Recalibrating Security Strategy in a Changed World

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“Never, ever, think outside the box.”
“THE BOX” – Budget Austerity Means:

- Reduced force structure
- Reduced global footprint
- BRAC – consolidate functions, forces
- Curtailed strategic appetite
- More reliance on UN
- Assist but don’t intervene
- “Lead from behind”
- Align rhetorically with interests, values
Civilian Agency Austerity:

- Maintain workforce, hiring freeze
- Maintain global footprint
- Reduce official travel, program funding
- Hortatory response to challenges
- Congress less, not more supportive
- Less mission focus, more ‘survival’ mode for offices, individuals
RESULT:

- Military becomes “only” operationally capable response arm
- More not less likely to be called on for show of force, response to unforeseen crisis
- Less ‘whole of government’ capability
- Harder to achieve politically-defined security objectives
- Austerity Defense planning overtaken by exigencies
Major **Physical Threats** to the US National Interest

- Direct attack on the US creating mass casualties, impairing US government/economy, impeding continuity of government
- Protracted/major war with a peer competitor – China, Russia, Iran
- Use of WMD against US or friend/ally of US
- Severe impairment of global trade (extended denial or corruption of data networks, closure of sealanes, energy supply interruption)
- Uncontrolled national debt (former CJCS - #1 threat)
Responses

• We prevail and complete military mission – but at high cost in KIA/WIA, equipment, budget, national will, coalition/alliance political solidarity, internal dissension, and tenuous long-term influence with country.

• We talk about ‘whole of government’, ‘national effort’, ‘updating tools of influence’, but we maintain stovepipes in plans, budgets and interagency operations.
Major Political Threat to the US National Interest

US no longer seen as capable of solving problems, leading solutions, acting in wider interest of world

Need to Recalibrate Efforts
Q: What do these have in common?

• Arab revolt
• COIN
• The US goal of “strengthening alliances and partnerships”
They succeed only if the local population supports them
TOWARD A 21ST CENTURY
US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

• What matters most to our ability to maintain and advance the US national interest in a world of more than 7 billion people in about 200 countries?
  – military superiority . . . ?
  – economic strength . . . ?
  both are essential – yet even with both we risk strategic reverse and erosion of security
Reputation

- US senior commanders have said all along we cannot defeat extremism by military force alone.
- If we are going to win votes in the UN Security Council on major issues (Iran sanctions), gain basing/overflight/transit access, intelligence cooperation and a welcome environment for our exports, companies, diplomats, students and tourists, we need to pay attention to the importance of **public opinion** around the world.
- As important as military strength is, we need to become more politically clever...
What is meant by “Reputation”? = REPUTATION FOR

- STRATEGIC WISDOM
- EFFECTIVE STATECRAFT
- COMPETENCE IN EXECUTION
- WINNING WHEN CHALLENGED

– what Hans Morgenthau called ‘the reputation for power’
A CHANGED WORLD

• Conflict is political – more likely in populated areas than remote battlefields or oceans

• Speed of crisis occurring faster; speed of bureaucracy slower

• Information domain – for West, a protected arena of democratic freedom; for others, it is the 21st Century battlefield

• Rising powers less significant than regaining the form that made us a superpower
Assess Military Roles/Missions in Context of Broad Political Strategy
Widening the Aperture

Identify, Locate, Track Potential Adversaries

- Analyze adversary strategy, actions to create friction abroad, doubt and irresolution at home

Guard interests (incl. homeland) against conventional or unconventional aggression

- Study, track adversary soft power, info ops to discredit, blame, defame US/allied purposes and reputation
STRATEGIC FOCAL POINTS

I. SHAPING THE POSTURE OF KEY POWERS CAPABLE OF DEGRADING US SECURITY

II. REVERSING THE RISE OF ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS WITH EFFECTIVE STATE SECURITY INSTITUTIONS THAT RESPECT RIGHTS AND LAW

III. TAILORING US POLICIES AND APPROACHES TO ADVANCE US CREDIBILITY, REPUTATION

IV. PREPARING NOT JUST FOR ENEMY ATTACK BUT FOR DANGEROUS COLLAPSE OF FRAGILE, FAILING AND OVERLY AUTHORITARIAN STATES

V. ECONOMY OF EFFORT: EXERTING INFLUENCE AND ACHIEVING EFFECTS AT LOWEST COST

VI. PURSUE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES IN CRISIS
CONCLUSIONS

• We failed to optimize during GWOT, high spending
• Budget crisis is a time to address shortcomings
• Sharpen appreciation of the actors and trends that will either secure or undermine our future
• Re-set the toolbox – interagency-wide
• Congress’s influence is decisive; must be treated as fully informed stakeholder
• Military needs to know if non-military capabilities of civilian agencies will be fielded or not