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U.S. Grand Strategy: Should America Come Home?

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Amongst the clamor of Republicans and Democrats, cries of racial and sexual inequality, gun violence, terrorist plots, mass killings, economic collapse, social movements and more, lies an unequivocal and extremely complex ideological battle that surpasses leaders, officials, and pundits. This battle is waged to determine the highest of decisions, to compare and contrast situations across a global scale, and mandate the direction a state should take in every aspect of its scope: Grand Strategy.

There exists a grand strategy in almost every field of academia and professional work; for businesses it is profit; for physics: understanding reality; for religion: salvation, and so on. Grand strategy is incorporated into every subsequent goal and task that a certain domain undertakes. Without a grand strategy, there would be very little progression as decisions made would lack the cohesion necessary to produce results. A business that runs without the desire for profits would ultimately end up crashing in on itself as sustainability plummets and it can no longer afford to pay its employees. This is why a sovereign state, much like a successful business, needs a grand strategy in order to survive and continue its growth.

While this paper takes a closer look at the most commonly referred to type of grand strategy, foreign policy, there is a grand strategy inherent in all the different facets of government and accompanying fields as well. There is a different grand strategy for domestic issues, for economics, for specific areas of the world, for scientific endeavors, for education, and so on. While it could be said that the top tier strategy for any state is sustainability, that leads to very little insight as to what the country should be doing and what sort of path it is headed down.
A better definition for grand strategy is that it is "an academic term referring to the plans and policies undertaken in order to balance national ends and means at the broadest national level." Simply put, it is the top political, military, and economic destinations at the time.

Germany’s grand strategy after World War I was to recoup their losses, stop the pitfall that their economy was in, and regroup their assets to create a functioning state. The Roman Empire’s grand strategy during the height of its reign was to continue to conquer and expand its influence as far as it could. These two examples may seem to contrast, however they are both adequate grand strategies as their military, economic, and political goals are enveloped by the immediate need to progress towards something else; be it a functioning civil society or a hegemonic empire.

A situation that is becoming visible on the horizon is that of a “pivot” from Middle East based foreign policy, to that of an Asian foreign policy. With the rise of China, the clashes between the powerful states in that region, the dwindling down of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a desire for more economic stability; the United States is increasing its number of experts on fields related to Asian policy in an attempt to gain a foothold on anything that may occur there in the near future.

In addition to this “pivot”, the United States still has to deal with nuclear proliferation in Iran, the after-effects of the Arab Spring, sustaining and transitioning of responsibility to a new Iraq government, conflict with Taliban, and many other issues that have yet to be resolved in the Middle East. After over a decade of spending blunders, unpopular wars, and the resulting massively divided domestic political society, the United States needs to act soon in hopes of retaining its former prowess in the region and beyond.

\[136\] Peter D. Feaver, “Debating American Grand strategy after Major War,” Orbis, Fall 2009, pp. 548
Yet, Asia is not the only continent that requires a concrete strategy, as the 2007 economic recession has sent the European Union (most notably Greece) spiraling into a whirlpool of debt and uncertainty as "the economy" becomes the primary cause of concern for the citizens of the Western World. The United States holds many investments in Europe, and any wave that happens overseas is almost certain to send ripples back.

Once these various situations are fully examined and assessed, only then can a seemingly coherent grand strategy for the United States emerge in such a dynamic environment that is the global community. Many critics and pundits claim that to combat economic hardships and public friction the United States should reign it its foreign investments; including but not limited to military bases, economic investments, nation-building efforts, and so on.

At first glance, this seems a viable option for addressing the concerns that the American and international public has for its leadership; yet further research into the matter proves otherwise. There will always be the question of whether or not the initial investments made in respect to United States foreign affairs were worth their trouble; however, the fact of the matter is that these investments are now affecting many animated variables in U.S. systems. There is little point in becoming vexed about the past, and the only way to move forward is to act on matters that are current and tangible.

Many of the arguments against keeping U.S. engagements at the same intensity or furthering their scope usually revolve around a cost-benefit analysis far more than anything ideological or subjective. This pragmatic look into what we reap and sow from lengthy engagements largely has to do with the economic recession of 2007. Instead of the virtually limitless resources that defined the 1990s and early 2000s, the United States has to take a closer look at what it is spending and how it is being used. As a result, a majority of public opinion in
recent years has been repulsed by any interventions or campaigns overseas; the most recent example being the civil war in Syria. This is a relatively new phenomenon as the past two decades of United States foreign policy strategy have been influenced by the power vacuum resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union, sporadic humanitarian intervention (aggressive liberalism) and within the past 10 years, the need for primacy and the eradication of terrorism. The difference is that now U.S. strategy has to deal with a sluggish economy, transparency of government affairs, and dwindling public support for any aggressiveness overseas. This results in a very straightforward argument: put the money the United States is spending on foreign entities and direct it towards more domestically engaged enterprises.

A majority of these arguments fall flat, however, when further probing shows that the benefits of scaling back U.S. global presences are far outweighed by the costs of doing so. Too many variables depend on a strong U.S. presence in the vicinity. The United States could save over $900 billion over 10 years if we administer draconian cuts to our nuclear arsenal, send all foreign troops home, shrank each branch of the military, and ended its security guarantees. However, a majority of those that are against keeping the status quo of foreign engagements do not wish for such a radical response. Most of the changes proposed are termed “restraint” “offshore balancing” and “over the horizon”, signaling a much more moderate response to defense and overseas spending.

These debates are not new, as many administrations since the 1980s have seen attempts by some to pull back our entrenchments and keep our hands clean. Bush Sr.’s administration ran on a pro-isolation policy centered on recovering from the Cold War and trying to find the U.S.’s

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place as the hegemon in the international system. This, however, changed when his hand was
forced when crises such as those in Somalia and the Gulf War appeared. Years later, the Clinton
administration found new affection for air power, which was apparent during the U.S.
interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo. The Obama administration followed suit with 2011 Libyan
Civil War, which was an air power campaign, akin to those in Bosnia and Kosovo, used to
minimize U.S. casualties and keep boots off the ground.

The only administration that remains an outlier to the repulse of deep foreign
entrenchment was the Bush administration during the aftermath of September 11, 2001. It is
here that the first truly pro-active U.S. grand strategy was seen since the fall of the Soviet Union:
Primacy. The United States during this time did everything in its power to become the tip of the
spearhead, and arguably the rest of the shaft, against Terrorism, terming a new “Axis of Evil”. This
clear approach to foreign policy is the only time a coherent strategy existed for the United
States in the past two decades.

Grand strategy, at its finest, was the driving power behind the Macedonian invasion of
Ancient Greece, the French Revolution, the combined efforts to take down Hitler and his Third
Reich, the end of the Cold War, and so on. In an academic sense, there is nothing higher at the
strategic or legislative level. The purpose of this paper is to; first, define what specific, if any,
strategies the United States adopted in the mid-1980s through the Cold War, and to when it came
into being as the world’s hegemonic superpower. Next, will be to outline an argument using
empirical research of international case studies of what strategies should be supported over the
next few years; whether it is a single strategy of engagement and diplomacy, or a reactive case-

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by-case system of deliberation. Finally, it will be discussed whether to stay engaged in foreign
affairs or to pull back as the United States heads into uncertain times.

II

Grand strategy, it is now very apparent, is a loaded term with many connotations
depending on both context and authority. If there were, and there is not, a clear-cut and easy
way to determine a country’s grand strategy at one point in time, almost every single pundit or
official would offer a different viewpoint. Terms such as Primacy, Aggressive Liberalism,
Selective Engagement, Neo-isolationism, and Containment are all types of grand strategies;
however, there are many more that will not even be mentioned in this project. Grand strategies,
in a foreign policy lens, can range from aggressive foreign policy including military
interventions and intermittent conflicts to sustain hegemonic abilities, to staying completely out
of foreign affairs as an isolated entity.

The fact that U.S. is such a large and complex nation, with many competing interests and
a diverse history, means that it is still debated on what, if any, grand strategies the United States
has advocated in its history. It might suffice to say that each individual administration (Regan,
Bush, Clinton, etc.) had their own grand strategies and plans from the outset; but the reality is
that each individual administration was beset by a number of crises that diverged from their
normal plan. When looking back at these “anomalies” it is hard to say whether there was ever a
coherent grand strategy.

When learning about U.S. foreign grand strategy in the contemporary sense, it is usually
a great benefit to look back at the turbulent 1980s and 1990s. The decline and fall of the Soviet
Union created a perfect world for the United States to experiment with almost unwieldy power
and to observe the after-effects of being the only hegemon in a power vacuum. This section is
poised to outline the many different types of strategy the United States has been said to adopt recently. To simplify it, a look at the four broad categories of foreign grand strategy, which each specific strategy can fit into it, will be done rather than a precise look at the many variations of each. These four categories are: Neo-Isolationism, Selective Engagement, Cooperative Security, and Primacy.

**Neo-Isolationism**

Starting at one end of the aggression spectrum is Isolationism or Neo-isolationism as traditional isolationism, the one seen prior to World War II, is rendered completely impossible by today’s globalized economy. Neo-Isolationism is the isolating of United States interests from the rest of the international system. American citizens, their domestic interests, and the safety of the state’s borders are the primary objectives in a Neo-Isolationist strategy. Among the four strategies that will be discussed, Neo-Isolationism tends to be the least popular and the least ambitious. The "security, liberty, and property of the American people" is the only factor behind decisions made in this frame of legislation.\(^\text{141}\)

Neo-Isolationists are realists; they focus solely on the division of power in the anarchic system of international relations to support their decision-making. To a Neo-isolationist the real question that needs to be asked when wondering about grand strategy is “who can threaten the sovereignty of the United States?” Their answer: No one.\(^\text{142}\) Their ideology stems from the single fact that the United States is undisputed in military power, and thus we should only focus inwardly on domestic issues. They believe there is little to no reason for the United States to

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\(^{141}\) The previous stated spectrum from militant intervention to domestic isolation

\(^{142}\) Bandow, “Keeping the Troops and the Money at Home,” p. 10

invest in foreign affairs. To the Neo-Isolationist we are “strategically immune” to all types of foreign threats - economically, geographically culturally, militarily, etc. The United States is also fortunately surrounded by oceans and militarily weak states, Canada and Mexico. With a Neo-Isolationist strategy in place, however, the United States loses its stakes in many foreign investments and loses control over an increasingly globalize world, where one event has the far-reaching capabilities to affect millions. While any rational individual would love to live in a peaceful world, where the United States did not have to spend such large sums of money and resources to protect its interests and those of its allies and their populations, the reality of the situation proves otherwise. Thus, a look into other strategies is required.

Selective Engagement

In short, Selective Engagement is a much more realistic (though isolationists are realists in that they believe in the Hobbesian view of power struggles) approach to the unrealistic neo-isolationist strategy recently discussed. This strategy emphasizes some aspects of isolationism, namely that “U.S. geography and nuclear deterrence make the United States so secure that a Eurasian hegemon would not pose much of a security problem.” However, Selective Engagement’s (SE) focus is to create and maintain a peaceful relationship with those that have incredible industrial and military capabilities, namely the EU, Russia, China, and Japan.

“Selective Engagement is, by definition, selective. It steers the middle course between an isolationist, unilateralist course, on the one hand, and a world policeman, highly interventionist role on the other. It avoids both an overly restrictive and overly expansive

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144 Nordlinger, “Isolationism Reconsidered” pg. 6
145 In comparison to the United States
146 Ibid.
definition of America’s interests, and it strikes a balance between doing too much and too little militarily to support them.\textsuperscript{147}

A number of critics of SE happen to be supporters of Neo-Isolationism, and thus they argue that SE encompasses cyclical logic in the way it tries to balance power and create peace. To prevent wars, the Neo-Isolationist says, SE theorists propose to “maintain substantial military forces, threaten war, and risk war.”\textsuperscript{148} To the Neo-Isolationist, as stated previously, the only way to prevent becoming involved in a war is to stay out of other’s affairs completely and that by in attempting to prevent wars, the United States is bound to create new ones. A rebuttal by SE theorists, however, would propose that this type of strategy was put into use during the World Wars, and unfortunately, a global conflict would force the United States’ hand, thus the idea of creating a balance of power using SE doctrine.

It is already increasingly apparent as to why it has been almost impossible for the United States to hold a coherent and concrete Grand Strategy. One major reason is that the world may not be viable for a single grand strategy anymore, which will be discussed further on in this article. It may take the combination of multiple grand strategies, or a Mixed Strategy (to borrow from Aristotle\textsuperscript{149}), to realize a summary version of a viable doctrine needed to address the concerns of a powerful hegemon.

\textsuperscript{149} In Aristotle's 'Politics' he argues that a "mixed constitution" consisting of elements of Monarchism, Aristocratism, and Democratism was the best formation for a sovereign state
Cooperative Security

Cooperative Security (CS), a much more globally optimistic grand strategy than any other, is also the sole strategy that bases its ideology off “liberalist” notions rather than “realist” ones.\(^{150}\) Whereas Neo-Isolationism and SE are primarily concerned with domestic issues and staying away from conflict as much as possible (realist guidelines), CS is centered on keeping world peace using diplomatic relations with other nation-states. To the supporters of CS, the United States has a large amount to gain in keeping global peace, as peace is “indivisible”\(^{151}\): any violent nation is a threat to all, regardless of intent, as they threaten the balance of power and peace at play.

However, there are critiques against this strategy, for instance few states will want to rise above their own self-interest to help a collective good and only states that are within the parameters for being a part of this alliance are democratic states, or pseudo-democratic states. Democratic states, then, are much less likely to go to war because of public opinion usually swaying towards more pacific means of delegation among states, as the legislators and decision makers do not want to upset the public opinion, which is the driving force behind their legitimacy. It follows that, since aggressors are not likely to listen to rhetoric instead of military force, any attempt using CS will cause either a backlashing public opinion or a stalled foreign policy with little to no tangible results. This does not mean it is any less (or more) viable than any other strategy, however. Each strategy has its advantages and disadvantages, and thus the picture of why one single coherent strategy has been out of reach for so long is becoming increasingly apparent.

\(^{150}\) In the context of IR, Liberalism believes in a globalized world using NGOs and international arms and that humans are increasingly making moral decisions, whereas Realism relies on the Security Dilemma and power struggles. (Optimism vs. Realism)

Primacy

As almost every quadrant on the spectrum of grand strategies has been discussed in some form of length, the last remaining strategy to be looked at is Primacy. A seemingly exact opposite of Neo-Isolationism, Primacy is focused on power and aggression as a means of maintaining global “peace”, thus it is the most “realistic” power. This “power” of Primacy stems from a strong and primary U.S. global presence; only the United States, with its capabilities, has the mean of ensuring global peace.

To stem the tide of terrorism after 9/11, Primacy demanded an expanded NATO, less correspondence with the United Nations, increased military presence globally, a multi-lateral hunt for Osama Bin Laden, and greater U.S. presence in every sphere of influence across the globe. The United States military needed to be at the cutting edge of technology, with as much power in both quantity and quality as possible, with specialists for every field and country working together to help fight the formless and evil enemy that is Terrorism.

The passion that Primacy creates amongst all individuals involved in the state utilizing its benefits can still be seen today across party lines. Regardless of Republican or Democrat, most Americans alive during 9/11 and now would still agree that the United States is the greatest country on Earth, and that our way of life, of “Americanism” is supreme.

“Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq. We did. I promised to refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11. We have. We've blunted the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan, and in 2014, our longest war will be over. A new tower rises

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152 Once again, to avoid confusion, “realistic” means “not liberal” rather than the contemporary usage denoting pragmatism.

above the New York skyline, al Qaeda is on the path to defeat, and Osama bin Laden is dead.”

Of course, just like any other strategy, regardless of its longevity, Primacy runs into criticisms and problems, some more prevalent than others. A majority of the criticisms pitted against Primacy are centered on the fact that most states will not take U.S. or any other global power’s leadership without some form of resentment or pushback. Primacy is a realist strategy, however, and understands that most states are vying for their own international influence and attempting to be dominant at least within their own region. The response to this is to use as much power and dominance, not just militarily, to keep those aggressors at bay, and thus an odd quasi-peace is formed. Primacy is “little more than a rationale for the continued pursuit of Cold War policy and strategy in the absence of an enemy.”

III

With an in-depth discussion of the various grand strategies and which, if any, each administration following the Cold War discussed at length; it is now time to look forward and see what should be done rather than what has been done. As stated previously, a case-by-case analysis is by far the most efficient way of discussing this. The cases will be separated into different regions, as each regional sovereign has much stronger ties with those surrounding it even in such a globalized world (Iran-Iraq relations are much more important than North Korea-Iraq for example). These regions include the Middle East, Asia, Europe, as they are the most important to national interests at this time of writing. However, there will be a follow-up
cumulative look at the rest of the world to gain a much broader look at what U.S. Grand Strategy should be in the near future.

**Middle East**

The Middle East, since the events of 9/11, and to some extent during the late twentieth century, has dominated the deliberative sphere in most of the Western world. With the GWOT, the Arab Spring, the Libyan Civil War, the Syrian Civil War, the Benghazi Scandal, Iran’s nuclear program, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and countless other incidents just in the last decade, the Middle East dwarfs any other sphere of influence for the United States and its allies in terms of activity.

The reoccurring sentiment for the Middle East, with Afghanistan being the “Graveyard of Empires”, and a very unstable political society in almost all states, is that there has never been a strict American policy in the Middle East and “it’s a good thing that we don’t because, if we did, it would probably be the wrong one.” The situation amongst Middle Eastern states themselves is exacerbated by the odd relationship that the United States has with the Middle East as a whole:

> “U.S. relations with the Arab countries and Iran have been grounded almost entirely in unsentimental calculations of interest. The American relationship with Israel, by contrast, has rested almost entirely on religious and emotional bonds. This disconnect has precluded any grand strategy.”

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This type of relationship is very common however; we see almost the same kind of outlook when dealing with Japan and Asia. Yet those relationships are not nearly as important to U.S. leaders as their Middle Eastern counterparts. Africa, Asia, and Europe all converge in the Middle East and the area is rife with natural resources. Any global power that wants to "project its power" cannot do so without access to the Middle East.158

Although Iraq and Afghanistan have been at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy the past decade, with the end of the GWOT, the conflicts here have been winding down; stabilization is the true goal of both of these states, and fortunately the United States seems to be headed down a good path with this.

The main conduit for the United States in the Middle East is Israel. Having been allies for decades, the United States and Israel maintain a tight knit alliance that has caused many stirs throughout the region, and has been hotbed for feverous debate. Many American leaders believe Israel to be too aggressive and stubborn, causing many problems for the United States; while others argue that Israel is our greatest ally and of great benefit to us due to their proximity in the Middle East.

Israel's main problem stems from ideological differences between it and its neighbors. Israel believes itself to be an extension of European political and economic societies rather than Middle Eastern ones. Israel also appears to have a one-sided relationship with the United States as "(it) does not appear concerned about the extent to which its policies have undermined America's ability to protect it from concerted international punishment for its actions...America

158 Ibid.
may ‘have Israel’s back’, but – on this – no one now has America’s back" and thus the main problem comes into focus.

The United States needs to re-evaluate its relationship with Israel. Presently, Israel does what it wants and the U.S. constantly stands by to defend it. While Israel is the most important relationship in the Middle East for the United States, it needs to give back to the United States what it receives. Israel is a major reason why the United States is hated by those in Middle Eastern states; they see Israel as a relic of Western Imperialism since Middle Easterners had very little say in its formation.

Regardless of Israeli’s aggressive nature, the United States should also focus on Egypt and Saudi Arabia, two of the largest and most influential states in the region next to Israel. Egypt’s future, because of recent events, is still uncertain. Many posit that regardless of the outcome of nation’s changes, there will be less U.S. influence, and more contention with Israel as Egypt heads towards Islamist populism. This means that the United States must try to show its ability to cooperate with the new regime regardless of their ideological differences.

Saudi Arabian-American relationships have also weakened considerably during the GWOT. This is, in part, due to American Islamophobia and diverging interests. "U.S.-Saudi cooperation is no longer instinctual and automatic. It has been cynically transactional, with cooperation taking place on a case-by-case basis as specific interests dictate." The addition of Iran’s nuclear ambitions has also chipped away at the dissolving partnership. The United States wants to preserve Israel’s nuclear monopoly in the Middle East while deterring that of Iran; however, Saudi Arabia does not wish the same.

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It is very easy to see how all of these conflicts are cyclical, with Israel the independent variable. Thus, to gain the greatest benefit with the least amount of risk, the United States needs to adhere to cooperation between the leading states of the Middle East. With Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and a slowly allying Iraq, all cooperating with the United States, it would be much easier to stop the nuclear proliferation of Iran, the conflicts in Syria, check Russian and Chinese regional powers, stem the spread of Terrorism, and essentially have a much greater range of influence in the entire area.

This is obviously an over-simplification, but it needs to be reiterated as much as possible since the current mindset of the United States is to use hegemonic primacy and power to sustain viable interests in the region. This includes sanctions, drone strikes, military bases, and other means of hard power. While Obama originally planned on this type of soft-power strategy in his campaign, as he aspired to do almost the complete opposite of his predecessor, as discussed, he has failed in this regard.

This failure of incorporating soft power is due to two reasons: the first, Obama has decided to both dwindle U.S. presence in areas and reign in investments while attempting to increase soft power, and secondly, his blunders with the Syrian crisis have further discredit the United States. There is too much ambiguity in the United States when comparing the Libyan Civil War and the Syrian Civil War. Innocents have died in each area, so why the polar opposites from U.S. Leaders? This lowers the United States’ ability to be trusted, as many see the United States as following narrowly defined self-interests; “the administration’s grand strategy was therefore perceived as promoting narrow U.S. interests rather than global public goods”.

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Thus, by reigning in foreign investments, withdrawing troops, staying out of humanitarian conflicts, and becoming more isolated, the United States is stating that it cares less about protecting innocents and helping other countries and that it will only put resources towards things that are in its best interests. (Libyan Crisis is a prime example of this). This is a very common phenomenon when dealing with isolationism. Although any country would arguably do the same as the United States is now, the fact of the matter is that there is still a lot of animosity towards any steps taken by the U.S. to remain docile during international conflicts. “Damned if you do, damned if you don’t.”

A grand strategy that fits this situation very well seems to be CS (Cooperative Security) in which foreign investments are kept at the same levels, however instead of them being coercive powers, they are cooperative. 9/11 is a prime example of what happens when coercive power is used without taking account of the repercussions, “9/11 crystallized a truth...though a new World Order based on U.S. power...had been created, it was not one that was considered just in many corners of the world.”

A proposed solution to this is a tangible form of CS named the “Demonstrative Model”, which posits:

“that the best means of assuring U.S. security and influence in a multi-polar world is to encourage the perception that prosperity and opportunity are clearly possible within the structures of the current world order thereby reducing the number of states who would desire to undo it”

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The Demonstrative Model requires states to concentrate significant resources and efforts onto a small number of states that hold high strategic importance in trouble regions. This will lead to government reforms, (hopefully) increased prosperity, and a change of mindset towards Western ideals. This is done in hopes to demonstrate how to govern “effectively and prosperously.”

The effects of the Demonstrative Model are diverse. Primarily, it ends poor governance in the targeted countries, stifles inequality, ends the notion that U.S. exploits these countries for their own gains (as was seen far and wide during the GWOT), lessens the risk and scope of U.S. and allied policies as they focus on a select few regional powers; and ultimately decreases the animosity for the “World Order.” If the current order is prosperous, there is very little reason to believe that rational actors would attempt to deride it.

Thus, the Demonstrative Model is by far the most peaceable and long-lasting solution to many of the solutions in the Middle East. By focusing primarily on U.S.-Israeli relations, keeping Israel “on a leash” so to speak, promoting equality and prosperity in both Saudi Arabia, and Egypt especially. This, in turn, will allow others to see the prosperity that comes about from cooperating with each other, rather than opposing. It is a messy solution, and does not put U.S. interests at the forefront, but that is what separates CS from Primacy; peaceful negotiations and security are the main products, not U.S. hegemonic influence. This type of strategy can already be seen in talks with Iran over their nuclear program. Instead of sanctions, peaceful negotiations are making unprecedented headway regardless of how far they are from completion.

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164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
While the Demonstrative Model will most likely not make headlines due to many factors, supporters of a strong and active U.S. foreign policy have views that are greatly in line with the Demonstrative Model as “the benefits of deep engagement” they say, “are legion.” The drawbacks of reigning in foreign investments will force the U.S. to cede economic and political leverage as well lose a lot of the security that comes with being engaged in foreign countries. While defense spending has been said to be far too high, and that lowering it will allow the United States to bolster its domestic economy; the fact is that defense spending equated for only 4.5% of the GDP in 2012, whereas the norm since World War 2 has been 7-8%.

This type of grand strategy will be very prevalent in Asia as well as the Middle East. Cooperation with Japan and South Korea, to have them influence the two troubling states in that region, North Korea and China, will be seen to have far greater benefit than a humanitarian intervention into North Korea, or starting an economic trade war with China.

Asia

The most troublesome situation in Asia currently is that of Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, or North Korea. Crimes against humanity, agricultural and economic collapse, political instability, “brainwashing”, and almost statewide hatred for the United States bred by the North Korean government. At first glance an invasion under the guise of Primacy seems to be the most notable option, almost any nation on Earth would agree. The amount of resources and lives lost in taking down a very militarily and structurally weak regime seems to be almost the most moral. Very few would criticize the notion that a war against North Korea would be just. However, there are a lot of factors to consider in the North Korean situation.

The first is the notion of state sovereignty. There is no real way to decide who is right or wrong in an international conflict, so state sovereignty is needed to ensure that each state has the

ability to pursue their own interests. While many lives are being lost in North Korea on a daily basis, and many are imprisoned; there is very little legal reason to attack, as they have not encroached onto any other territories. Of course, recent years have seen numerous threats against the United States and North Korea, there has not been any acting on those threats, and thus there is little reason to invade for security reasons.

This notion of sovereignty has come under serious scrutiny though, largely in part due to the situation in North Korea. What has come out of discussions of sovereignty is the notion of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P). The R2P doctrine states that all nations of the world have a duty to protect those who human rights were being infringed upon.\(^\text{168}\) This lead to deliberation, however, because a majority of human rights are said to be of Western and Judeo-Christian values; so how can the United Nations, largely a Western institution, force other countries to follow their ideals and still claim to be peaceful? However the United Nations has posited in the “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”, that the right to life is a universal right that every sovereign state should protect.

This all seems well and good, as no rational human being would ever disagree with this; but the line blurs when dealing with more cultural rights that the U.N. chartered human rights contains. A counter-argument could be made where a large group of non-Western states could impose a law that Western cultures did not agree with; such as women having to wear a hijab. Many non-Western states believe it should be required, and although the Liberal Western States are against it, both sides argue from ideological viewpoints rather than natural or moral law.

Regardless of the legality of a humanitarian intervention, the situation is far more complex than it seems at first glance. There are two reasons why humanitarian intervention may not be the best option. First, many critics of intervention believe that the regime of Kim Jong-Un

\(^{168}\) "To Protect Sovereignty, or to Protect Lives?" The Economist 15 May 2008
is not the prime reason why humanitarian crises are so prevalent in North Korea. "They (critics) consider that the root cause of North Korean human rights problems comes from outside of North Korea, such as the U.N. economic sanctions against North Korea as well as natural disasters. They also argue that the hostile relations between the U.S. and North Korea have made the North Korean situation worse."^169

It is here that I say these claims are almost foolish, I agree that the United States relationship with North Korea does not help the situation at least when its very hostile (though the U.S. has sent aid and offered to send more), the fact of the matter is that the brainwashing of civilians, the cultish society pervading the entire state, and the political prison camps of which contain over 200,000 citizens, would beg to differ.^170

The better critique against intervention stems from the notion that any military intervention is a short-sighted goal. While a vast majority of North Koreans live in poverty or jail, a surprisingly large number do enjoy a good life in the state as they are the elite of the society. Any uprising would turn these innocent people's lives upside down. In addition, the fall of the regime would mean that the impoverished and hungry majority of North Korea, over 22 million people, would feel the worst effects:

"(Intervention would) incur more devastating effects on the North Korean people by aggravating current human rights situations, for the major victims accruing from the

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^170 "North Korea: Political Prison Camps." Amnesty International, 4 May 2011
regime change are the North Korean people themselves, especially the less advantaged peoples who are the target for protecting and improving human rights.”

An effect of intervention would mean millions of refugees into South Korea, China, and other surrounding countries. There is not a single country in the world, especially in that area, that can take in and take care of a brainwashed, impoverished, and hungry population of an entire state. Thus, more lives than ever before will perish.

The last and most optimistic plan of North Korea is internal political change. “There is little awareness of the extent to which the North Korean totalitarian system is steadily eroding, opening possibilities that did not exist until very recently for internal political and economic change.” However, the optimism of this notion is lost as a deeper insight into North Korea’s society is gained. The people of North Korea believe their leaders to be products of divine intervention, that they have the strongest military in the world, and that the United States is an evil country bent on killing all innocents. It is the main reason the regime is still in power today.

Thus, there seems to be little hope for North Korea currently; either the world stands idly by while millions suffer from hunger and disease while being imprisoned for truly ludicrous reasons, or risk intervening and making the situation much worse, not only for the North Koreans, but the surrounding area. Surprisingly, the best plan of action for North Korea resides not with western liberal institutions or states, but with China and its allies.

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It can be said that North Korea's only "ally" left in the world is China, as the Soviet Union fell and South Korea became a partner of the Western world. This means that beyond China, North Korea has very little "real" interaction with other countries, save threatening or asking for aid. The relationship between China and North Korea is almost surreal, however. In 2013, North Korea ransomed a Chinese government official and fishing boat in return for $97,600, not exactly the type of action an ally would take.

Though they are tightly knit, China is quickly becoming irked by North Korea's desire to become a nuclear power, and its apparent desire to start a war with the world's powers. China essentially treats North Korea the way a parent treats a misbehaving child. Whenever North Korea decides to spout violent rhetoric, threaten South Korea or the U.S., and move its "nuclear missiles" (notice the quotations), China is quick to try to calm the North Korean regime down. Whether or not the North Korean leaders actually believe the propaganda they feed is a different story.

Like a teacher having to use an unruly child's parents to get him or her to do something, the United States must use China as a means of reaching North Korea's leadership in any substantial way. This will form a partnership with the Chinese that borders on a necessary interest: keeping the peace. While China does not exactly harbor good sentiments for the United States, and vice versa, there is at least a mutual respect that is absent from most of those who are not allied with the United States. Each fears a war with the other and respects their power and influence. Thus, this partnership not only ensures that North Korea does not create any conflicts, but also ensures that the U.S.-China relationship will be strengthened through diplomatic means.

Xinhua, "Chinese, DPRK leaders exchange congratulatory messages on the launch of friendship year", 1 January 2009.
CS is by far the most viable strategy for this as well. Although the Demonstrative Method cannot be used in Asia because the political and economic spheres are much different, cooperation is once again the most viable option for establishing stability in the region. Since the United States already entertains close ties with Japan and South Korea, who are both formidable states in the area (though are dwarfed by China), it will be much easier for the United States to create incentives for states in that region to cooperate.

China’s growth is unprecedented, and a very real fear of the world becoming a bi-polar (or even multi-polar with the inclusion of India) power struggle is very real. This means, however, that China will require more and more resources, especially oil. While China does enjoy somewhat domestic production of oil, it is not nearly enough to keep the state purely autonomous. Recent studies suggest that by 2025, China will import three-quarters of its oil from the Middle East.175

With the Demonstrative Method discussed previously in place, and the after-effects of the GWOT still retained in many regions, the Middle East will most likely be strongly influenced by U.S.-Israeli interests. In lieu of risking war, the United States can trade a percentage of the oil produced in that region for Chinese cooperation. The Chinese reciprocate by helping to keep North Korea at bay, and increasing U.S. interests in Asia. While it seems unlikely now, if China is rational, it would benefit greatly from this proposition, as “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”, and that enemy is statewide instability and scarce resources. The United States would also be able to directly affect the growth of China by managing the amount that China will receive from the reserves in the Middle East. This is why the Middle East has been said to be so

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important to the United States, not strictly because of political or ideological means, but because so many resources and trade routes lie in the region.

As it is very easy to see, the contemporary international system puts a tremendous amount of importance on the Middle East and Asia, yet Europe and the rest of the world also play their parts in U.S. grand strategy. Though there is little risk for wars, revolutions, political unrest, or ideological conflicts between Europe (especially Western Europe) and the United States, there still exist remnants of the Cold War in Eastern Europe and Russia, along with the European Union financial crisis.

Europe, NATO, and Beyond

The situation in Europe is not nearly as dire or violent as it is in other areas, mainly because most of Europe shares the same culture and liberal value system of the United States. The main source of contention and deliberation amongst the supranational bloc and the global hegemon are based around economic means and trade. NATO is the only real interaction between Europe and the United States that happens to go beyond this relationship.

United States, if it were to take a step in the direction of Primacy, as it did during the Iraq War, would have little use for NATO and Europe as a whole. However, since the last two sections seriously recommended CS for U.S. grand strategy, it is apparent that trend should continue. The Middle East and Asia are far too large for U.S. unilateral hegemonic interests to rain supreme, that is just a pipe dream, one that the U.S. has strove too hard for in past years only to end up in a worse situation. To avoid war, keep peace, and retain its hegemony, the United States needs to work closely with its NATO allies to ensure that it checks China’s power, and keeps the regional powers in the Middle East at bay, at least from a Realist’s perspective.
NATO cooperation in conjunction with American power, will allow the United States to enjoy far more U.N. support, as it will no longer have to deal with unilateral criticism. Instead, the United States could enjoy a coalition of interests, much like it did during the first Gulf War; rather these will be economic endeavors, not military.

With Western European support, the U.S. could check the power of Russia, who actively sides with the Chinese on many issues regarding U.S. interests, especially in the Middle East. Also, strong U.S. interest in the region will also create a mutual benefit between the two. For if the United States “retrenches” its ventures in Europe, there could be backlash:

“It’s not difficult to foresee governments there refusing to pay budgetary costs of higher military outlays and the political costs of increasing EU defense cooperation. The result might be a continent incapable of securing itself from threats on its periphery, unable to join foreign interventions on which U.S. leaders might want European help, and vulnerable to the influence of outside rising powers.”

While this may or may not be the best global solution, it is definitely one to maintain U.S. interests and investments abroad. Many proponents of reigning in foreign investments and withdrawing from situations across the globe tend to forget that in doing so, the U.S. will lose a lot of its cooperative power as well. Those who want to bring American resources and assets home mean well, they believe it will save money, increase global opinion of the U.S., save lives, and prevent future wars. Yet, unfortunately, their arguments do not hold up, as “there is little

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176 Brooks, Stephen G., John G. Ikenberry, and William C. Wohlforth. "Lean Forward." Foreign Affairs 92.1:
A better definition for grand strategy is that it is “an academic term referring to the plans and policies undertaken in order to balance national ends and means at the broadest national level.” Simply put, it is the top political, military, and economic destinations at the time.

Germany's grand strategy after World War I was to recoup their losses, stop the pitfall that their economy was in, and regroup their assets to create a functioning state. The Roman Empire's grand strategy during the height of its reign was to continue to conquer and expand its influence as far as it could. These two examples may seem to contrast, however they are both adequate grand strategies as their military, economic, and political goals are enveloped by the immediate need to progress towards something else; be it a functioning civil society or a hegemonic empire.

A situation that is becoming visible on the horizon is that of a “pivot” from Middle East based foreign policy, to that of an Asian foreign policy. With the rise of China, the clashes between the powerful states in that region, the dwindling down of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a desire for more economic stability; the United States is increasing its number of experts on fields related to Asian policy in an attempt to gain a foothold on anything that may occur there in the near future.

In addition to this “pivot”, the United States still has to deal with nuclear proliferation in Iran, the after-effects of the Arab Spring, sustaining and transitioning of responsibility to a new Iraq government, conflict with Taliban, and many other issues that have yet to be resolved in the Middle East. After over a decade of spending blunders, unpopular wars, and the resulting massively divided domestic political society, the United States needs to act soon in hopes of retaining its former prowess in the region and beyond.

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136 Peter D. Feaver, "Debating American Grand strategy after Major War," Orbis, Fall 2009, pp. 548