and non-deployed warheads that have been the subject of START talks.

President Obama has also called for a multilateral Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty to end production of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium; a new international fuel bank to safely supply civilian nuclear energy programs; and tougher sanctions on cheaters to strengthen the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. He has pledged to secure global stockpiles of nuclear materials within four years, and promised to “aggressively pursue” U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which the Senate rejected in 1999. Taken together, these steps seek to avoid a new nuclear age of proliferation that “will be more precarious, psychologically disorienting, and economically even more costly than Cold War deterrence,” the Four Horsemen wrote in a Wall Street Journal editorial.

As mentioned, much of the Administration’s nonproliferation agenda rests on the ability to deter Iran and North Korea from becoming established nuclear weapons states. Should Iran shake off weak sanctions defy the Security Council by acquiring a nuclear weapon, the result could be a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that scuttles any chances for Senate ratification of the Test-Ban Treaty. Complicating matters is the fact that Israel sees the acquisition by Iran of nuclear weapons capability as an existential threat and that the President will have to make a difficult decision if it becomes clear that Israel is going to take action on its own.

We remain concerned that while stated U.S. policy holds that neither country can be allowed to reach nuclear weapons status, yet that goal has not been matched with the

ways and means to achieve it. With Iran in particular, a dangerous gap exists between our staunch rhetoric and our willingness to take all necessary steps to deny Tehran nuclear weapons.

### Countering Terrorism

In the eight years since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Al Qaeda has failed to launch another terrorist attack on the U.S. homeland. That speaks to the considerable strides that the United States has made in the global conflict against violent extremism.

The Department of Homeland Security has hardened the United States as a terrorist target, although Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's unsuccessful attempt to blow up an airliner in Detroit on Christmas day revealed that more needs to be done. In general, however, the number of thwarted terrorist plots in recent years suggests much higher levels of cooperation and intelligence sharing among U.S. police and intelligence agencies, and among U.S. agencies and their counterparts overseas.

For instance, A May 2007 plot by a six-man cell to attack the Army base at Fort Dix, New Jersey, was also exposed after a 16-month FBI operation that included infiltrating the group. Also in 2007, U.S. forces in Iraq arrested Abdul Hadi, who was connected to the 2005 London bombings and fingered as Al Qaeda's top commander in Britain by a junior Qaeda fixer who became an FBI informant. In June 2006, seven men were arrested in Miami and Atlanta in a plot to blow up Chicago's Sears Tower, after another investigation involving an FBI informant.

All of those cases suggest cracks in Al Qaeda's once-vaunted operational security. The terrorist organization finds it increasingly difficult to operate in Pakistan, where its training bases are the subject of much intelligence scrutiny and increased attacks by U.S. Predator drones. That has forced Al Qaeda leaders to focus on their own survival. Western intelligence and law enforcement agencies appear increasingly agile in exploiting that vulnerability.

The indiscriminate slaughter of civilians is costing Al Qaeda and its allied terror groups influence among Muslims. An increasing number of influential Islamist theologians have openly criticized the group, for instance, for its wanton brutality and penchant for killing many more Muslims than "nonbelievers." Al Qaeda's failure to launch a terrorist attack against the West since the London bombings of 2005 have also diminished the group within the terrorist pantheon, where violence remains the coin of the realm.

Because the terrorists only have to be successful once, the United States and its allies cannot let their collective guard down. The failure to successfully kill or capture Osama Bin Laden remains a frustration, although there are indications that U.S. drones are striking targets closer to his inner circle. The number of thwarted terrorist plots with links back to Al Qaeda's core leadership in Pakistan remains a concern. Britain's MI5 domestic intelligence agency has disclosed 30 terrorist plots in the United Kingdom. A majority are linked to Al Qaeda in Pakistan.

Finally, the security of the American people simply cannot be adequately assured as long as the United States lacks control of its borders. Critical infrastructure inside the United States also remains vulnerable eight years after 9/11, to include major ports, power grids, and rail transportation systems. More must be done to harden the homeland against attack.

### *Stabilizing Afghanistan and Pakistan*

President Obama's decision to dispatch a total of more than 50,000 reinforcements to Afghanistan may prove his most consequential decision. Some critics accuse him of sinking the nation into a quagmire. Others decry what they perceive as his setting of an 18-month timeline for beginning to withdraw U.S. forces.

Certainly the prolonged debate on Afghanistan highlighted worrisome issues and significant costs associated with more than eight years of operations there. As already mentioned, stress fractures in the overburdened all-volunteer force are becoming clearer with each passing month. The debate also raised questions about the military's conventional war-fighting skills and capacity. Moreover, the deliberations pointed to a growing fissure between a war-weary American public and military leaders who anticipate a "Long War" with violent extremist groups that is likely to stretch well into the future.

After two decades of deeply unsatisfying experiences in irregular warfare in places such as Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the U.S. military has come to believe that counter-insurgency operations focusing on securing population centers are the key to success. The template is the successful "surge" in Iraq in 2007-8.

The study group commends President Obama for supporting his commander in the field in Afghanistan, with caveats. The Administration was right to develop a regional strategy that makes explicit the links between Afghanistan and Pakistan, but our leverage to pressure Pakistan to contest Al Qaeda and Taliban sanctuaries on its territory remains limited. President Obama's Afghan "surge" also relies heavily on the kind of "civilian surge" that our non-defense agencies have consistently struggled to support and resource in the past. The heavy reliance on Afghan government capacity, and its willingness to address endemic corruption, also remain possible weaknesses in the strategy. For all of those reasons, the study group believes the July 2011 timeline will mark the beginning of a withdrawal of U.S. forces that is more gradual and long-lasting than many Americans anticipate.

### *Transition Power in Iraq*

Recent terrorist bombings (early 2010) in Baghdad underscore the tenuous security situation that continues to dominate in Iraq, and the challenges ahead as the United States prepares to withdraw nearly 70,000 troops (out of a current total of 115,000) between January and September of 2010. U.S. forces are scheduled to be out by the end of 2011. The ability to maintain this timeline will directly impact the availability of U.S. forces for the "surge" in Afghanistan. Iraq may have become America's

“forgotten war,” but it still retains the ability to profoundly impact U.S. security interests in the greater region.

The Obama Administration inherited the current withdrawal timeline and Status of Forces Agreement from the Bush Administration, but it would be a mistake to believe the Iraq campaign can be put on “cruise control.” A stable, unified and relatively secure Iraq remains a fundamental U.S. interest. We are not there yet, and the United States has staked far too much blood and treasure on that objective not to see it achieved as we enter the withdrawal phase of the Iraqi Freedom campaign.

The U.S. needs to ensure there is an orderly and well-directed transfer of roles and responsibilities between the military and civilian personnel in Iraq. In particular to sustain unique programs, processes and functions developed by the military during the past seven years are crucial to the ultimate success of the campaign.

## **#2: Develop a National Security Strategy that draws on all elements of national power to achieve the President’s foreign policy and national security goals**

Some contend that U.S. government’s ability to craft and execute long-term strategies has been declining for decades. The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments in Washington argues that too often U.S. political and military leaders equate strategy with compiling a list of desirable goals, rather than crafting plausible action plans to achieve those goals in the face of bureaucratic resistance, resource constraints, political obstacles, and possible shifts in the strategic environment. Such a blueprint for action is the essence of strategy, and the United States’ lack of a unified strategy that draws synergies from across government departments and agencies is unacceptable.

Outside of the Defense Department, the U.S. government lacks the capacity and expertise to develop overarching long-term strategy. The problem is two-fold. First, strategies developed by the Defense Department are by their very nature military-centric, while challenges such as terrorism, proliferation or insurgency demand whole-of-government, multilateral strategies. Second, lacking strategic guidance, problems inevitably migrate to the Defense Department because of its unmatched resources and “can do” culture. As has been vividly shown in armed nation-building operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, this tendency overburdens the U.S. military and forces uniformed service members to do work that civilian officials and agencies should perform.

A coherent National Security Strategy that identifies the “roles and missions” of all involved departments and agencies would enable the President to place military force in its proper context and rationalize spending to build non-military government capacity while preserving the strength of our military. We do not believe funding for the Defense Department should be diverted to non-military agencies. Rather, a country with the resources and responsibilities of the United States can afford to fund both the diplomatic and military elements of its national power. We need to achieve balance by adequately resourcing both the “soft” and “hard” tools of national power.

Development of a National Security Strategy requires Presidential leadership. No other force in the Executive Branch wields sufficient power to coerce strategic planning and collective action out of a stove-piped government bureaucracy. Government departments resist change and compete for resources. They are adept at circumventing Presidential authority. Congress may also resist, concerned about any potential expansion of Executive power. Moreover, Congressional oversight is organized along departmental and agency lines. That reinforces the tendency of agencies to see the world from their own narrow stove-pipe.

Fortunately, there is no legal or structural impediment to President Obama crafting a comprehensive National Security Strategy. There are numerous strategic processes that he can build on, beginning with the Pentagon's new National Defense Strategy, the State Department's new Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, and the CIA's "Global Trends 2025" work. There are also useful historical precedents to consider, such as Dwight Eisenhower's Basic National Security Policies document that he used to develop a coherent vision and enforce budget discipline in his administration.

The working group believes forging a National Security Strategy fits more naturally in the hands of National Security Adviser Gen. Jim Jones (ret.). The National Security Council is the central coordinator for all the national security departments. As a former Commandant of the Marine Corps, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, and Special Coordinator on Palestine, Jones is almost uniquely qualified in terms of understanding the nuanced interplay of "hard" and "soft" power in achieving U.S. strategic goals.

President Obama has shown great promise in developing a strategic worldview and unifying vision. What's needed now is a National Security Strategy to lend it structure and sinew. Such a strategic blueprint will inevitably require tough choices about priorities and emphasis, but absent such guidance the United States will continue to squander resources and energy it can ill afford to waste. President John F. Kennedy put it best: "To govern is to choose."

### **Action 1: Develop a Long-Term Strategic Plan and Launch a Strategic Re-Alignment**

Unless the Administration is rigorous in developing a coherent National Security Strategy and the strategic habits that must accompany it, the President's "burning inbox" and crises of the day will dominate. A resistant and stove-piped federal bureaucracy, driven by annual budget cycles and self-interest, will also prove the enemy to a significant strategic realignment that better rationalizes resources. Furthermore, future quadrennial reviews within the Departments of State, Defense and Homeland Security should be informed and guided by the President's national strategy. Currently, the reviews are planned so early in a President's term that it does not allow for the development of a strategy first.

The Eisenhower Administration's Basic National Security Policy offers a useful model for plausible action. That policy instituted a government-wide, annual review that listed threats to U.S. interests and national security, identified the means to protect those interests, and matched those means with available resources consistent with the President's strategic vision and priorities.

### **#3: Establish a Comprehensive National Security Budget**

Too often a President's national security priorities are not adequately reflected in the budgeting process. Departments and agencies become adept at defending traditional budgets, and see White House edicts only as useful "guidance" that can be ignored in the crunch of resources. This triumph of bureaucracy over electoral mandate and strategic imperative cannot stand.

A National Security Budget that rationalizes resource allocation across the entire government can force the budget process to respond to the President's priorities. Currently budget reviews are conducted by the individual departments and agencies. Little attention is paid to ensuring that capabilities that benefit all departments are adequately funded. As an example, the Secretary of Defense does not participate in the State Department's budget review, rendering him powerless to improve the capabilities of the diplomatic corps. The converse applies. The National Security Advisor has little ability to force the Treasury Department to build its capability to track terrorist financing. And so on.

A coherent National Security Budget confers four key benefits. First, the lack of adequate resources for non-defense agencies would become readily apparent. While we don't support shifting funds from the Defense Department, placing the budgets of defense and non-defense agencies side-by-side will demonstrate the need to make greater investments in U.S. diplomatic, development, and strategic communications capabilities. If we expect U.S. diplomats, development experts, money laundering sleuths and judicial officials to perform to the same high standards we demand of the U.S. military, they must have the necessary resources and training.

Second, developing a National Security Budget will introduce a culture of rigorous program assessment to non-defense departments. Too many of them fail to invest in directorates like the Pentagon's Program Analysis and Evaluation. Too few promote comptrollers to Deputy Secretary, as the Pentagon does. Little wonder that Congress treats their requests for additional resources with skepticism. Secretary of State Clinton's appointment of a Deputy Secretary with these responsibilities represents the kind of positive step needed to develop a rigorous program assessment culture at the State Department.

Third, a National Security Budget will give the White House better oversight over program implementation and execution. Currently the National Security Council advocates policies with little understanding of their budgetary impact. The Office of Management and Budget proposes budgets with a limited grasp of the national security

implications. The oversight involved in developing a coherent National Security Budget would expose and close that gap.

Fourth, a National Security Budget will require greater coordination by Congressional committees to perform effective oversight. Currently, the committees on Foreign Affairs and Armed Services have few coordinating mechanisms in reviewing budgets for their respective agencies despite the fact that they often share in common functional missions.

#### **Action 1: Create a Unified NSC-OMB Budget Review Process**

To assist the National Security Advisor in enforcing the President's priorities, we recommend that the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs co-chair with the Director of the OMB an interagency, National Security Budget review. Currently, this is conducted at levels below the two principals, which we believe provides insufficient coordination between the authorization and appropriation pillars of Executive authority.

#### **Action 2: Create Capital Development Funds within Department Budgets**

Congressional micromanagement of the annual budget process, coupled with bureaucratic perceptions of self-interest, create inefficiencies in the budgeting process that the United States can ill afford. Departments have perverse incentives to spend all allotted funds in order to prevent future funding from being cut. At the same time, they often lack Congressional authority to move money within existing budgets to best advance the President's priorities. Nowhere is this inefficiency more notable than in the realm of counterterrorism. The working group argues for relaxing some prohibitions on departments moving money to reflect changing circumstances and urgent need.

Congress is understandably leery of creating "slush funds." We believe Congressional leaders and department heads can develop a stronger shared vision of overall priorities that develops confidence in the process and allows departments and agencies greater latitude to shift monies to address near-term needs and opportunities. To create that level of confidence, the working group recommends pilot programs that establish **discretionary accounts of up to five percent of overall departmental budgets, to be used to address emerging threats or opportunities.** If successful, such developmental accounts could be added to the National Security Budget, with a formal line item request to Congress.

#### **#4: Establish Empowered Teams**

The working group recommends that the National Security Council given authority and funding to create empowered teams under the authority and supervision of the National Security Council as applicable to deal with specific challenges. Other teams might be formed by the Homeland Security Council or the Economic Security Council as applicable.

This approach would enable the White House to implement national security and other interagency functions (e.g. e.g., dealing with pandemics, natural disasters, or other

challenges) through special teams that may deal with broad issues or specific, smaller challenges that can cut across bureaucratic lines to get things done. Teams would have the clout, expertise, experience, authority, and funding to carry out a defined mission and achieve solutions. The goal is promote entrepreneurial solutions, collaboration and innovation, ensure rapid response.

Taskings would be assigned by the NSC, HSC, ESC or other White House elements. Funded via the EOP annual budget, they are subject to Congressional oversight. The teams may operate at a higher or lower level. The key characteristic is flexibility. They are intended to be action teams set up to achieve measurable, concrete results.

Congressional oversight for operations would be required, in accordance with whatever arrangement is worked out between the White House, and the relevant House and Senate Committees.

NSC would have flexibility in assembling the teams. It might assemble them from within or without the inter agency. It might designate existing integrated regional teams that COCOM currently employ – a concept that CSPC believes should be developed for tasks.<sup>viii</sup> It may elect to deploy such teams separately or in tandem with integrated regional teams.

## **#5: Build Integrated Regional Teams**

This multi-agency team approach can be extended to strategically important regions of the world. The U.S. military has taken the lead in developing whole-of-government capabilities in response to regional threats or demands. Examples include the Joint Interagency Task Forces that are deployed in the Caribbean and along the U.S. southern and western borders to counter the threat from drug trafficking cartels. Similarly, Joint Interagency Task Forces are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan to carry out counterterrorism missions.

U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was created as a model headquarters for applying this whole-of-government approach to threats and challenges on the African continent. The United States remains concerned about the migration of Al Qaeda and allied terrorists to Africa's ungoverned spaces. Governments in the region are preoccupied with the challenges of poverty, disease, drought, and government corruption. All of those challenges require that U.S. agencies develop partnerships with governments in the region.

AFRICOM's headquarters has a military commander and a civilian deputy from the diplomatic corps. Its staff consists of personnel from multiple agencies with expertise in regional concerns, including development, disease prevention and counterterrorism operations. Though not without difficulties, the working group believes this experiment represents a significant step forward in integrating U.S. government capabilities. SOUTHCOM has a military commander and both a civilian and a military deputy commander. Whether integrated teams are attached to a military command such as AFRICOM, SOUTHCOM and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and

Afghanistan, or to a diplomatic posting is largely immaterial. The point is that integrated teams or Joint Interagency Task Forces are a creative, actionable solution to achieve whole-of-government approaches to surmounting current and future challenges.

**Action 1: Establish Interagency Teams in All Geographic Commands**

We recommend building on the AFRICOM/SOUTHCOM model by attaching multi-agency action teams to all geographic commands and headquarters around the world. Forging regional action teams with local expertise and cultural understanding, coupled with the inherent capabilities of the Departments of Defense, State, Treasury, Agriculture, Justice and USAID, is the embodiment of “smart power” applied to the challenges of globalization.

**Action 2: Create a Post-Conflict Lessons Learned Process**

The U.S. armed services are learning organizations. They improve by conducting rigorous process of After Action Reviews and Lessons Learned exercises. Successes and mistakes are captured while memories are still fresh. Lessons are fed back into the organization in a continuous loop of self-improvement. The time is long past due for establishing a similar Lessons Learned process to inform interagency. The Interagency Teams seem natural forums in which to focus such initiatives. The United States has paid dearly for the hard lessons of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it would be a tragedy if those lessons were lost – beginning with the need for interagency cooperation, and the high cost of not achieving it.

**#6: Strategically Rebuild and Reset the U.S. Military into a Full-Spectrum Force**

The U.S. military is appropriately focused on winning the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In doing so, it is important to sustain the military’s non counter-insurgency capabilities as well. Counter-insurgency is only one slice in the spectrum of conflict, and it is not even the only asymmetric threat that conventional U.S. military forces will confront. Intelligent adversaries will continue to probe for and exploit any perceived weakness or gap in U.S. military capabilities.

Potential challenges to U.S. military dominance include the rise of a near-peer competitor with conventional and unconventional forces designed to exploit U.S. military vulnerabilities; the proliferation of nuclear weapons, especially if the acquisition of nuclear weapons by North Korea and Iran cause a “cascade” of proliferation by other states looking to counter their capabilities; and the rise of asymmetric threats such as cyber warfare.

The U.S. military will strain to meet those challenges at a time when it is focused on counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and counterterrorism operations in an “arc of instability” that stretches from Africa, through the Middle East, all the way to southwest Asia. The Defense Department will also have to reset forces strained by those operations, incorporate an additional 92,000 soldiers and Marines into U.S. ground units, provide long-term care for service members wounded in those conflicts,

and replace an arsenal of equipment that has been ridden hard over eight long years of war.

The Defense Department will face daunting challenges in trying to win today's wars while adequately funding the U.S. military's future modernization, all in the midst of a profound global economic crisis. Given the enormous expenditures involved in rescuing the financial system and providing stimulus to a badly weakened U.S. economy, the Obama Administration will face enormous pressure to reduce defense spending. Congress will also have much to say about the matter. The responsibility of U.S. military leaders is to make the difficult decisions in terms of prioritizing programs and balancing current and future needs, and being prepared to adequately justify those decisions to the White House, Congress and the American people.

### **Action 1: Build a More Capabilities Based Force**

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has struggled to reorient the Pentagon's procurement system in order to rectify a mismatch between a bureaucracy focused on the far-horizon and U.S. forces that confront the hard realities of today's wars. We commend his efforts. Because U.S. military forces are designed to meet threats at the high-end of the conflict spectrum, the cost-exchange ratios favor our enemies in low-end conflicts like the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We recommend that Secretary Gates use the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review process as the starting point for designing a more capabilities-based force, rather than one designed against specific threats. Such a force would protect a nucleus of high-end capabilities to counter a future peer competitor. The industrial base would need to run at a "cool to warm" pace, with the ability to ramp up production should a peer competitor begin to emerge. The remainder of the force, however, should be tailored even more so than at present to meet the near-term challenges of today, to include counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations.

### **Action 2: Ensure the Future Viability of Strategic Nuclear Forces**

The United States conventional military superiority has reduced our reliance on strategic nuclear forces. That has made possible strategic arms reduction treaties and nuclear non-proliferation initiatives. For the foreseeable future, however, strategic deterrence will continue to rest upon maintaining a credible nuclear force. We urge the Administration to consider carefully the recommendations of the Schlesinger-Perry Commission, which contends that the United States must modify and modernize its strategic nuclear stockpile and supporting infrastructure..

The working group could not reach consensus on whether modernization of the nuclear stockpile could be accomplished within the confines of the proposed Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty that the Obama Administration plans to put to the Senate for ratification. Some experts in the working group thought that the CTBT was so central to ongoing nonproliferation initiatives that its passage must be supported, while others thought concerns about the reliability of the nuclear stockpile should take precedence. Others were strongly in favor of the Reliable Replacement Warhead.

## **#7: Recast the 21<sup>st</sup> Century National Guard and Reserve**

The experience of eight years of war have validated the recasting of the National Guard and Reserves from a strategic reserve for mobilization for all-out war, to an operational reserve that participates in regular deployments and shoulders a significant measure of the burden of ongoing wartime operations. Still, Guard and Reserve responsibilities to protect the homeland against terrorist attack or natural disaster have grown. The National Guard has proven that it can accomplish both its federal (Title 10) and domestic (Title 32) missions. The working group recommends codifying this transformation.

In doing so, the Pentagon will need to pay close attention to the unintended consequences of the “Abrams Doctrine,” that sought to front-load the active military’s reliance on the Reserve component so that virtually any deployment required a presidential call-up of the Reserves. Adjustments have already been made, but the National Guard needs to set forth an organizational and operational vision that defines its role and relevance, and that describes how it views the implications of this transformation to an operational reserve.

### **Action 1: Give the Chief of the National Guard Bureau the Lead in Transforming the Guard**

The Chief is best positioned to institutionalize the reforms that are transforming the National Guard to an operational reserve with a leading role in homeland security. This individual is also best positioned to balance competing demands and expectations of all major stakeholders, to include the Defense Department, the individual services, the Department of Homeland Security, Congress and governors.

### **Action 3: Make the Chief of the National Guard Bureau a Senior Adviser to the Secretary of Homeland Security**

In times of national emergency, the relationship between the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau could prove critical in determining how the Guard is employed domestically. Thus, serious consideration should be given to making the Guard Chief a formal adviser to the Secretary of Homeland Security, alongside the Commandant as the Coast Guard.

### **Action 4: Create Joint, Interagency Tours for Homeland Security Personnel**

Scores of federal agencies and more than 87,000 different governmental jurisdictions at the federal, state and local level have homeland security responsibilities. Too often personnel from these disparate agencies and localities meet for the first time during emergencies. Precious time is wasted overcoming cultural differences and operational blind spots to form a cohesive team. To address a similar problem among the armed services, the Goldwater-Nichols reforms of the late 1980s required military officers to complete prescribed professional education courses and serve in “joint tours” with members of other branches as a condition of qualifying for promotion. Similar requirements could be adapted for the federal civil service in agencies with national

security responsibilities, to generate sufficient numbers of managers and executives with interagency knowledge and experience.

**Action 5: Establish Standing, Multi-Agency Task Forces at the State Level Focused on Homeland Security**

Joint Task Forces, whether aimed at drug traffickers, terrorists, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, represent a strong innovation. The Department of Homeland Security should build on this model and fund standing Joint Task Forces at the state level that report to the governor and that integrate federal, state and local capabilities.

**#8: Reinvigorate Professional Military Education in Transforming the Armed Services**

No organizations as large and steeped in culture and doctrine as the U.S. armed services shift direction quickly. Yet for decades the U.S. military has collectively prided itself on being a learning organization, and what it has learned after eight hard years of war and two decades of post-Cold War crisis deployments is indeed fundamentally transforming. In such times of turmoil and change, the services have long relied for guidance on the schools, war colleges and training center that together comprise the Professional Military Education (PME) system.

Consider that an officer today with 20 years of service has experienced an era of almost constant, irregular conflict in places such as Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. The post-Cold War generation of officers that is now being groomed for leadership has been tested on battlefields around the world, and the lessons they have brought back are reshaping the U.S. military for the future. The place where those lessons are distilled, reflected upon and eventually institutionalized is the PME system.

In such times of tumult and institutional soul searching, for instance, the Army has looked for guidance from the schools associated with its Training and Doctrine Command, which was originally created in the 1970s to help the service regroup after the Vietnam War. TRADOC schools crafted the combined arms maneuver, synchronized air-and-ground attack doctrine that helped deter the Soviets, and proved successful in the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

TRADOC has produced and the Army has embraced in record time new doctrines on Counter-Insurgency Operations (Field Manual 3-24), Stability Operations (3-07), Security Assistance Operations (FM 3-07.1), and even nation-building operations (“Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction,” produced jointly by the Army War College and the U.S. Institute for Peace).

One of the hard lessons of the recent past is that today’s conflicts require greater cultural awareness and intellectual agility on the part of young service members. In a 24/7 media age that includes unprecedented transparency to military operations, commanders rightly talk about the importance of the “strategic corporal.”

The working group is concerned, however, that the Defense Department is devoting insufficient attention and resources to the Professional Military Education system. Schools and training centers are too often understaffed, and service members find it hard to make the time between back-to-back deployments to advance their professional education. This situation is not sustainable.

The Pentagon is too focused on replacing the physical equipment of the force, while neglecting the mental resources of its men and women. We need to provide our military with time for reflection and learning. That means devoting significantly more resources to developing the U.S. military's intellectual capital. Deployments must be manageable. The PME system should be viewed as a vital element in "resetting" the force. Full staffing at schools and training centers must be maintained. Doing less would ignore a key lesson of the last eight years: U.S. military power in the future will be defined by mental agility and the ability to adapt to an ever-changing and increasingly complex world.

### **#9: Revitalize International Institutions and Multilateral Alliances**

The working group applauds the renewed emphasis on strengthening the United States' instruments of soft power. We also must rebuild international institutions and alliances that were put in place at Washington's urging after World War II, laying the foundation for the "American Century."

The United States has been most effective on the world stage working through international institutions to lead broad coalitions of like-minded nations in tackling common problems and threats whether the challenge is nihilistic terrorism, the proliferation of doomsday weapons, or global climate change.

The working group believes the United States will have to take the lead in maintaining peace and stability in the global commons for the foreseeable future. But we cannot and should not bear that burden alone. We should commit significant resources and energy to revitalize institutions and alliances shaken in recent years by wars or a perception of overbearing U.S. unilateralism.

On this score, the working group is especially concerned at the hesitation by many of our NATO allies to make the investments necessary to keep their military forces relevant to today's threats, or to commit those forces to common missions without crippling "caveats" attached. Even before the global financial crisis, most NATO nations were consistently under-investing in their defense capabilities. There is every reason to fear that the financial crisis will result in even further reductions in allied defense spending.

Counter-insurgency warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan has caused the United States and a small group of allies to improve their military capabilities. But other allies are not matching this pace. That is creating a two-tiered alliance that could fundamentally erode the bedrock principle of equitable burden sharing. Several solutions have been

tried. These include establishment of Allied Command Transformation as a partner to Joint Forces Command and the creation of NATO's Rapid Reaction Force. These are good steps but so far have not checked an alarming and growing gap in military capabilities and defense spending. A two-tiered security alliance in which a handful of countries bear disproportionate costs and risks, while other nations largely eschew those burdens and act essentially as strategic free-riders, is unsustainable.

### **Action 1: Conduct a NATO Solarium Exercise**

At a critical early juncture in the Cold War, former President Dwight Eisenhower conducted the successful "Solarium Exercise" to test strategies for prevailing against the former Soviet Union at a cost the United States was able and willing to sustain. The working group believes the Obama Administration should adopt that model, conducting a wide-ranging exercise to test the viability of current NATO strategies, and the willingness of member nations to resource and sustain it.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the working group on national security believes the world has entered a period of profound strategic transition rife with dangers as well as opportunities. As they have in the past, allies will look to the United States for guidance in this time of testing. They will judge the character of American leadership by our commitment to a strategic vision that adheres to our core principles and values, and advances the cause of stability and peace for the betterment of all. We also are convinced that in terms of mobilizing like-minded nations to cooperative action to address today's myriad challenges, the United States remains the indispensable nation.

We also believe that America's power and prestige in the world rest on a foundation of a vital economy. That foundation has been rocked by the global economic crisis. When the crisis passes, the United States must once again bring its revenue and spending into a sustainable equilibrium. We simply cannot remain the world's largest debtor nation, and at the same time preserve our role as a superpower and guarantor of global stability. If we continue as the former, then today's leaders will have to one day answer to future generations why they willfully presided over an era of American decline.

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<sup>i</sup> Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks to U.S. Global Leadership Coalition," Department of State, December 7, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/12/133275.htm>.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Remarks at the International Conference on Afghanistan," Department of State, January 28, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/01/136159.htm>.

<sup>iv</sup> Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," The White House, December 01, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>.

<sup>v</sup> Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize," the White House, December 10, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-acceptance-nobel-peace-prize>.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM offer illustrations where civilian-military teams working jointly at the command level are being tried. The effort has confronted challenges but the concept is a strong one and

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merits support and development, as they provide local knowledge of regions and the ability to surge in response to new challenges and opportunities.