

# **Low Energy and High Friction: How Domestic Determinants Shape U.S. National Security Policy in the Asia-Pacific**

by

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## **Introduction: Questions of Method**

The earliest serious scholarship on the domestic determinants of American foreign policy was James Rosenau's. In the introduction to his 1966 edited book, *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, he wrote, "The links between the domestic sources and the resulting behavior–foreign policy–are not easily observed and are thus especially resistant to coherent analysis."<sup>[1]</sup> In a work a year later, he added,

Most scholarly treatments of foreign policy are either case studies or institutional analysis; that is, they are concerned either with the effects of many sources in a particular situation or with the effect of a single source in a variety of situations. Rare is the work that traces and assesses the relative contribution made by many sources in many diverse situations. The number of non-governmental factors that can shape a society's foreign policy is staggering, and , accordingly, the task of piecing them together into a coherent whole is extraordinarily complex."<sup>[2]</sup>

This essay aims to assess many sources in many diverse situations, posing questions that Rosenau

warns are “resistant to coherent analysis” and dealing with cause and effect links that “are not easily observed” where the number of factors to consider is “staggering” and “the task of piecing them together. . . . is extraordinarily complex.” Even if expectations about the findings cannot be high, the effort is well worth attempting.

### **Recent Scholarship**

In the last five years two studies, concurrent in most of their findings, provide the best available guides for this inquiry. In 1992 through 1994, David A. Deese of Boston College convened a series of meetings aiming to “delineate the political changes transforming the American foreign policy process since the 1960s.”<sup>[3]</sup> In 1995, Harry Harding of George Washington University and Bruce Jentleson of Duke University brought together another group of scholars at the Aspen Institute in Wye, Maryland for much the same purpose. The Aspen Institute study centered on two case studies, one on international response to violence in East Timor and one on the debate over Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status for China.

Both groups found that any such inquiry must take into account a huge and rapidly expanding array of factors, much more extensive even than Rosenau had considered. Among the intangibles (and unmeasurables) to be included are national character and world view as well as the prevailing popular vision of America’s global role. This may derive in great degree from the current national mood, which itself seems to bear some relation to scores of other factors such as the nation’s recent economic performance, the recentness or distance in time from a war,

immigration and demographic shifts, widely held perceptions of the trends in global affairs, etc.

Both studies stress that one must also consider changes in the policy making process, to include an increase in the number of actors and participants, a blending (and dilution) of traditional national security issues with humanitarian, commercial and environmental issues, a trend toward much greater involvement of the public and of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a greater part played by transnational organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a diminished role for the specialized elites from academia and think tanks and a rise in the power of Congress and of the media, generally at the expense of the traditional policy makers in the executive branch.

The Deese study optimistically welcomed the proliferation of actors and of forces shaping U.S. foreign policy, hailed the increase in pluralism, was very hopeful about the prospects for foreign policy by broad-based consensus, and heralded the welcome arrival of what it called “deliberative politics.” The Harding group reached much more nuanced and reserved conclusions about what they called “the growing cacophony of the American political process.” They endorsed the finding of the Deese study that “the foreign policy-making process in the United States is in a state of fundamental transformation,” and they described that transformation as follows:

Previously, foreign policy was determined in a highly elitist process, in which the executive branch made policy, with bipartisan support from Congress and in consultation with a relatively small group of foreign policy specialists outside government. Today, foreign policy is the product of a much more pluralistic process,

in which Congress plays a far more important role, and in which organized interest groups outside government attempt to persuade both Congress and the executive branch to adopt their favored positions on key issues. In addition, Washington no longer has a monopoly on the conduct of U.S. foreign relations. Decisions made by private institutions and by local governments now have a major impact on America's relations with foreign societies. <sup>[4]</sup>

Those two studies certainly were right to discern a “new politics of foreign and national security policy,” though cacophony appears greater than deliberativeness. This paper will speak to the matters the above studies raise in turn: first the intangibles--national character, world view and national mood--then the somewhat more observable matters involving expanded participation in the policy process.

### **American Character and World View**

The essence of the American character in foreign policy is captured in a few basic propositions that have endured since the earliest days of European settlement. The most central of these dates back to Governor John Winthrop, leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who declared in 1630 that “We are as a city upon a hill. . . . the eyes of all the world are upon us. . . . We bear a light unto the world. We should not hide our light under a bushel.” It is remarkable that in 1980, 350 years later (a long span in America's history) Ronald Reagan was repeating the same “city on a hill” phrase.

Twined around this view is a second basic proposition: that America is the “New Jerusalem,” the “New Canaan” or the “New Israel,” a promised land given by God and meant as a model (and a rebuke) to the nations of Europe which, like Babylon or Sodom, are fallen,

corrupt, abandoned by God and meant to be redeemed by the “New Eden.”<sup>[5]</sup> Asia (principally China), by contrast to Europe, was “somnolent,” destined to be awakened by Americans’ idealistic and democratic vitality. Though this idea resonated particularly in the days of the Puritans and later in the Great Awakening, it was also strongly alive in the minds of Theodore Roosevelt’s generation and can be heard today in the voices of the Christian fundamentalist right. Both these propositions present foreign affairs as a drama and the world as a stage on which America works its will (which is God’s will) magnanimously and irresistibly

The notion that America is a light unto the world, “the primitive and precious model toward which all the world shall move,” as Thomas Jefferson called it, “the last, best hope of earth,” in Abraham Lincoln’s words, is the most fundamental element of the American character. Even in its more secular expressions, it creates in Americans an expectation that all nations will in significant ways replicate the “American experiment for all mankind.” Looking for replicators, U.S. citizens perceived in Simon Bolivar or San Martin “the George Washington of Latin America” or “the George Washington of the Andes,” and Louis Kossuth, leader of the revolt of Hungarians against Austrian rule in 1848, was labeled in newspaper editorials “the George Washington of the Danube.”

Obviously Asia is hard to contain in this framework of assumptions. Nonetheless, some newspapers called Chiang Kai-shek “the George Washington of China,” and many Americans felt a great sense of puzzlement and betrayal when China followed Mao. They demanded to

know, “Who lost China?”--as though it had been destined to be America’s at least in the sense that it would follow America’s lead and example. The same thinking led Americans to read the post-war recovery of Japan as proof of the compelling attractiveness of the American model and of its power to transform a fallen imperial system into a prosperous democracy.

In the 1950s and 60s, the rejection of the American model by former colonies in Asia and Africa caused much surprise and distress as Americans wondered, “Why are intellectuals in Africa and Latin America and Asia reading Marx and Lenin? Why aren’t they reading Jefferson and Madison?” John Kennedy called on a strong belief in the transformative power of the American example to sell Congress and the American people on such programs as the Peace Corps, the Alliance for Progress and the space race. In the 1970s the shocks of Vietnam and Watergate and the revelations of CIA misdeeds put the American example in a much less flattering light, but the “global wave of democracies” Ronald Reagan discerned in the 1980s reignited this expectation that America would find imitators around the world, as did the failure of communism in Central Europe and the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, after the Cold War’s end, the confidence is muted, yet one can sense the same expectancy in the American mind. For example, it is secreted between the lines in Thomas Friedman’s best-seller *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, in which practices and innovations identified with the U.S. and particularly with American corporations and Silicon Valley take the world by storm and transform it irresistibly for the better.

These fundamental themes in the American character express themselves in foreign policy

in the form of two responses to the world, and Americans tend to embrace one or the other alternately, in pendulum swings of opinion.<sup>[6]</sup> They at times emerge as a propensity to crusade, to transform the world through aggressive and optimistic endeavors, but the crusades generally lapse in less than a decade into phases of disengagement and aloofness. Kennedy's time and Reagan's were touched by the spirit of the crusade, and Kennedy's rhetoric expressed the crusading spirit forcefully:

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we will pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”

Crusaders may set out in a spirit of global extroversion to “pay any price,” but this is usually followed by a retraction, a popular tendency toward disengagement from the world. Kennedy's aggressive expansiveness was followed by Nixon's detente and retraction. Reagan's revitalization of the Cold War was followed by Clinton's introverted and minimalist foreign policy. At times of national introversion, Americans ask, “If our model is compellingly attractive, why go abroad attempting to propagate it? Indeed, why risk corrupting or otherwise endangering ‘the primitive and precious model toward which all the world shall move’?” This introversion reaction particularly sets in after a great effort like a war, especially a protracted struggle like the Cold War. There can be little doubt that the United States is currently in a phase of introversion.<sup>[7]</sup>

## **The Current National Mood**

The national mood today reflects such post-war weariness and wariness of involvement.

Recent polls do not suggest that Americans are outright isolationist, but it is hard to put a much more positive label on their mood. James M. Lindsay of the Brookings Institution prefers the only slightly less severe term “apathetically internationalist.” Americans are in favor of engagement in the world, but only vaguely so. Over 60 percent of Americans polled in 2000 said the U.S. should “stay involved in world affairs,” but “only two to three percent name foreign policy concerns as the most important problem facing the country, and Americans have trouble identifying issues that concern them. When the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations asked people in 1998 to name ‘the two or three biggest foreign-policy problems facing the United States today,’ the most common response by far, at 21 percent, was ‘don’t know.’”<sup>[8]</sup>

Political leaders, Lindsay points out, “worry less about what the public thinks about an issue than about how intensely it cares,”<sup>[9]</sup> and the presidential campaign gave evidence that the public is no more than listlessly interested in foreign affairs. The two candidates, guided by their polls, gave national welfare reform and payment for prescription drugs for the elderly much more attention than Yugoslavia, where we have close to 10,000 troops, or Israel, where over 300 died in street fighting, or Russia, which seems to be in a state of dangerous deterioration. The foreign policy issue that commanded most attention was National Missile Defense, perhaps because of its promise to hold the world at bay.

Lindsay holds that apathetic internationalism “encourages politicians, who naturally

gravitate toward issues that matter to the public, to neglect foreign policy.” He observes that “both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee have trouble recruiting members,”<sup>[10]</sup> in part because those are difficult committees from which to raise funds but also because Americans are perceived by their representatives as indifferent to foreign affairs. “This apathetic internationalism is reshaping the politics of American foreign policy . . . distorting policy choices to favor the noisy few over the quiet many. . . . [It] “empowers squeaky wheels, . . . [because] when there are a few people who will die for the issue, and no one else gets anywhere close to that, they can have their way.”<sup>[11]</sup> It also makes it harder for presidents to lead, because when there is little attention and little strong feeling attached to an issue, there are no great costs involved in defying the party leadership and / or the President. The House of Representatives refused to vote support for the bombing in Kosovo, for example, even though more than 60 percent of the population declared that they supported the air campaign. This may have been because polls also revealed that only one in nine Americans reported that they followed the news about Kosovo “very closely.” In a similar way, even though over 80 percent of Americans polled supported the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and even though President Clinton and 62 senators had earlier asked that it be withdrawn from the ratification process (to avoid certain defeat), the Senate nonetheless voted to reject it and so sent it down to permanent defeat. The polls also revealed that half those surveyed admitted they had heard nothing about the Senate’s consideration of the CTBT.<sup>[12]</sup> “Left unchecked,” Lindsay

warns, “these impulses will prevent the United States from capitalizing on its great power.”<sup>[13]</sup>

At least one analyst warns that the spirit of the American populace may change from aversion to international involvement to actual antipathy. William Schneider, a contributing editor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, senses that spirit growing since the end of the Cold War:

Instead of being driven by a clear-cut, overriding sense of national interest, foreign policy is now becoming ‘politics as usual’ . . . . That means Americans may no longer see foreign policy as a cause, an expression of great national purpose. Instead, they may see it as another area of complex contending interests, domestic as well as foreign. If that happens, Americans may not just lose interest in foreign policy. They may actively rebel against it. . . .”<sup>[14]</sup>

Of course popular indifference and unawareness of foreign affairs is not a new trait among Americans. They have long relied on the continental size of their country and its fortunate location between broad oceans and non-hostile neighbors to shield them from the consequences of inattention. What may be new, according to Hofstra law professor Peter Spiro, is a spreading of the indifference or aversion to foreign policy from the general populace to the informed elites. Spiro discerns a growing respectability for isolationism due to the ascendancy of what he calls “The New Sovereignists.” He finds among academics, editorial writers, high-level bureaucrats and congressional staffers a consensus against the kind of eager commitment to global leadership that John Kennedy 40 years ago symbolized and stimulated. He points out that Clinton “could muster only about 40 out of 200 members of his own party in the House of Representatives to support his forlorn search for the authority necessary to negotiate additional trade agreements,”<sup>[15]</sup> and he offers many examples of rhetoric from journals and editorials

citing America's size and power as reasons why it can and should "go it alone" and withhold U.N. dues, refuse to sign on to such initiatives as the peacekeeping mission to East Timor or the treaty for the establishment of a permanent war crimes court or the environmental standards outlined in Kyoto. [\[16\]](#)

The impact, then, of the intangibles of national character, vision and mood is to produce a foreign policy of low energy and low drive. There is little vision articulated by the leadership in part because there is little enthusiasm or even interest among the populace. There are few initiatives striking enough to figure in a presidential campaign in part because there is little public response and because it is so difficult to muster presidential authority and party discipline to put new initiatives over the top or through the Congress. The new president will have to work hard to draw together the political capital and the enthusiasm to sustain an active foreign policy, and what is true for foreign policy as a whole will also be so for national security policy toward the Asia Pacific.

### **Changes in the Policy-Making Process and the Rise of the New Politics**

If the intangible elements of national character and mood make for little drive in American national security policy in the Asia-Pacific, developments on the other side of the inquiry, changes in the policy making process, make for plenty of friction. One can certainly say that in recent years policy-making has become more democratic in the sense that there are many more voices and less autocratic control from the top down. It is less certain, however, that

democracy is a great thing in foreign policy making. We have it on the authority of Alexis de Tocqueville, a great admirer of democracy in America, that “foreign politics demand scarcely any of those qualities which a democracy possesses, and they require, on the contrary, the perfect use of almost all those faculties in which it is deficient.”<sup>[17]</sup>

Some trends of change in the foreign policy-making process have been underway for 30 years. The trend toward a more assertive Congress began when the presidency was weakened by the scandal surrounding Watergate and the defeat in Vietnam. A succession of acts of Congress regarding Asia show the challenges the legislative branch has posed to the executive branch. In 1970 Congress repealed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, depriving President Nixon of the mandate they had granted President Johnson to use force in Southeast Asia. In 1973, both houses overrode Nixon’s veto to pass the War Powers Act, restricting the commander-in-chief’s power to send troops into combat without coming to Congress for a declaration of war. In 1974 Congress refused to grant most favored nation trading status to the Soviet Union as part of a demand that human rights (in this case the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate) be respected. Similar congressional action with regard to China would follow in later years. In 1975 Congress required that all American forces be withdrawn from Vietnam, and that they be removed at a faster pace than the executive would have preferred. By 1979, the Undersecretary of State William D. Rogers observed in frustration, “Foreign policy has become almost synonymous with lawmaking. The result is to place a straitjacket of legislation around the manifold complexity of

our relations with other nations.” Six years later President Reagan complained, “We have got to get to the point where we can run a foreign policy without a committee of 535 telling us what we can do.” In the same years Congress reorganized itself to greatly increase the number of committees and in the process broke the power of the party leaders who had once directed affairs with baronial authority. In 1986 political analyst and columnist David Broder observed, “There are 165 different people in the House and Senate who can answer to the proud title ‘Mr. Chairman.’”<sup>[18]</sup>

It can be argued that a more involved Congress makes for policy that more closely reflects the desires of all the people. In practice, however, it has often made for policy that reflects the strong desires of the constituencies of a few members of Congress who carry out a form of “single issue politics,” as when a few members from heavily unionized districts may be very strongly committed to blocking a free trade measure. Moreover, it is difficult for members of Congress to be sufficiently informed and attentive to foreign and security affairs to be responsible and effective. Individual congressmen develop considerable expertise on security affairs, like Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia and Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin, but most of their peers have nowhere near their depth of knowledge, nor do they have the leisure to educate themselves.

Under the rules of the Senate, a single actor, informed or not, can stymie all action on a bill. They permit essentially endless debate (a 60 percent supermajority is required to close out discussion on an issue, and business cannot go forward until all would-be speakers have been

heard or exhausted) and they allow a single senator to put a “hold” on any legislation, meaning it is not to be brought up for final action until he or she agrees. This makes compromise necessary, and policies may be compromised to the point of meaninglessness or unworkability. In the halls of Congress, it is easy to play a preventer role, so easy that an executive working with Congress may find it impossible to carry out an active and energetic foreign policy.

Charles Kegley and Eugene Wittkopf point out that President Truman famously kept a sign on his desk that declared, “The buck stops here.” There is no such desk in Congress.

Over half of the standing committees in both the House and Senate have broadly defined jurisdictions that give them some foreign affairs responsibility. Unlike the executive branch, where policy debates take place in private with a single individual, the president, often making the final choice, congressional debates are perforce public, with final choices made by counting yeas and nays, and with decision making diffuse. Under these conditions, policy consistency and coordination are most unlikely. [\[19\]](#)

With the breakdown of authority of party leaders since the 1970s and 1980s, various members of the House and Senate have grown more willing to form into cross-party coalitions of short duration on issues such as normalizing trade with China, blocking participation in peacekeeping in East Timor or opposing the nuclear reactors deal with North Korea. These coalitions may include very unusual partners (for example, Democrats whose constituents include liberal human rights activists and labor unions whose members are concerned over imports from China may team with conservative Republicans whose constituents include anti-Communists and anti-abortion activists distressed at China’s one-child policy). The coalitions cannot be sustained

because they are not institutionalized into parties or established as part of the platform of the two dominant parties. They are sufficient, however, to block action on an issue through the end of a legislative term.

The rise of Congress as an actor in foreign and national security policy has facilitated the increased participation of other actors in the same process. Interest groups energetically work to influence members of the House and Senate, and in recent years they have learned how to address their concerns to members of the various departments of the executive branch and to the general public. These interest groups may be economic in nature and include unions such as the AFL-CIO or United Auto Workers and major multinational corporations such as General Electric and Daimler-Chrysler; they may be identity-based and include the Cuban Americans, Vietnamese Americans and Jewish Americans; they may be essentially political in character and include Amnesty International, Asia Watch or Greenpeace; or they may be governmental and include both state and local governments (the California World Trade Commission was represented at the most recent meetings of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and the governments of foreign powers.

As the seats at the table increase in number and the voices increase in volume, the once authoritative single voice of the executive is muted. Even the executive branch is a more pluralistic entity than it was as cabinet departments once little involved in foreign and security policy become important players. I. M. Destler of the University of Maryland argues that the

primarily economic departments like Treasury and Commerce have become so important in security policy formulation that they should be granted a higher status, perhaps by melding the National Security Council and the National Economic Council into a National Policy Council. This would reflect, he argues, the inseparability of security affairs and economic affairs, and of foreign affairs and domestic affairs. [\[20\]](#)

Power appears to be shifting from the executive branch into new directions, some of them hard to distinguish at first. Thomas Friedman, New York Times columnist and apostle of globalization, argues that corporations, investors, currency speculators, mutual fund managers and other finance figures are huge and little recognized makers of policy whose power will be felt even more in the coming four years. In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, he finds that policy is made by “the electronic herd”--his phrase to sum up all of these actors and capture the speed with which they can use the Internet to gather information and act on it. [\[21\]](#)

It is hard to assess the power and impact of Friedman’s “electronic herd,” but it is clear that the last few years have witnessed an increase in the power and scope of one large financial actor, the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Robert Zoellick, former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Undersecretary of State and Deputy Chief of Staff in the Bush White House, captures both the growth of that organization’s power and the difficulties associated with that growth:

The IMF’s power has been expanded [by the Asian economic downturn.] It is now the source of macroeconomic policy advice, the lender of last resort, and even the dictator of microeconomic, structural, and trade reforms. Given the IMF’s wide-ranging roles, the institution has become the target of criticism. It is accused of bailing out reckless investors, taking the side of the rich against the poor, being

America's puppet, and adopting much tougher standards for East Asian nations while bowing to political pressure for lenient handling of Russia. IMF officials are also accused of incompetence. Though some of these accusations may have merit, no institution is ready take the IMF's place in supplying the capital that in the right circumstances can help counter financial panics and give countries a breathing space to implement reforms. Yet the IMF has not acquired the political legitimacy to go with its economic clout. Its evolving roles have not been understood, or accepted, by the U.S. Congress. [\[22\]](#)

It is difficult, then, even to list all the relevant actors, or even varieties of actors, in the making of American national security policy today. It is possible to conclude, however, that the one obvious product of the proliferation of actors and interests and lines of influence is an increase in friction: greater difficulty getting anything decided and done. Match a high level of friction with a low level of drive and one at least risks arriving at a dull stasis.

### **The Current Situation, and a Little Speculation**

Into this condition of low drive and high friction, an administration full of new personalities arrives. It seems certain that the new administration will be aggressively challenged in all that it does, though national security policy in Asia may be less a battleground than other matters more contested in the campaign such as health care and tax cuts. The new administration's predecessor certainly faced serious opposition even though Clinton decisively won two elections and enjoyed, even during the course of his impeachment hearings, high popularity ratings. President Bush must expect to feel the pressure of all the forces described above exerting their influence on the making of foreign policy, plus fierce partisanship from Democrats angry over an election whose results they contested by every possible means. Not

only will Mr. Bush lack the cushion of a strong endorsement from the electorate, he will suffer a shadow over his legitimacy having lost the popular vote and gained the White House through recourse to the courts.

The speed and secrecy with which Bush chose his cabinet suggests he will have little patience or talent for the kind of pluralistic, consensus-seeking policy process that this paper argues has emerged in the national security field in recent years. He has made it clear that he seeks to have “the most disciplined White House in decades,”<sup>[23]</sup> and what he seeks in his closest staff he will want to find elsewhere throughout his government. Disappointment and clashes seem inevitable.<sup>[24]</sup>

President Bush will inherit an obstreperous Congress. James Lindsay points out that “45% of current Senators and 61% of current representatives took office after 1992. They have known only fractious relations with the commander in chief [ the President.]”<sup>[25]</sup> On the other hand, the lead members of his national security team, Colin Powell, Condoleeza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld, are reassuring, unobjectionable choices who do not promise to be the source of many new initiatives. None of them has the ambitious, egocentric, power-seeking style of a Henry Kissinger, a Zbigniew Brzezinski or an Al Haig.

*The Economist* predicts that Secretary of State Powell will remain steadfast in his resistance to new commitments and his reluctance to send troops into conflict areas overseas. He opposed the use of force in Iraq, calling instead for economic sanctions and suggesting they be

allowed several years to work, and he supported an early end to the fighting. He opposed the use of troops in Bosnia and criticized the bombing campaign against the Serbs. “Nobody really thinks [the West] has a vital interest [in Bosnia], Powell said. <sup>[26]</sup> National Security Advisor Rice is likely to be equally resistant to troop commitments, and she has already speculated publicly that the troops deployed to Yugoslavia ought to be withdrawn. What will this reluctance mean in Asia? Not that the U.S. would want to pare down troops in Japan or Korea, but possibly that it would cede some of its role in Europe to the Europeans and turn its attention more toward the Asia-Pacific region. So *The Economist* suggests: “Some Europeans, it seems, would dearly love to start a ‘reverse Monroe Doctrine’: We run Europe; you run the rest of the world (though they are notably reluctant to put their defense spending where their mouth is). <sup>[27]</sup>

In Donald Rumsfeld the Defense Department gets a close associate of the influential Vice President, Richard Cheney, a fellow corporate executive used to running a tight ship, and a strong proponent of missile defense, having chaired the commission that assessed the ballistic missile threat to the U.S. and concluded that North Korea and Iran were closer to having weapons capable of striking American soil than the intelligence agencies had reported.

Rumsfeld will find a U.S. military that has been operating throughout the 1990s at a very high tempo and under diminishing funding. Elliot Cohen of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies argues that over the past 10 years the military’s budget has dropped from \$382 billion (in today’s dollars) to a current \$279 billion. It needs to replace planes that in some

cases are more than 30 years old and it suffers difficulties in recruiting enlisted people and retaining junior officers. More generally, Cohen says, “American strategy still relies on a Cold War-derived understanding of military power and fails to focus on the challenges of the new century: homeland defense, a rising China, and what can only be termed “imperial policing”” (which he later in the article refers to as “peace-maintenance operations”).<sup>[28]</sup> Cohen calls for a shift of attention from the rest of the world to Asia:

The objective should be to have—and no less important, be seen to have—a decisive edge over any major competitor, most likely China. To remain dominant over China, the United States must not only shift its attention to the Pacific but also start thinking in entirely new ways about technology, logistics, and operations. For nearly half a century, the American military organized itself to fight a short, extremely intense battle in Europe from large, fixed bases dispersed over relatively short distances. Whatever a future war in Asia might look like, that will not be it. Winning a conflict in Asia will mean long-range warfare, with dispersed, mobile, or concealed basing, and the kinds of forces that can sustain a long, perhaps only intermittently violent, clash in the air, at sea, and in space.<sup>[29]</sup>

U.S. forces will remain in Asia, as reaffirmed by Admiral Dennis C. Blair, the Commander-in-Chief in the Pacific, who last month outlined his vision of American purposes in the region. Although he set only long-range and general aims, he described a very active and demanding process designed to move the security structure of the region from a wheel (America the hub from which bilateral agreements extend like spokes) to a web in which the U.S. fosters “security communities” of which it is both a member and a security guarantor for some other members. Rejecting “zero-sum balance of power mindsets,”<sup>[30]</sup> he endorsed ideas developed by Karl Deutsch in the 1950s when the notion of a European community first was being explored.

Deutsch held in 1957 that security communities can be founded in any environment in which states share “dependable expectations of peaceful change.”<sup>[31]</sup> In Admiral Blair’s eyes, then, the American role is to make such expectations dependable. This requires an engaged, energetic, committed and continual program of preventive diplomacy backed by the evident readiness to use force and involving many security guarantees. It remains to be seen whether the new administration will be able to shape the national mood, the political consensus and the budgets required for the sort of programs Blair and Cohen outline.

If the military is poorly funded at the current juncture, the conduct of U.S. foreign relations is underfunded. Richard N. Gardner, former ambassador to Italy and member of the Secretary of State’s Overseas Presence Advisory Panel, points out that with a gross domestic product near \$10 trillion and a federal budget over \$1.8 trillion, the total allotment by Congress for all non-military costs of managing U.S. national security in 2001 comes to \$20 billion,<sup>[32]</sup> or one percent of the budget. Congress has resisted additional spending on foreign relations in almost every category except for the improvement of security at American embassies overseas.

A pattern emerges: low diplomatic outreach, embassy protection, missile defense, protests in Seattle and Washington against the interdependence that has come with the globalization of communications and trade . . . all these suggest a wish to keep the outside world at bay. After the longest period of uninterrupted economic expansion in its history, the nation seems to feel self-sufficient, secure and detached from global affairs. This attitude was encouraged by the way

Americans seemed insulated from the economic downturn that struck Asia.<sup>[33]</sup> The U.S. economy never faltered in its steady growth and job creation. That apparent immunity may be showing signs of ending. The Federal Reserve Board has become concerned enough about shrinking levels of production and sales that it for the first time lowered interest rates in mid month and did not wait for its usual month-end Open Market Committee meeting. On January 3 and again on March 20, 2001, it lowered the prime rate by a very substantial half percentage point as unemployment edged to 4 percent.

### **Conclusion**

The current situation of high friction and low drive in national security policy toward Asia is all the more regrettable as this may be a moment when more energetic leadership by the U.S. in Asia could be useful. America clearly has a central role to play, a role only more central since July 1997 and the economic downturn. In the candid analysis of the late academic Michel Oksenberg:

No country benefited in absolute terms [from the downturn, but] the United States gained relative to the other major powers. It became more central to regional stability and prosperity than at any time since the early 1960s. Its markets are recognized as pivotal to all countries in the region as they seek to export their way out of their decline. . . . [A]ll countries acknowledge and welcome the role American forward-deployed forces play in maintaining stability in the region--China remains reluctant to acknowledge this openly, primarily out of concern that those forces could be used to defend Taiwan. No one is speaking any longer of America's imminent demise as an Asia Pacific power.<sup>[34]</sup>

But does America possess the resources, particularly the commitment, consensus and

freedom of action, to play this role? Oksenberg doubts it.

Contrary to expectations of the early 1990s, the future still seems to belong to the United States. The region is placing greater hopes on the United States than Washington has the wisdom, resources, and will to sustain. The United States is in an overexposed position. It lacks a prescription for swiftly returning the region to rapid growth. U.S. markets are inadequate to enable all the affected countries simultaneously to export their way to rapid growth. U.S. domestic politics probably preclude it from playing the role others expect of it. While the Asian model is in disrepute, there is no rush to embrace the American one.

[35]

The current American mood of reluctant engagement, and especially “the new politics of foreign and national security policy,” are formidable obstacles to energetic American leadership in the Asia Pacific. Yet Oksenberg is probably right in saying the U.S. “is more central to regional stability and prosperity than at any time since the early 1960s.” Under these circumstances it is worth remembering that in the 1960s, Senator J. William Fulbright warned of America’s “arrogance of power” in Asia. The 1960s, however, were a time when America was in one of its extroverted phases, and that was an era when a decisive and assertive foreign policy was easier to sustain. It would be a sad irony if, in 2010, people looked back on this decade as a time when Americans were not arrogantly powerful but rather were distantly ineffectual--a time when the United States failed to rise out of its indifference and to overcome the complexities of its policy process to play its necessary role in the Asia-Pacific.

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[1] James Rosenau, Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy (New York: Free Press, 1967), p. 2.

[2] James Rosenau, “Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy,” in Approaches to

Comparative and International Politics, ed. R. Barry Farrell (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 32.

[3] David A. Deese, ed., The New Politics of American Foreign Policy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. v.

[4] Harry Harding, Final Report of the 89<sup>th</sup> American Assembly: Public Engagement in American Foreign Policy (Queenstown, MD: Aspen Institute, 1995), p. 3.

[5] Ernest Lee Tuveson, Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), passim.

[6] Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self Interest in America's Foreign Relations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 1-23.

[7] On cycles of introversion and extroversion, see Frank L. Klingberg, "Cyclical Trends in Foreign Policy Revisited in 1990," International Studies Notes 15, no. 2 (Spring 1990.)

[8] James M. Lindsay, "The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 79, no. 5 (September-October 2000), p. 4.

[9] James M. Lindsay, "The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 79, no. 5 (September-October 2000), p. 2.

[10] James M. Lindsay, "The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 79, no. 5 (September-October 2000), p. 4.

[11] James M. Lindsay, "The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 79, no. 5 (September-October 2000), p. 5.

[12] James M. Lindsay, "The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs 79, no. 5 (September-October 2000), p. 3-8.

[13] James M. Lindsay, "The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign

Policy,” Foreign Affairs 79, no. 5 (September-October 2000), p. 2.

[14] William Schneider, “From Foreign Policy to ‘Politics as Usual’,” in The New Politics of American Foreign Policy, ed. David A. Deese (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), p. x.

[15] Peter Spiro, “The New Sovereignists: American Exceptionalism and Its False Prophets,” Foreign Affairs 79, no. 6 (November-December 2000), p. 13.

[16] It is a little startling to find Walter A. McDougall, editor of *Orbis* and author of the well received new history of American foreign relations, Promised Land, Crusader State, say in the concluding chapter of that book, “The United States ought simply to close... all its do-gooder agencies [by which he means foreign aid programs]. If the president and Congress agree that transfers of money are needed to grease the skids for diplomacy (that is, to bribe foreign leaders) or perform a service of interest to the United States (for example, dismantle Soviet warheads), let the State or Defense Department dispense such funds from its own budget.” Walter A. McDougall, Promised Land, Crusader State (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), p. 210.

[17] Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 219.

[18] David S. Broder, “Who Took the Fun Out of Congress?” The Washington Post National Weekly Edition, 17 February 1986, sec A, p. 9.

[19] Charles Kegley and Eugene Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), p. 435.

[20] I. M. Destler, “A Government Divided: The Security Complex and the Economic Complex,” in The New Politics of American Foreign Policy, ed. David A. Deese (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), pp. 143-5.

[21] Thomas L. Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2000), p. 187.

[22] Robert Zoellick, “Campaign 2000 -- A Republican Foreign Policy,” Foreign Affairs 79, no. 1 (January-February 2000), p. 38.

[23] Mike Allen and Dana Milbank, “Cabinet Chosen Quietly, Quickly: Process Presages Effort to Build a Disciplined Administration,” The Washington Post, 7 January 2001, sec. A. p. 1.

[24] “Aides to some congressional leaders, who can help make Bush’s life better or more miserable, said their bosses were miffed that they were not consulted or informed sooner.” Mike Allen and Dana Milbank, “Cabinet Chosen Quietly, Quickly: Process Presages Effort to Build a Disciplined Administration,” The Washington Post, 7 January 2001, sec. A, p. 1.

[25] James M. Lindsay, “The New Apathy: How an Uninterested Public Is Reshaping Foreign Policy,” Foreign Affairs 79, no. 5 (September-October 2000), p. 6.

[26] The Economist, “The World In Their Hands,” 23 December 2000, p. 29.

[27] The Economist, “The World In Their Hands,” 23 December 2000, p. 30.

[28] Eliot A. Cohen, “Domestic Sources of American Security Policy,” in The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy, eds. Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), pp. 41, 46.

[29] Eliot A. Cohen, “Domestic Sources of American Security Policy,” in The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy, eds. Eugene R. Wittkopf and James M. McCormick (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), p. 45.

[30] Dennis C. Blair and John T. Hanley, Jr., “From Wheels to Webs: Reconstructing Asia-Pacific Security Arrangements,” The Washington Quarterly 24, no. 1 (Winter 2001), p. 9.

[31] E. Adler and M. Barnett , eds., Security Communities (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 78.

[32] Richard N. Gardner, “The One Percent Solution: Shirking the Cost of World Leadership,” Foreign Affairs 79, no. 4 (July-August 2000), p. 3.

[33] Few Americans expressed much concern about the economic downturn in Asia and many

actually were excited as it seemed to create a demand for more accountability and democracy among the urban middle class in many countries. They assumed that more open, pluralistic, accountable and democratic societies must be on the way. Congress constrained the president in his response to the crisis. Robert Zoellick points out the irony: “The U.S. has been put in the odd position of not granting the president authority to extend (and protect) the open trading system at the exact moment the U.S. is promoting open trade and market solutions to Asia’s problems.” Zoellick, “Campaign 2000 -- A Republican Foreign Policy,” Foreign Affairs 79, no. 1 (January-February 2000), p. 40.

[34] Michel Oksenberg, “The Asian Strategic Context,” in Robert Zoellick and Phillip Zelikow, America and the East Asian Crisis: Memos to a President (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), p. 9-10.

[35] Michel Oksenberg, “The Asian Strategic Context,” in Robert Zoellick and Phillip Zelikow, America and the East Asian Crisis: Memos to a President (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), p. 14.