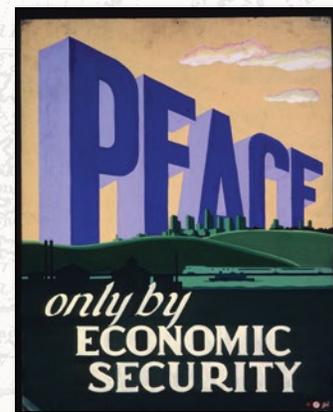
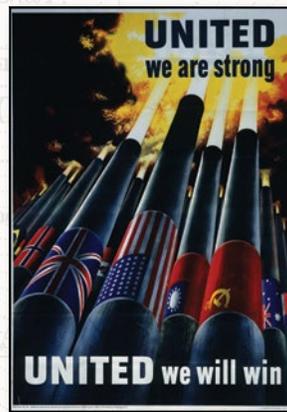


# STRATEGIKA

CONFLICTS OF THE PAST AS LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT



## Revitalizing America's Security

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Peter R. Mansoor • Angelo M. Codevilla • Bing West



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## JANUARY 2017 · ISSUE 38

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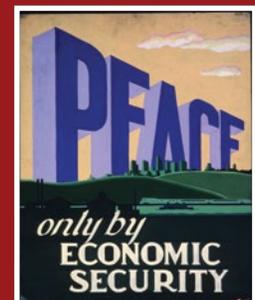
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## ABOUT THE POSTERS IN THIS ISSUE

Documenting the wartime viewpoints and diverse political sentiments of the twentieth century, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Poster Collection has more than one hundred thousand posters from around the world and continues to grow. Thirty-three thousand are available online. Posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia/Soviet Union, and France predominate, though posters from more than eighty countries are included.



# Blast from the Past: The Strategic Realignment of the United States in the Trump Administration

*Peter R. Mansoor*

As Donald Trump assumes office as the nation's 45th president, questions swirl regarding the strategic trajectory and alignment of the United States during his administration. Mr. Trump campaigned on a platform of putting "America First," but the policy details of what exactly this means were, to put it mildly, lacking. Candidate Trump castigated America's NATO allies for failing to live up to alliance commitments to spend at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense, hinted that Japan and South Korea would be better off with their own nuclear umbrellas, and, while vowing that his administration would crush ISIS quickly, stated that other problems in the Middle East, such as the Syrian Civil War, should be left to local actors to resolve or outsourced to Russia. He would bolster US military power, but use it more sparingly. Whether this means the Trump administration will follow neo-isolationist, offshore balancing, conservative internationalist, or some other form of grand strategy remains to be seen. Given the uncertainty of what lies ahead in the next four or eight years, a review of the grand strategic alignment of the United States in the last two centuries is in order for clues as to what might lie ahead.

The first US presidents avoided "entangling alliances," as Thomas Jefferson put it, focusing instead on the security of the homeland and protection of American commerce overseas. In his farewell address to the American people, President George Washington stated America's preferences clearly: "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." When President Thomas Jefferson deployed naval squadrons and Marines against Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean, he did so without the help of nearby European states. The nation's small army was employed guarding ports and safeguarding westward expansion. The War of 1812, the "second war for American independence" in the eyes of many contemporary American observers, confirmed US sovereignty in the homeland, but did not fundamentally change the nation's grand strategic outlook.

The trajectory of US grand strategy changed dramatically in 1823, when President James Monroe announced that the United States would not tolerate the expansion of

colonial empires in the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine greatly expanded the concept of US national security. The defense of the United States would not begin at the nation's borders, but would rather encompass North, South, and Central America as well as the oceanic approaches to the Western Hemisphere. As presidential doctrines go, the Monroe Doctrine had a long run, governing US foreign policy for more than a hundred years. But we should not give too much credit to US pronouncements and power for keeping colonial powers at bay; Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal were all too willing to cede the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere to the United States, a nation that seemed more focused on westward expansion than in impinging on European colonial possessions outside North America, most of which had gained their independence by 1823 in any case.

At the end of the 19th century the United States veered suddenly and unexpectedly onto the strategic path to overseas expansion. American public opinion, whipped to a fever pitch by yellow journalism (which has come back into vogue), demanded war in support of Cuban revolutionaries after the USS *Maine* blew up in Havana harbor, a tragedy blamed by many Americans on Spain but which was more likely due to an internal explosion. Overcoming mobilization and deployment challenges, the US armed forces seized Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam, while the US Navy Asiatic squadron under Commodore George Dewey destroyed the Spanish Pacific Fleet in the decidedly lopsided battle of Manila Bay. An army expeditionary force defeated the Spanish army in the Philippines and then spent a number of years battling Filipino and Moro guerrillas.

With no malice aforethought, the United States now found itself in possession of Caribbean and Pacific colonies (including the new territory of Hawaii, annexed in 1898), the defense of which would begin far from the Western Hemisphere. Doing so would require the acquisition of a powerful oceangoing navy, the first manifestation of which was the cruise of the "Great White Fleet" around the world from 1907 to 1909. The United States had emerged from its isolationist shell.

The great conflagration that erupted in Europe in 1914 eventually engulfed the United States, a rising industrial state with vast reserves of untapped military power. The initial concern of the Wilson administration was a familiar one to Americans—freedom of the seas. The sinking of the RMS *Lusitania* in May 1915 brought an ultimatum from Wilson to Imperial Germany to honor the rules of cruiser warfare or face American entry into the war. The Germans wisely backed off, only to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917, gambling for victory before the presence of American troops on the Western Front could be felt. For the first time in its history, the United States was involved in a great power conflict outside the Western Hemisphere, albeit as an "associated" power rather than as an ally to Great Britain and France.



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Wilsonian grand strategy came to be associated with liberal internationalism—an effort by the world’s leading powers to prevent major power conflict, police international affairs, and advance humanitarianism through collective action. The Treaty of Versailles hardly accorded to Wilson’s “Fourteen Points,” which promised national self-determination, freedom of the seas, and open diplomacy, among other things. But the treaty did create a League of Nations, the foundational structure of collective security to ensure the Great War would be the last such conflict. The US Congress, however, would have none of it. By a vote of 49 to 35 the Senate rejected the treaty and with it American participation in the League of Nations. The United States would return to its traditional isolationist stance. Given that US troops were deployed in China and the Philippines, the term was not exactly accurate, but it did encapsulate the mind-set of the American people, who believed they gained little from the Great War and wanted to put “American first.”

The retrenchment of American power in the interwar era was deep and significant. Although the nation maintained a strong navy that in 1938 included fifteen battleships and five aircraft carriers, the US Army shrank to just 174,000 troops (ranking it 17th in the world in terms of troop strength, just behind the army of Portugal), and the Army Air Corps in that year had few modern combat aircraft (the B-17 bomber and P-40 fighter were in the final stages of testing). As critically, Congress tied the president’s hands with legislation intended to keep the United States out of future great power conflicts. The Neutrality Acts prohibited the export of weapons and ammunition to nations at war, prohibited Americans from extending loans to belligerent nations, forbade US citizens from traveling on belligerent ships, and prohibited American merchant ships from transporting arms to belligerents. The American people showed their support for isolationism through the creation of the America First Committee, dedicated to keeping the United States out of foreign wars. A major political force in the late 1930s, the America First Committee boasted 800,000 members in 450 chapters.

“America first,” at least as embodied in the grand strategy of the interwar era, worked only as long as there remained a balance of great powers overseas. Isolationism as a grand strategic framework became much less tenable after the fall of France in June 1940. Great Britain also appeared to be on the ropes, which raised the possibility of German domination of the European continent. Given the expansionist philosophy of the Nazi regime, that prospect posed an existential threat to the United States. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Congress responded by passing the Two Ocean Navy Act, mobilizing the National Guard, and—a first in American history—enacting a peacetime draft. Roosevelt sent arms to Great Britain, traded destroyers for bases, and put the US Navy on a collision course with the *Kriegsmarine* in the Atlantic. Admiral Harold Stark’s Plan Dog and subsequent American-British-Canadian staff discussions paved the way for the

adoption of Rainbow 5, a war plan that envisioned the United States fighting as an ally of Great Britain (and later the Soviet Union) in both Europe and Asia. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, was only the final dagger in the heart of a grand strategy that no longer accorded with America's national security interests. Once again—and this time seemingly for good—the defense of the United States would begin with the defense of America's overseas allies.

The destruction of the Axis powers laid the foundation for a more stable postwar order, this time with the United States willing and able to participate in its creation and maintenance. Having engaged in two great world wars in just a quarter century, US political and military leaders embraced collective security and the defense of allies made possible by the visible commitment of forward deployed troops in Europe and Asia. This liberal international order, along with its policies and institutions such as the Marshall Plan, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and defense treaties with Japan and South Korea, has lasted for more than seventy years. Republican and Democratic administrations over that period would argue about specifics of policies underlying liberal internationalism—containment, engagement, NATO enlargement, and so forth—but there was no disagreement over the ends of policy. The United States would buttress the international order from which it profited greatly with its vast reserves of diplomatic, informational, economic, financial, and military power.

For ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it seemed that the United States would exert its authority through an international system in which it held the preponderance of power. The unipolar moment was fleeting. The terror attacks on the US homeland on September 11, 2001, began the process by which America's domination ended. The administration of George W. Bush committed the nation to an expansive war on terror, including campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq in which it collapsed the Taliban and Ba'athist regimes and enmeshed US

### **POLL: WHAT SHOULD BE PRESIDENT TRUMP'S POLICY REGARDING RUSSIA?**

- Get along better with our EU and NATO partners, and curtail Russian aggression with stronger sanctions.
- Continue the reset policies and jawboning of the Obama administration.
- Adopt a policy of benign neglect to allow Putin a greater sphere of interest along his border.
- Seek active detente with Putin to concentrate on common enemies like radical Islamists.
- Enlist Putin as an ally, in hopes of flipping Russia away from Syria and Iran to rejoin the Western order.

armed forces in long-term military operations to stabilize their successors. Neither war ended quickly or successfully, and their multitrillion-dollar price tags, along with the deaths and wounding of thousands of service members, soured the American people on continued service as the guarantor of the international system.

The rise of China, a revanchist Russia, allies that have failed to live up to treaty obligations in terms of defense spending, and the lingering effects of a crippling recession have all contributed to a malaise that has affected the American psyche. The Obama administration has exacerbated these factors by its use and misuse of American power: a premature withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, eliminating the leverage they provided over the conduct of the Iraqi government and thereby enabling the rise of ISIS; using force against the regime of strongman Muammar Qaddafi to cause its collapse (and his murder) without thought as to how to stabilize Libya in the aftermath of conflict; announcing an ill-conceived “red line” over the use of chemical munitions in Syria and then failing to enforce it; failing to support the Syrian rebellion in its early stages when the creation of a moderate, secular front against Bashar al-Assad was still possible; and banking on stabilizing the Middle East by negotiating a nuclear accord with the ayatollahs in Tehran, an agreement whose benefits have reenergized the Iranian economy without moderating Iranian conduct. Little wonder why the American people were ready to vote for change when the presidential election rolled around in 2016.

What type of grand strategy the Trump administration will adopt going forward is anyone’s guess, but it will not be more of the same. Mr. Trump has promised to put “America first,” which means jettisoning supposed deadbeat allies who freeload off of American power, picking America’s fights more judiciously, and employing overwhelming force when sending American troops into battle. Given the president’s fascination with Russian President Vladimir Putin, it seems quite likely that the US-Russian relationship will be recast, with Putin benefiting from the lifting of sanctions (and thereby acknowledging the seizure of Crimea as a *fait accompli*) and a free hand in Syria (which will bolster Russian power but not end the civil war there). What the United States would get out of this policy is an open question; perhaps nothing more than Putin’s goodwill—thin gruel when it comes to issues that matter. On the other hand, if such a policy does not impel NATO allies to raise their levels of defense spending through fear of the Russian bear, then perhaps nothing will. The president has already shown his willingness to challenge China on issues of long-standing import, such as the “one China” policy vis-à-vis Taiwan. He has promised to renegotiate America’s trade relationships to bring jobs back home, to substantially limit Muslim immigration into the United States, and to build a wall along the US southern border with Mexico.

Taken together, these policies spell the end of the liberal international order as we have known it since the end of World War II. The United States is returning its grand strategic posture to an earlier time, when America eschewed allies and presidents talked softly and carried big sticks. Those policies, one might note, ended with the United States embroiled in two world wars. It remains to be seen whether they will be more successful this time around.



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# America Respected vs. Global Security

*Angelo M. Codevilla*

George Kennan wrote that Americans in 1905 had not imagined threats from abroad, but that by 1950 they could hardly think of anything else. In the intervening half century, US foreign policy had adopted the maxim that America's security is inseparable from the rest of the world's peace and progress. Accordingly, Woodrow Wilson's Great War, his settlement thereof, and subsequent American-led treaties for global peace and arms control sought to "make the world safe for democracy." Franklin Roosevelt had made war to rid the world of "ancient evils, ancient ills" and invented the United Nations Organization to police the result. Three generations later, after more treaties, trillions of dollars, and wars in pursuit of world order and global security, we are less secure than ever—massive increases in all manner of power notwithstanding. Now, as Russia and China expand, as the rest of the world integrates nuclear weapons into ordinary military operations even as the US government tries to disinvent them, the Muslim world's warriors kill Americans while inspiring others among us to murder their neighbors.

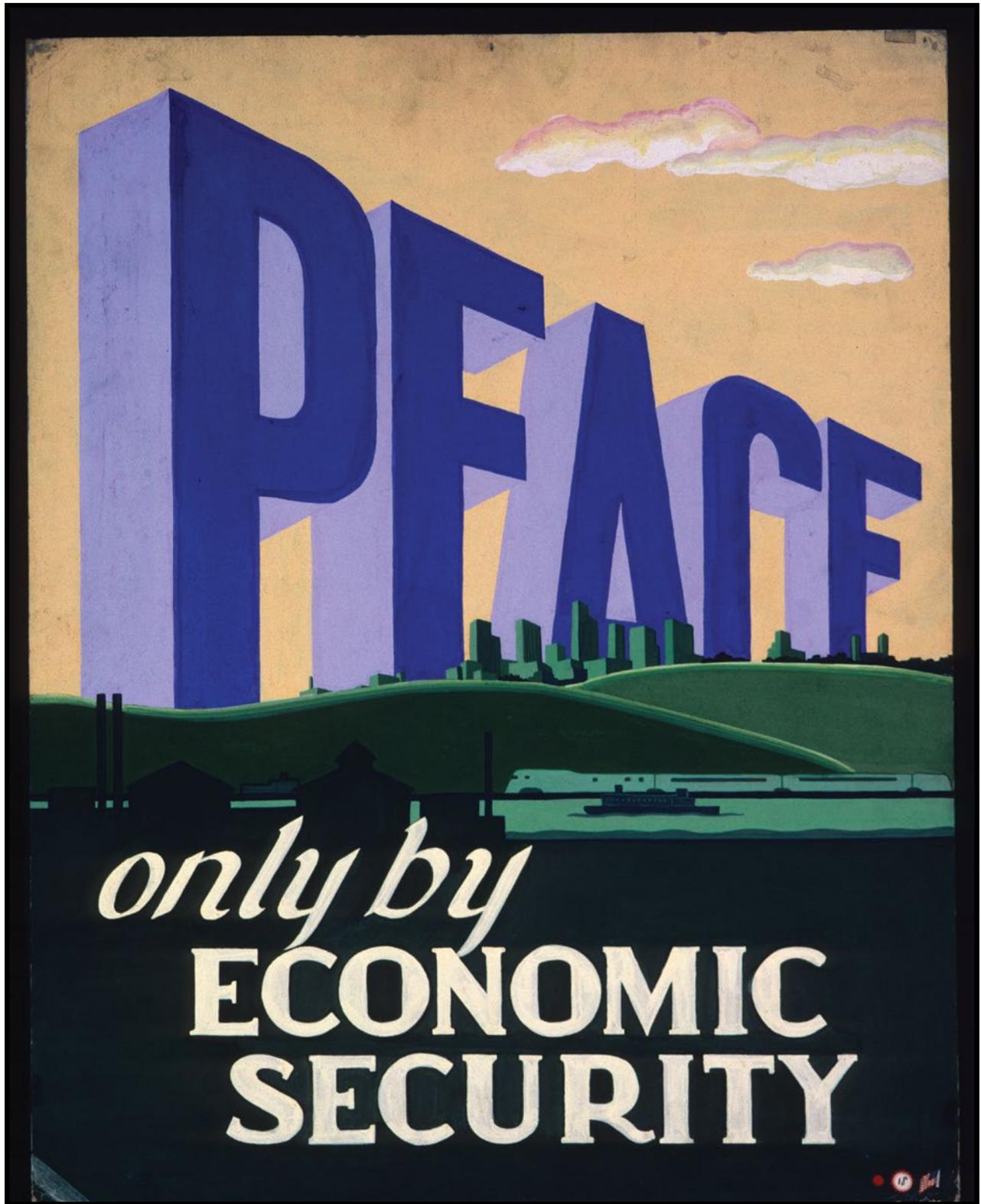
In short, a century's trials have shown the consequences of departing from the classic statesmanship of presidents from Washington to Theodore Roosevelt—minding America's business and maintaining a surplus of power over commitments. They illustrate the need for decisiveness in minding America's own business, and for refraining from interfering in others' affairs while brooking no interference in ours. Then, America's guiding strategic principle was:

"what is nearest is dearest." Jealous balancing of ends and means was its practical guide. Returning to this, the opposite of retrenchment, would mean channeling Ronald Reagan, the only president since TR who approached confrontations in terms of "we win, they lose."

Distinguishing among what is America's vital business—to be minded with all our might—what is peripheral, and what is others' business, has ever been statesmanship's primordial responsibility. Such distinctions are not arbitrary. Nor are they to be made by executive orders, agreements, telephone calls, or "understandings." As matters of life and death, they are the American people's business, to be debated and voted.

To regain respect for its words, the US government must prepare to do something that it has not done since 1945—namely, win a war. Peacefully to delimit spheres of influence vis-à-vis any power requires the capacity to win wars. This means guarding American lives by prioritizing firepower and defending America's satellite network. To be taken seriously by nuclear powers, which have plans for using nuclear weapons in military operations, it means, above all, protecting Americans against ballistic missiles—renouncing the half-century-old bipartisan consensus that peace requires keeping Americans vulnerable.

We can be grateful that today's geopolitical challenges do not amount to the threat which the Soviet Union had posed. Russia's and China's imperialisms are of the traditional kind, expanding to the limits of



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resistance. Defining spheres of influence with such empires by deciding the extent of our own interests vis-à-vis theirs is the stuff of traditional statecraft. To exercise it, the US government must define what America's traditional objective of preventing a single power from dominating all of Europe, and another from dominating East Asia, means in today's circumstances. That is very much our business. Then, it must communicate that understanding to Russia, China, and their neighbors—with deeds more than with words.

American declarations and "trip wire" troops cannot stop Russia's military incursions into areas with substantial Russian populations, and hence from overawing ever more of its "near abroad." Nor does anyone imagine the United States, or even the Eastern European governments involved, making war on Russia to stop it. By the same token, Russia is not going to bog itself down militarily trying to conquer and hold western Ukraine or the Baltic states, never mind Poland. The US government could define America's and Russia's respective spheres of influence by arming these countries substantially, dispensing with inflammatory words and the unserious economic

sanctions currently on Russia, but obviously preparing the devastating kind should she bid for an hegemony that threatens America.

China's appropriation of the South China Sea, accomplished by its masterly construction of military outposts on built-up reefs, cannot be reversed by "freedom of navigation patrols." These are the sad equivalents of "trip wire" troops. Breaking China's shore-based control of the Western Pacific is beyond America's current military and political capacity, especially given Chinese missiles' free ride to local and US targets. Mitigating this threat would have to begin with making our Pacific bases—and America itself—invulnerable to Chinese missiles. Achieving a new, favorable balance of military power in the region might require fortifying Taiwan. But nothing short of that would make it possible to establish a peaceful, long-term delimitation of China's influence.

Islamism's threat stems from the Muslim world's civilizational collapse and internecine warfare, as well as from our foreign policy establishment's attempts to alleviate its effects and steer its course. Having learned that this is counterproductive, America's strategic choice should be to leave that world's concerns to its denizens, minimizing contact with them. Sadly, some potentates and even entire communities incite and celebrate killing Americans. Our business, our safety, lies in killing as many people as are associated in any way with killing Americans, repaying incitement with death, devastation, and economic privation, so that terrorism will become an occasion for communal bewailing rather than celebration.



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and served on the Senate Intelligence Committee as well as on presidential transition teams. For a decade he was a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the author of thirteen books, including *War Ends and Means*, *The Character of Nations*, and *Advice to War Presidents*. He is a student of the classics as well as of European literature; he is also a commercial grape grower.

# Trump's Strategic Realignments

*Bing West*

"Likely," when considering what strategic realignments the Trump administration will embrace to restore American deterrence and enhance global security, is the least likely adverb to apply to predictions. A *Wall Street Journal* review of 6,500 market predictions by economic experts found that most were wrong. I don't know what the Trump administration will do, or how that will affect global security. So here are my seven guesses—acknowledging most are likely to be incorrect:

**1. Overt Bargaining.** President Trump appears to view geopolitics as business deals, with the actors on opposing sides having legitimate interests that can be accommodated by compromise. Thus he employs bluster and hyperbole to provide leverage for reasonable settlements between masters of the universe. President George W. Bush displayed a similar belief that kings decide the course of their nations. He thought he could steer Vladimir Putin, Nouri al-Maliki, and Hamid Karzai onto righteous paths, while the citizens of their countries placidly followed. Trump has similar confidence in his own magisterial magnetism. However, a Trump administration devoid of evangelical vision will not overreach, as did Bush. And while President Obama's global retreat will cease, a merchant creed of quid pro quo deals cannot be America's lodestone. Some doctrine has to emerge as guidance.

**2. Return of Balance of Power.** With the economy as his top priority, Trump will leave the fundamental management of foreign policy to his Cabinet. The Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Defense, as well

as the Director of the CIA and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, are centrist pragmatists. Under their tutorship, the Trump administration will seek some variation of the balance of power that began with the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and reached its apex following the Congress of Vienna (1814–15). That balance was shattered by the two world wars of the 20th century. America's reign as the world's sole superpower was transitory, lasting for only a decade after the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991. What followed was overreach by George W. Bush and retreat by Barack Obama. Now the Trump administration is certain to resume a restrained competition against our adversaries. Given Trump's choices to lead his Cabinet, over the next two years some variation of the traditional balance of power will evolve into written doctrine.

**3. Checking Russia.** Putin has annexed portions of Eastern Ukraine, intimidated Europe, and employed indiscriminate bombing to keep Assad in power. These gains can be contained, but not rolled back. Putin wants to consolidate his global status, not challenge Trump as he did Obama. Trump will reinstate the government contacts severed by Obama and, as in the Reagan years, engage with Russia within sensible limits. "No nation," George Washington wrote in 1778, "is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interests." We can rely upon Trump's Cabinet to adhere to that dictum. Russia will remain America's adversary both in terms of geopolitics and values.

Obama never regained credibility after not enforcing his "red line." Trump's "red line" will be a test in

the cyber world, probably involving Russia. Defense alone is insufficient. Attacks will not cease until there is firm, punitive retaliation. At the same time, Russia (and China) must be convinced that America will prevail in any tit-for-tat escalation duel. Our private sector is both our weakness and strength. Corporate CEOs must be included in war-gaming all options. They know how to employ cyber strikes to affect economies. But our society must be willing to accept disruptions in response. To succeed, Trump must use the bully pulpit to convince the public to stand firm, while accepting that the ideology of the mainstream press insures negative coverage of whatever action he takes.

**4. Stasis in Europe.** Like his predecessors in the Oval Office, Trump has good reason to be skeptical about the heft and commitment of Europe. His demand that European nations contribute more to the common defense echoes that of prior administrations. It will be met with overt agreements and covert accounting legerdemain. The European democracies are our exasperating and dearest friends. They should be more assertive of the values they preach. But while State and Defense will insure close personal relationships, the leftist tilt of most European states assures their constant skepticism of Trump, who will respond in like measure. On balance, NATO, our most critical alliance, will remain more iconic than substantive.

**5. An Ever-turbulent Middle East.** In the Middle East, due to America's copious energy supplies, oil has ceased to be the driving exigent for our military involvement. (In fact, energy commodity exports are an unrecognized lever in tilting the global balance of power in our favor.) President Obama fractured our friendships with Sunni nations in order to align with an Iran that remains hostile and radical. Frequent visits by senior American officials may partially reassure



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Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the Gulf states, but rebuilding trust will take years. If the Boeing \$17 billion deal with Iran proceeds, then Iran will gain access to the US and global banking system, greatly reducing the credibility of imposing future sanctions. How the Boeing deal plays out will signal Trump's resolve or acquiescence toward Iran.

Iranian and Russian military involvement has enabled Assad's Alawite regime to control western Syria. There is no indication that the administration will apply hard leverage to break the alliance between Russia and Iran. Trump, however, will authorize more bombing against an ISIS that will wither as a functioning state among the poor Sunnis confined to central Syria. The Kurds will consolidate a de facto state in northern Iraq and eastern Syria, guaranteeing

escalating clashes with a dictatorial Turkey. Iraq under a corrupt, Shiite-controlled Parliament will remain a satrap of Iran. Without intervening in large numbers, America will provide the intelligence, bombing, advisers, and commando raids to restrict and gradually destroy the terrorist bases across the Levant and in Afghanistan, while accepting that occasional terrorist attacks in Europe and America will recur.

**6. A Trade Deal with China.** In Asia, the island forts will remain fixtures in the South China Sea. But China is certain to face US naval exercises designed to insure freedom of the seas and solidarity with Asian states discomfited by China's aggressiveness. Trump is incensed by China's mercantilism, cyber hacking, and theft of intellectual property. China will deflect retaliation by adjusting the balance of trade. Given the strength of the dollar, Chinese concessions may not be that significant. But the adjustment will be trumpeted as a major foreign policy victory.

### **7. Conclusion: Multipolar Competition Resumes.**

Obama sought to divest America of global leadership. He believed the arc of history, independent of the acts of man, bent inexorably toward democracy and tranquility. In the real world, maintaining a balance of power among Russia, China, and America demands American resolve. Under the Trump administration, America will resume competing, as it has since 1945. After eight years of passivity and retrenchment, this reversion to the mean in American foreign policy—modest as it will be—qualifies as a strategic realignment.

So far, Trump's competitive instincts have focused upon short-term transactions, while America's global leadership is based upon lasting principles. Conjoining the evanescent with the enduring will require growth while serving in the Oval Office. Whether and how that growth occurs is unpredictable.



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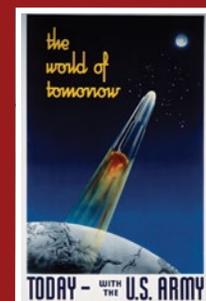
## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is Donald Trump an isolationist, a realist, or a Jacksonian—or none of these?
2. Do our Asian partners feel more or less comfortable with the idea of a Trump presidency?
3. How might the new Trump administration cope with the Iran Nuclear Deal?
4. Is the bipartisan American postwar policy of active engagement abroad over?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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## IN THE NEXT ISSUE NEW MILITARY TECHNOLOGIES



## Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

## Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

## Strategika

*Strategika* is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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