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## The Politics of Empire: The United States and the Global Structure of Imperialism in the Early Twenty-First Century

Edward P. Hunt

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The Politics of Empire:  
The United States and the Global Structure of Imperialism  
in the Early Twenty-First Century

Edward P. Hunt

North Attleboro, Massachusetts

Master of Arts, The University of Massachusetts at Boston, 2010  
Master of Science, The University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 2007  
Bachelor of Arts, The College of William and Mary, 2003

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

American Studies Program

The College of William and Mary  
August, 2016



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APPROVAL PAGE

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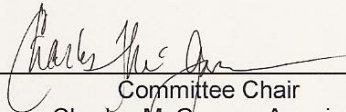
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Edward P. Hunt

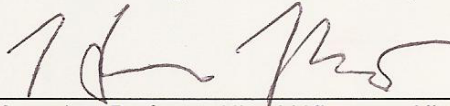
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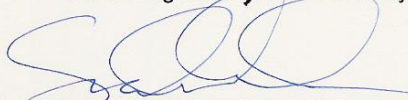
Committee Chair

Associate Professor Charles McGovern, American Studies and History  
The College of William and Mary



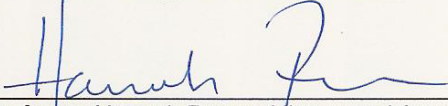
---

Associate Professor Hiroshi Kitamura, History  
The College of William and Mary



---

Leslie and Noami Legum Professor of History Scott Nelson, History  
The College of William and Mary



---

Assistant Professor Hannah Rosen, History and American Studies  
The College of William and Mary

## ABSTRACT

In the field of diplomatic history, scholars have debated how the United States has played an imperial role in the world. Although diplomatic historians have presented many different interpretations, they have never agreed on the defining aspects of U.S. imperialism. My dissertation intervenes in the debate by reviewing how the United States functioned as an imperial power at the start of the twenty-first century. In my dissertation, I make use of a wide array of publicly available sources, including the public remarks of U.S. officials, the public records of the U.S. government, and the diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks, to describe how the United States enforced a global system of imperial order. Specifically, I argue that officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama began the twenty-first century by implementing an imperial grand strategy to keep the international system organized around a dominant center and a subordinate periphery in a global structure of imperialism. By showing that officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations kept each region of the world integrated into a global structure of imperialism, my dissertation intervenes in one of the key debates in diplomatic history to define how the United States functioned as an empire.

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For Chelsea Manning

## Introduction

### The United States as Empire

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- Imperial Grand Strategy
- The Center-Periphery Model
- A New Imperial Historiography
- Imperial Grand Strategy Restated
- The Military Structure of Imperialism
- Key Non-Military Nodes
- Summary of the Dissertation
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

At the start of the twenty-first century, the leaders of the United States grew increasingly confident in their power. At times, some officials even described the United States as an empire. “We’re an empire now,” the U.S. official Karl Rove announced.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Ron Suskind, “Without a Doubt,” *New York Times Magazine*, October 17, 2004. Although Suskind attributes the quote to an unnamed “senior adviser to Bush,” the senior adviser has been identified as Karl Rove. See Mark Danner, “Words in a Time of War: On Rhetoric, Truth, and Power,” in *What Orwell Didn’t Know: Propaganda and the New Face of American Politics*, ed. András Szántó (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 23. For additional examples and further discussion, see the following sources: Thomas E. Ricks, “Empire or Not? A Quiet Debate Over U.S. Role,” *Washington Post*, August

Throughout U.S. history, many scholars have also identified the United States as an empire. About a century before Rove made his comments, the scholar Brooks Adams argued in his study *The New Empire* (1902) that the United States had already emerged as an empire. “The Union forms a gigantic and growing empire which stretches half round the globe, an empire possessing the greatest mass of accumulated wealth, the most perfect means of transportation, and the most delicate yet powerful industrial system which has ever been developed,” Adams asserted.<sup>2</sup>

During the early twentieth century, a number of other scholars made similar claims. For example, the scholar Scott Nearing argued in a series of works that the United States should be seen as an empire. “The American Republic has been thrust aside,” Nearing proclaimed in his study *The American Empire* (1921). “Above its remains towers a mighty imperial structure.” The new imperial structure is “the American Empire – as real to-day as the Roman Empire in the days of Julius Caesar.”<sup>3</sup>

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21, 2001; Patrick E. Tyler, “In Washington, a Struggle to Define the Next Fight,” *New York Times*, December 2, 2001; Kevin Bacon, “American Imperialism, Embraced,” *New York Times Magazine*, December 9, 2001; Emily Eakin, “All Roads Lead to D.C.,” *New York Times*, March 31, 2002; John Bellamy Foster, “The Rediscovery of Imperialism,” *Monthly Review* 54, no. 6 (November 2002): 1-16; Dan Morgan, “A Debate Over U.S. ‘Empire’ Builds in Unexpected Circles,” *Washington Post*, August 10, 2003; Andrew Bacevich, ed., *The Imperial Tense: Prospects and Problems of American Empire* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003); Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003); Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds., *The New Imperial Challenge*, vol. 40 of *Socialist Register* (London: Merlin Press, 2003); Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds., *The Empire Reloaded*, vol. 41 of *Socialist Register* (London: Merlin Press, 2004); John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney, eds., *Pox Americana: Exposing the American Empire* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004); Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young, eds., *The New American Empire: A 21st Century Teach-In on U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: The New Press, 2005); John Bellamy Foster, *Naked Imperialism: The U.S. Pursuit of Global Dominance* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2006).

2 Brooks Adams, *The New Empire* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1902), xv.

3 Scott Nearing, *The American Empire* (New York: The Rand School of Social Science, 1921), 15. Also see the following works: Scott Nearing and Joseph Freeman, *Dollar Diplomacy: A Study in American Imperialism* (New York: B. W. Huebsch and the Viking Press, 1925); Scott Nearing, *The Twilight of Empire: An Economic Interpretation of Imperialist Cycles* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1930); Scott Nearing, *War: Organized Destruction and Mass Murder by Civilized Nations* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1931); Scott Nearing, *The Tragedy of Empire* (New York: Island Press, 1945).

During the latter half of the twentieth century, additional scholars continued to write about the United States as an empire. Notably, the diplomatic historian William Appleman Williams argued in his study *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) that U.S. officials had implemented an imperial foreign policy at the end of the nineteenth century to create “a new and persuasive empire.” With the publication of his study, Williams brought serious new attention to the idea of an American empire in the field of diplomatic history.<sup>4</sup>

After Williams completed his study, a number of diplomatic historians began to bring the idea of an American empire into the heart of the field of diplomatic history. The diplomatic historians of the “Wisconsin School,” who completed their doctoral work under Williams at the University of Wisconsin, organized a new wing in the field of diplomatic history that focused on the main patterns and features of the American empire. “The central problem in American history is to explain the process or development, and therefore the present nature, of the American empire,” the Wisconsin School scholars Lloyd C. Gardner, Walter F. LaFeber, and Thomas J. McCormick asserted in their study *Creation of the American Empire* (1973).<sup>5</sup>

By the final years of the twentieth century, many diplomatic historians had even begun to accept the existence of an American empire. Whether or not they identified with the work of Williams and the Wisconsin School, a broad array of diplomatic historians all began to write about the United States as a powerful empire. “The concept of American Empire is now suddenly beginning to gain once-unimaginable, even almost nostalgic,

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4 William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1959), 208.

5 Lloyd C. Gardner, Walter F. LaFeber, and Thomas J. McCormick, *Creation of the American Empire: U.S. Diplomatic History* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1973), xv.

prominence,” the diplomatic historian Emily S. Rosenberg observed in her essay “‘The Empire’ Strikes Back” (1988).<sup>6</sup>

Of course, diplomatic historians still disputed many of the main features of the empire. While they may have begun to study the United States as an empire, diplomatic historians continually debated the ways in which the United States functioned as an imperial power. As a result, diplomatic historians produced a large body of work that provided all sorts of different interpretations of the American empire.<sup>7</sup>

The diplomatic historian Edward Crapol, who reviewed the literature in his essay “Coming to Terms with Empire” (1992), showed that diplomatic historians harbored many fundamental disagreements. Diplomatic historians may have reached “a widespread scholarly agreement” on the existence of an American empire, “but they continue to disagree as to how and why the United States achieved its imperial position and great-

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6 Emily S. Rosenberg, “‘The Empire’ Strikes Back,” *Reviews in American History* 16, no. 4 (December 1988): 585.

7 For more discussion of how diplomatic historians have assessed the American empire, see the following sources: Edward P. Crapol, “Coming to Terms with Empire: The Historiography of Late-Nineteenth-Century American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 16, no. 4 (October 1992): 573-597; Ian Tyrrell, “Empire in American History,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 541-556. For more discussion of how diplomatic historians have assessed U.S. imperialism, see the following sources: Frank Ninkovich, “The United States and Imperialism,” in *A Companion to American Foreign Relations*, ed. Robert D. Schulzinger (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 79-102; Paul A. Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (December 2011): 1348-1391; James G. Morgan, *Into New Territory: American Historians and the Concept of US Imperialism* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2014). For more discussion of how diplomatic historians have approached the history of U.S. foreign relations in general, see the following sources: Walter LaFeber, “Liberty and Power: U.S. Diplomatic History, 1750-1945,” in *The New American History*, ed. Eric Foner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 271-289; Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Thomas W. Zeiler, “The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field,” *The Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1053-1073; Erez Manela, “The United States in the World,” in *American History Now*, ed. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 201-220.

power status,” Crapol explained. Ultimately, a “consensus, even on such a fundamental issue as the nature of that empire, eludes the craft.”<sup>8</sup>

Early in the twenty-first century, the historian Ian Tyrrell found that consensus continued to elude the craft. In his essay “Empire in American History” (2009), Tyrrell speculated that the changing nature of U.S. power made it difficult for scholars to agree on the main features of the empire. “American empire has taken a number of forms,” Tyrrell argued. “Interpretation of these has been hotly contested, and the relationship between them is unclear.”<sup>9</sup>

When the White House official Karl Rove identified the United States as an empire during the opening years of the twenty-first century, he effectively raised more questions than he answered. At the time Rove made his comments, what did the U.S. empire look like? And what role did it play in the world? Despite the fact that many scholars agreed to define the United States as an empire, the answers remained unsettled.

In this dissertation, I intervene in the ongoing discussion by presenting my own assessment of the present nature of the U.S. empire. Although I believe that a number of diplomatic historians have identified many of the empire’s key features, I introduce a new interpretation that I believe clarifies many of the most important aspects of the debate, including the question of when the empire took its latest form, the problem of how to define the empire, and the matter of what the empire means for the world.

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8 Edward P. Crapol, “Coming to Terms with Empire: The Historiography of Late-Nineteenth-Century American Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History* 16, no. 4 (October 1992): 587, 589.

9 Ian Tyrrell, “Empire in American History,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 546.



To begin my approach, I introduce a series of interrelated arguments. In the first place, I argue that U.S. officials created the latest form of the U.S. empire after World War II. Despite the fact that many observers prefer to break the postwar period into series of phases, such as a postwar world, a post-Cold War world, and a post-9/11 world, I contend that U.S. officials designed an imperial grand strategy at the end of World War II and consistently followed their strategy throughout the postwar period.

In addition, I argue that U.S. officials worked to impose a specific model of imperial order on the world. In contrast to the many theorists of imperialism, who argue that systems of imperialism have developed from natural laws and principles, I propose that U.S. officials constructed their own model of imperial order and fit their model to the world. Specifically, I argue that U.S. officials modeled the postwar international system around a dominant center and a subordinate periphery in a global structure of imperialism.<sup>10</sup>

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10 I borrow the phrase “structure of imperialism” from the scholar Johan Galtung. See the following sources: Johan Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism,” *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2 (1971): 81-117; Johan Galtung, “‘A Structural Theory of Imperialism’ – Ten Years Later,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 9, no. 3 (December 1980): 181-196. For discussion of the many different theories of imperialism, see the following sources: Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); Tom Kemp, *Theories of Imperialism* (London: Dobson Books Ltd, 1967); Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1972); Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, trans. P. S. Falla (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980); Norman Etherington, *Theories of Imperialism: War, Conquest, and Capital* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Carl Parrini, “Theories of Imperialism,” in *Redefining the Past: Essays in Diplomatic History in Honor of William Appleman Williams*, ed. Lloyd C. Gardner (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1986), 65-83; Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986); Bernard Semmel, *The Liberal Ideal and the Demons of Empire: Theories of Imperialism from Adam Smith to Lenin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); “Imperialism: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?” *Radical History Review* 1993, no. 57 (Fall 1993); Patrick Wolfe, “History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory, from Marx to Postcolonialism,” *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 2 (April 1997): 388-420.

Furthermore, I argue that officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama began the twenty-first century by working to keep the same kind of imperial structure imposed on the world. Although officials in both administrations pursued different imperial styles and experimented with different imperial tactics, I claim that officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations made it their goal to enforce the same postwar system of imperial order.

Finally, I argue that U.S. officials largely succeeded in their efforts. In spite of the fact that many observers question the extent of U.S. power by theorizing about imperial overstretch and warning about imperial decline, I believe that U.S. officials accomplished their goal of imposing their imperial structure on the world. As a result, I conclude that U.S. officials made empire into the everyday reality for the great majority of the world's population at the start of the twenty-first century.

In short, I have written this dissertation in the hope of clarifying one of the central issues in American history. In the spirit of the many scholars who have spent their academic careers calling attention to the issue of empire, I have sought to explain the process, development, and present nature of the American empire.

## Imperial Grand Strategy

One of the most useful starting points for identifying the present nature of the American empire comes from the work of the U.S. strategist George Kennan. After World

War II, Kennan produced a series of works in which he formulated the key features of the postwar American empire.<sup>11</sup>

As the first Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, Kennan devised an imperial grand strategy that described how U.S. officials could impose a structure of power and domination on the postwar world. While he certainly did not call on U.S. officials to extend the boundaries of the United States across the rest of the world, Kennan explained how the United States could remain within its borders and still exert its control over the international system. As a result, Kennan provided some of the clearest insights into how the United States came to dominate the postwar world as a powerful empire.<sup>12</sup>

In February 1948, Kennan outlined his ideas in one of his first major studies of the global situation. Currently, “we have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population,” Kennan explained. Concerned that the major disparity in the global distribution of wealth would make the United States into “the object of envy and resentment,” Kennan argued that U.S. officials must dedicate themselves to the task of securing the position of disparity of the United States. “Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security,” Kennan asserted.<sup>13</sup>

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11 There is a vast scholarly literature on George Kennan. Perhaps the best starting point is Kennan's memoirs. See George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1967); George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1950-1963* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1972).

12 Much has been written about George Kennan and the Policy Planning Staff. For one starting point to the literature, see Lucian Pugliaresi and Diane T. Berliner, “Policy Analysis at the Department of State: The Policy Planning Staff,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 8, no. 3 (Spring 1989): 379-394.

13 “Report by the Policy Planning Staff,” PPS/23, February 24, 1948, in U.S. Department of State, *General; The United Nations (in two parts) Part 2*, vol. 1 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 524.

After making his point, Kennan then introduced a model that he believed would enable U.S. officials to fulfill their task. Hoping to establish what he called a “workable world order,” Kennan described a “center, which is our own immediate neighborhood – the area of our own political and economic position,” and a “periphery,” which circled the center. By positioning a small group of rich nations alongside the United States at the center of the international system and relegating the remainder of poorer nations to the periphery, Kennan believed that U.S. officials could preserve the position of disparity of the United States.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, Kennan felt a great sense of urgency. Unless U.S. officials implemented a workable world order on the center-periphery model, he feared that the poorer nations of the world would come together to create an alternative pattern of global relationships. “In all areas of the world, we still find ourselves the victims of many of the romantic and universalistic concepts with which we emerged from the recent war,” Kennan warned. In other words, Kennan warned his colleagues that the poorer nations on the periphery might attempt to organize the postwar world in a way that made it impossible for U.S. officials to maintain the position of disparity of the United States.<sup>15</sup>

After he completed his study, Kennan then spent the following months sharing his ideas with his colleagues. In December 1948, Kennan delivered a speech to the National War College in which he repeated his major concerns. The most “important determinant in the relation of this country to its world environment” remains “the fact that this country has fifty percent of the wealth of the world and only six percent of its

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14 Ibid., 527.

15 Ibid., 529.

population,” Kennan explained. Still convinced that most people of the world would never accept a world that featured so much wealth concentrated in the hands of so few people, Kennan insisted that U.S. officials must do everything in their power to fulfill their very special task. “Our task and our destiny, if we are going to face facts frankly, is to defend and protect our extraordinary and very vulnerable position in the midst of a jealous and embittered world,” Kennan asserted. “We cannot alter or conceal this fact by high-sounding phrases about democratic ideals, about our idealistic purposes in world affairs.”<sup>16</sup>

When he shared his vision with the Central Intelligence Agency the following year, Kennan provided additional clarification. As he outlined his strategy, Kennan advised his colleagues to think of the United States as a rich country that imposed a class structure on an unwilling world. Frankly, “we have to accept a certain unchallengeable antagonism between 'him that has' and 'him that has not' in this world,” Kennan stated. To emphasize his point, Kennan suggested that U.S. officials must wage a permanent class war against the have-nots of the world. Essentially, “the best we can do is at least to make it plain to these people that we are a formidable force in world affairs; that we are a firm people who know what we want, whether it is good or bad; and that we are prepared to back up our words in ways they have to respect,” Kennan explained.<sup>17</sup>

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16 George Kennan, “Where are We Today?” National War College, December 21, 1948, George Kennan Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Available online at <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC076/c03148>.

17 George Kennan, “The Current Situation,” Central Intelligence Agency Conference, October 14, 1949, George Kennan Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Available online at <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC076/c03160>.

In fact, Kennan repeatedly insisted that U.S. officials must do everything in their power to preserve the dominant position of the United States in the world. Rather than identifying the containment of communism as the grand strategy of the United States, Kennan insisted that U.S. officials must reserve their greatest efforts for imposing a hierarchical structure on the international system.

In December 1949, Kennan made his case in another major speech at the National War College. In his speech, Kennan urged his colleagues to bring “some order and sense” to the world. “This is the real problem of western democracy,” he explained. “Communism has a relationship to it, but only the relation of the complication to the disease.” Moreover, Kennan argued that U.S. officials “should not get too violently indignant over the fact that such a complication exists.” To explain why, he noted that the complication of communism provided U.S. officials with some benefits. “As one of my associates recently said: ‘If it had never existed, we would have had to invent it, to create the sense of urgency we need to bring us to the point of decisive action,’” Kennan stated. Indeed, Kennan suggested that U.S. officials could exploit fears about communism to make it easier for them to impose their preferred form of order on the world.<sup>18</sup>

By the time he had finished his term of the nation's first Director of Policy Planning at the end of 1949, Kennan had developed an expansive new strategy for the United States. In his many papers and speeches, Kennan introduced a bold new vision in which U.S. officials secured the dominant position of the United States in the world by shaping the main contours of global order. Without limiting his attention to the

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<sup>18</sup> George Kennan, “Where Do We Stand?” National War College, December 21, 1949, George Kennan Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Available online at <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC076/c03161>.

complication of communism, Kennan outlined a strategy that required the leaders of the United States to impose a hierarchical system of imperial order on the world.

With his vision, Kennan also introduced a strategy that marked a major turning point in U.S. history. In contrast to earlier generations of U.S. officials, who had conquered the continent before transforming the United States into the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere, Kennan crafted a plan for the United States to extend its power over the rest of the world. While he certainly did not plan for the United States to extend its borders across the rest of the world, Kennan introduced an imperial grand strategy that described how the United States could impose an imperial structure on the international system. By employing a very simple center-periphery model, he explained how the United States could shape the main contours of global order. As a result, Kennan effectively described how the United States could impose its will on the world as a global empire.

### The Center-Periphery Model

In many ways, the imperial grand strategy of George Kennan provides a useful starting point for conceptualizing the main features of the postwar American empire. Not only did Kennan identify the basic motive of U.S. officials to maintain the position of disparity of the United States, but he also pointed to the very model that the leaders of the United States would use to pursue their task.

At the same time, a number of additional individuals played another central role in highlighting the main features of the postwar U.S. empire. Although they did not have

access to the internal records of the U.S. government, such as the secret papers of George Kennan, a multitude of scholars began to formulate their own version of the center-periphery model to describe the main contours of world order. In spite of the fact that they approached the topic from different disciplinary backgrounds, the scholars began to call attention to the very same model that Kennan had devised for the postwar world.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, the many scholars who began to introduce their own versions of the center-periphery model into the scholarly literature did not need access to the secret records of U.S. officials to develop their models. Since the late nineteenth century, a number of scholars had already used the center-periphery model to describe various parts of the world.<sup>20</sup>

Notably, the German political geographer Friedrich Ratzel employed a center-periphery model in his study *Anthropo-Geographie* (1882) to describe the political geography of states. With his version of the model, Ratzel argued that states enhanced

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19 In the following paragraphs, I review a number of the different approaches, including Latin American structuralism, Johan Galtung's structural theory of imperialism, dependency theory, and world-systems analysis.

20 For some examples, see the following sources: Friedrich Ratzel, *Anthropo-Geographie oder Grundzüge der Anwendung der Erdkunde auf die Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Verlag von J. Engelhorn, 1882); Ellen Churchill Semple, *Influences of Geographic Environment on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthropo-Geography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911); R. D. McKenzie, "The Concept of Dominance and World-Organization," *American Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 1 (July 1927): 28-42; Erich W. Zimmerman, "The Resource Hierarchy of Modern World Economy," *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 33 (1931): 431-463; Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Briand Plan for Closer Union in Europe," in *Survey of International Affairs, 1930* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 131-142; Arnold J. Toynbee, "Machiavelli," in *The Growths of Civilizations*, vol. 3 of *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 299-310; Nicholas J. Spykman, "Geography and Foreign Policy, I," *The American Political Science Review* 32, no. 1 (February 1938): 28-50; Nicholas J. Spykman, "Geography and Foreign Policy, II," *The American Political Science Review* 32, no. 2 (April 1938): 213-236; Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins, "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, I," *The American Political Science Review* 33, no. 3 (June 1939): 391-410; Nicholas J. Spykman and Abbie A. Rollins, "Geographic Objectives in Foreign Policy, II," *The American Political Science Review* 33, no. 4 (August 1939): 591-614; Derwent Whittlesey, *The Earth and the State: A Study of Political Geography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1939); William Adams Brown, Jr., "The Disintegration of the International Gold Standard System at the Periphery," in *The International Gold Standard Reinterpreted, 1914-1933* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 1940), 2:861-926.



their power by integrating central and peripheral locations. As the scholar Ellen Churchill Semple explained in her reinterpretation of Ratzel's study, certain “peripheral holdings are the lungs through which states breathe.”<sup>21</sup>

During the early twentieth century, the scholar R. D. McKenzie also employed the center-periphery model. In his essay “The Concept of Dominance and World-Organization” (1927), McKenzie used the model to describe the hierarchical structure of the international system. The main trend in world organization features a “dominant center and subordinate integrated parts,” McKenzie explained.<sup>22</sup>

During the early 1930s, one of the most influential scholars in the world even used the center-periphery model to define one of the main responsibilities of world leaders. In a series of works, the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee argued that the leaders of the most powerful nations at the center of the international system must employ their power to secure their hold over the many challengers on the periphery. The rulers of “the little states in the centre” must find some way from “succumbing to the contending Great Powers on the periphery,” Toynbee asserted. In addition, Toynbee added a great degree of urgency to the task. “This situation is a challenge to statesmanship,” Toynbee insisted. “If the pygmy states at the centre take no preventative action, it is obvious that the giant states on the periphery are bound to overwhelm them.”

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21 Friedrich Ratzel, *Anthropo-Geographie oder Grundzüge der Anwendung der Erdkunde auf die Geschichte* (Stuttgart: Verlag von J. Engelhorn, 1882); Ellen Churchill Semple, *Influences of Geographic Environment on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthropo-Geography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), 144.

22 R. D. McKenzie, “The Concept of Dominance and World-Organization,” *American Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 1 (July 1927): 30.

The responsibility of ruling the world would then “pass to the outer 'barbarians' who are not yet fit to wield it.”<sup>23</sup>

While Toynbee certainly employed the center-periphery model in a way that anticipated Kennan's subsequent use of the model, other scholars soon began to use the model for very different reasons. In the years after World War II, a growing number of scholars began using the model to critically assess the hierarchical structure of the international system. For example, the Latin American economist Raúl Prebisch employed the center-periphery model in his influential study *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems* (1949) to critically assess the major disparity of economic power in the international system. “The enormous benefits that derive from increased productivity have not reached the periphery in a measure comparable to that obtained by peoples of the great industrial countries,” Prebisch observed.<sup>24</sup>

Inspired by Prebisch's work, many economists throughout Latin America began employing the model in similar ways. Creating a new body of economic theory known as structuralism, Latin American structuralists argued that powerful structural factors in the international economic system prevented the agricultural countries on the periphery from

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23 Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1930* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 133; Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Growths of Civilizations*, vol. 3 of *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 305. For more discussion, see the following sources: Hans. J. Morgenthau, “World Politics in the Mid-Twentieth Century,” *The Review of Politics* 10, no. 2 (April 1948): 154-175; Kenneth W. Thompson, “Toynbee and the Theory of International Politics,” *Political Science Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (September 1956): 365-386.

24 Economic Commission for Latin America, *The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems* (Lake Success: United Nations Department of Economic Affairs, 1950), 1. The paper was first published in Spanish in 1949. For more discussion, see Joseph L. Love, “Raúl Prebisch and the Origins of the Doctrine of Unequal Exchange,” *Latin American Research Review* 15, no. 3 (1980): 45-72.

developing their economies in ways that enabled them to advance to the industrialized center.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the work of the Latin American structuralists had a major impact on scholars working on similar issues in other areas of the world. For example, Latin American structuralists had an especially strong influence on the thinking of the European social scientist Johan Galtung, who played a central role in creating the field of peace research.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, Galtung used the center-periphery model to make one of the most significant theoretical insights into modern forms of imperialism. In his essay “A Structural Theory of Imperialism” (1971), Galtung argued that a world divided by a powerful center and weaker periphery constituted a structure of imperialism. To make his argument, Galtung began by adding an additional dimension to the center-periphery model. “The world consists of Center and Periphery nations; and each nation, in turn, has its centers and periphery,” Galtung argued. After making his point, Galtung then asserted that the most powerful actors in the Center nations forged an alliance with the most powerful actors in the Periphery nations to form a structure of imperialism. The structure of imperialism begins with “a bridgehead which the center in the Center nation establishes in the center of the Periphery nation, for the joint benefit of both,” Galtung contended.<sup>27</sup>

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25 For more discussion, see the following sources: Joseph L. Love, “Raúl Prebisch and the Origins of the Doctrine of Unequal Exchange,” *Latin American Research Review* 15, no. 3 (1980): 45-72; Joseph L. Love, “The Origins of Dependency Analysis,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22, no. 1 (February 1990): 143-168; Joseph L. Love, “The Rise and Decline of Economic Structuralism in Latin America: New Dimensions,” *Latin American Research Review* 40, no. 3 (2005): 100-125.

26 For more discussion, see Peter Lawler, “The Critique of Global Structure,” in *A Question of Values: Johan Galtung's Peace Research* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), 91-112.

27 Johan Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism,” *Journal of Peace Research* 8, no. 2 (1971): 81. Also see Johan Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism' – Ten Years Later,” *Millennium: Journal*

Furthermore, other scholars recognized the same imperial structure. In a number of works that became known as dependency theory, dependency theorists integrated Marxist theory with Latin American structuralism to identify capitalist nations as imperial powers that actively exploited a much weaker periphery. Indeed, dependency theorists highlighted the very same kind of structure of imperialism in the international system.<sup>28</sup>

During the mid-1970s, the scholar Immanuel Wallerstein used the center-periphery model to present a comparable interpretation. In his study *The Modern World-System I* (1974), Wallerstein crafted his own form of the center-periphery model to identify a global structure of imperialism as a capitalist world-system. With “world-systems analysis,” Wallerstein argued that a powerful core, an intermediate semi-periphery, and a subordinate periphery constituted a capitalist and imperialist world-system.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, Wallerstein made a significant insight into the nature of imperialism. While he certainly did not have access to the secret records of George Kennan, Wallerstein recognized that the leaders of the core-states at the center of the world-system employed their power to “protect disparities that have arisen within the

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*of International Studies* 9, no. 3 (December 1980): 181-196.

28 For more discussion, see the following sources: Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Diana Hunt, *Economic Theories of Development: An Analysis of Competing Paradigms* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989); Cristóbal Kay, *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment* (London: Routledge, 1989); Jorge Larraín, *Theories of Development: Capitalism, Colonialism and Dependency* (Cambridge: Policy Press, 1989); Björn Hettne, *Development Theory and the Three Worlds* (Harlow: Longman Scientific & Technical, 1990); David Lehmann, *Democracy and Development in Latin America: Economics, Politics and Religion in the Post-war Period* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

29 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (San Diego: Academic Press, Inc., 1974); Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, no. 4 (September 1974): 387-415. For more discussion, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

world-system.” Indeed, Wallerstein used the very same language as Kennan to argue that the leaders of the world imposed an imperial structure on the international system with the goal of maintaining disparities in the international system.<sup>30</sup>

By the time Wallerstein had introduced his new approach, a multitude of scholars had all begun to identify the same kind of imperial structure. While they typically approached the topic in different ways, the scholars employed some version of the center-periphery model to bring critical attention to the very same model that U.S. officials were secretly working to impose on the postwar world. Consequently, a multitude of scholars constructed a new body of literature that pointed to the very specific way in which the United States shaped the postwar world as a powerful empire.

#### A New Imperial Historiography

The growing discussion of the center-periphery model in the academic world played a significant role in revealing the main features of the postwar American empire. With a wide array of scholars bringing more attention to the center-periphery model, academics formulated a powerful new tool for conceptualizing the structure of the postwar American empire.

As the discussion gained more attention, a small number of diplomatic historians then began to incorporate the model into their own work. Recognizing the special relevance of the model to the postwar strategy of the United States, this small group of

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<sup>30</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (San Diego: Academic Press, Inc., 1974), 349.

diplomatic historians began using the model to describe how U.S. officials shaped the main contours of the postwar world. Although they continued to disagree on various elements of U.S. foreign policy, even presenting many different interpretations of how and why U.S. officials used the model, these diplomatic historians created a new body of literature that identified the precise model that U.S. officials employed to construct their global American empire.<sup>31</sup>

Leading the way, the historian Gabriel Kolko produced the foundational work. In his study *The Politics of War* (1968), Kolko described how U.S. officials began working during World War II to position the United States at the center of a globally integrated world system. Although he did not explicitly employ a center-periphery model to make his argument, Kolko recognized that U.S. officials intended to position the United States at “the center of the postwar world system.”<sup>32</sup>

In subsequent work, Kolko also added to his findings. In *The Limits of Power* (1972), he collaborated with Joyce Kolko to describe how U.S. officials put their plans into action during the postwar period. After World War II, U.S. officials worked to create “a reformed, integrated international economy” with “the United States as the heart of that system,” the Kolkos explained.<sup>33</sup>

Once the Kolkos began to uncover the imperial ambitions of U.S. officials, a number of additional scholars then began making comparable discoveries. For example,

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31 For more discussion, see the following sources: Bruce Cumings, “Revising Postrevisionism, or, The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History,” *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 4 (1993): 539-569; Perry Anderson, “Imperium,” *New Left Review* 83 (September/October 2013): 5-111.

32 Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945* (New York: Random House, 1968), 479.

33 Joyce Kolko and Gabriel Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 709.

the scholars Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter showed in their book *Imperial Brain Trust* (1977) that strategic planners at the Council on Foreign Relations coordinated with officials at the State Department during World War II to design a “Grand Area” for the United States to lead after the war. “A new world order with international political and economic institutions was projected, which would join and integrate all of the earth’s nations under the leadership of the United States,” Shoup and Minter reported.<sup>34</sup>

Around the same time, a number of scholars filled in more of the details. From the mid 1970s until the early 1980s, a number of scholars described how U.S. officials created a Grand Area that featured a powerful trilateral structure at the center of the international system. Specifically, the scholars found that U.S. officials positioned Western Europe and Japan alongside the United States as additional centers of power under U.S. leadership. Despite the fact that many observers spoke of a bipolar world that remained divided between the United States and the Soviet Union, a number of scholars found that U.S. officials contained the Soviet Union while they created a much more powerful trilateral structure as their base of power in the world.<sup>35</sup>

Building on the new findings, the diplomatic historian William Borden then made a significant conceptual insight. In the Introduction to his book *The Pacific Alliance* (1984), Borden argued that U.S. officials created a tripolar world system. After World

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34 Laurence H. Shoup and William Minter, “Shaping a New World Order: The Council’s Blueprint for World Hegemony, 1939-1975,” in *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), 141.

35 For some examples, see the following sources: Richard H. Ullman, “Trilateralism: ‘Partnership’ for What?” *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 1 (October 1976): 1-19; Charles S. Maier, “The Politics of Productivity: Foundations of American International Economic Policy after World War II,” *International Organization* 31, no. 4 (Autumn 1977): 607-633; Holly Sklar, ed., *Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Management* (Boston: South End Press, 1980); Richard J. Barnet, *The Alliance: America-Europe-Japan: Makers of the Postwar World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

War II, “American policy sought an alliance of industrial, capitalist states with three poles,” Borden explained. The three poles included “the United States as the center of Western Hemisphere production, Japan as the center of Asian production, and Europe as the center of European/African/Middle Eastern production.” With his basic insight, Borden found that U.S. officials linked the three poles with the rest of the world to create an integrated world system. “All else would flow from the structural relations among the three productive poles and between them and their peripheral areas,” he noted.<sup>36</sup>

Shortly after Borden completed his work, the diplomatic historian Thomas McCormick made a similar argument. In his essay “Every System Needs a Center Sometimes” (1986), McCormick synthesized Borden's findings with Wallerstein's world-systems analysis to argue that U.S. officials constructed “a world system where North America, Japan, and Europe constitute the core.”<sup>37</sup>

When he expanded on his argument in his study *America's Half-Century* (1989), McCormick provided additional details. For starters, McCormick argued that U.S. officials employed their own form of world-systems analysis to reconstruct the postwar world. World-systems analysis “was the very analysis used by the group with the most autonomous power to shape and make American foreign policy,” McCormick asserted. In addition, McCormick found that U.S. officials employed their own form of world-systems analysis to create a very specific kind of international order. The “overriding goal” of U.S. policymakers was to achieve “the integration of a reindustrialized Germany

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36 William S. Borden, “Introduction,” in *The Pacific Alliance: United States Foreign Economic Policy and Japanese Trade Recovery, 1947-1955* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 10.

37 Thomas McCormick, “Every System Needs a Center Sometimes': An Essay on Hegemony and Modern American Foreign Policy,” in *Redefining the Past: Essays in Diplomatic History in Honor of William Appleman Williams*, ed. Lloyd C. Gardner (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1986), 197, 204.



into a European economic-military unit, the integration of Japan and the Asian rimlands into a regional entity, the integration of the Third World periphery and semiperiphery into the industrial cores, and the integration of all into all,” McCormick asserted. Indeed, McCormick found that U.S. officials used their own form of world-systems analysis to integrate a powerful tripolar core with a subordinate periphery in a globally integrated world system.<sup>38</sup>

Not long after McCormick completed his study, the diplomatic historian Bruce Cumings then made a related point. In his essay “Trilateralism and the New World Order” (1991), Cumings asserted that U.S. officials successfully exerted their power through a powerful trilateral structure at the center of the international system to create a capitalist world system. People should view the postwar world as a “period of American hegemony and trilateral 'partnership,'” Cumings insisted.<sup>39</sup>

At the time, another influential diplomatic historian also brought some of the same ideas into the mainstream of the field. In his study *A Preponderance of Power* (1992), the diplomatic historian Melvyn Leffler delved into the documentary record to confirm that U.S. officials entered the postwar period with the goal of constructing a hierarchical world system. After World War II, “American officials believed that they had to relieve the problems besetting the industrial democracies of Western Europe, integrate former enemies like Germany and Japan into the international economy, and insure that all these industrial core nations could find markets and raw materials in the

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38 Thomas J. McCormick, *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 16, 106.

39 Bruce Cumings, “Trilateralism and the New World Order,” *World Policy Journal* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 220. Also see Bruce Cumings, “The Wicked Witch of the West is Dead. Long Live the Wicked Witch of the East,” in *The End of the Cold War: Its Meanings and Implications*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 87-101.

underdeveloped periphery of the Third World,” Leffler asserted. Although he did not employ world-systems analysis to make his argument, Leffler agreed with his colleagues that U.S. officials worked to restructure the postwar international system by “creating strength at the center and binding core and periphery.”<sup>40</sup>

With a growing number of diplomatic historians using the center-periphery model to highlight the global objectives of U.S. officials, the scholar Noam Chomsky then synthesized many of the latest findings to provide additional confirmation. In his study *World Orders Old and New* (1994), Chomsky agreed that U.S. officials transformed their wartime enemies of Germany and Japan into powerful postwar allies at the center of a globally integrated world system. “Germany and Japan were recognized to be the 'great workshops,' which would have to be at the core of the industrial world that was to be reconstituted within the overarching framework of U.S. power,” Chomsky asserted.<sup>41</sup>

In more recent work, the scholar Perry Anderson has only reached the same basic conclusion. In his essay “Imperium” (2013), Anderson employed his own version of the center-periphery model to argue that U.S. officials integrated “keystone” states in Western Europe and the Asia Pacific region with the remaining “perimeter” areas of the world to create a global system of imperial order.<sup>42</sup>

With Anderson's more recent contribution to the literature, a growing number of diplomatic historians have also provided another key insight into the basic nature of the

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40 Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 10, 18.

41 Noam Chomsky, *World Orders Old and New* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 120. For more discussion, see Mark Laffey, “Discerning Patterns of World Order: Noam Chomsky and International Theory after the Cold War,” *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 4 (Oct. 2003): 587-604.

42 Perry Anderson, “Imperium,” *New Left Review* 83 (September/October 2013): 5-111.

role of the United States in the world. By describing how U.S. officials organized the postwar world around a powerful tripolar center and a subordinate periphery in an integrated world system, the diplomatic historians constructed a new body of literature that described how U.S. officials imposed a system of imperial order on the postwar world. In short, the diplomatic historians created a new imperial historiography that showed how U.S. officials employed a center-periphery model to construct a global American empire.

### Imperial Grand Strategy Restated

The small group of diplomatic historians who contributed to the new imperial historiography may not have settled all aspects of the debate over the defining features of U.S. imperialism, but they did create an important new starting point for identifying the main structure of the empire. By focusing on the special importance of the center-periphery model, they showed that U.S. officials sought to impose a specific model of imperial order on the world.

In recent years, one prominent U.S. official has even provided some good reasons to accept the central findings of the new imperial historiography. Starting at the end of the twentieth century, the U.S. strategist Richard Haass identified the United States as an imperial power that imposed a system of imperial order on the world. Although he cited a number of different models to support his argument, Haass insisted that the United States shaped the main contours of world order as a global American empire.

During the late 1990s, Haass first began to introduce his vision. In his book *The Reluctant Sheriff* (1997), Haass presented the idea that the United States shaped the world by “assuming the role of international sheriff” and forging “coalitions or posses of states” to enforce a global system of international order. In other words, Haass suggested that the United States worked with its partners to impose its preferred form of order on the world. Moving forward, “what will prove crucial is the ability of the United States to persuade others to adopt and abide by its preferences – and the will and the ability of the United States to act as a sheriff to mobilize itself and others to insist on them when resistance emerges,” Haass asserted. In short, Haass introduced what he called “an imperial doctrine” that envisioned the United States as an international sheriff that formed “coalitions of the willing” and conducted “foreign policy by posse.”<sup>43</sup>

After he introduced his imperial doctrine, Haass then began to explicitly insist that the United States must play an imperial role in the world. For example, Haass argued in his essay “What to Do With American Primacy” (1999) that “American foreign policy must project an imperial dimension.” Providing more details, he specified that U.S. officials must implement an imperial foreign policy to shape the structure of the international system. Today, “the United States must attempt to organize the world along certain principles affecting both relations between states and conditions within them,” Haass explained. Ultimately, the United States must oversee “the creation and maintenance of an American world system.”<sup>44</sup>

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43 Richard N. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), 6, 44, 70, 93.

44 Richard N. Haass, “What to Do With American Primacy,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (September/October 1999): 41, 45, 49.

Not long after Haass called on his colleagues to lead an American world system, he then introduced a bolder vision. When Haass revisited many of the same ideas in a lecture titled “Imperial America” (2000), Haass called on his colleagues to begin thinking of the United States as an imperial power. The people of the United States must “re-conceive their role from one of a traditional nation-state to an imperial power,” Haass asserted. In addition, Haass pointed to a specific model for the United States. Finding inspiration in one of the most powerful empires in history, Haass turned to the model of the British empire. “The U.S. role would resemble 19th century Great Britain,” Haass explained. By following the British model, Haass believed that the United States could extend its control over the world “informally if possible and formally if necessary.” Indeed, Haass envisioned a world in which the United States followed the model of the British empire to dominate the planet as “an American empire.”<sup>45</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, Haass even received the opportunity to implement his imperial vision. With the support of his colleagues, Haass joined the Bush administration as the administration's first Director of Policy Planning at the State Department.

In his new role, Haass quickly outlined his imperial ambitions. Although he stopped using terms such as empire and imperial, Haass signaled his intentions by calling attention to the actions of his predecessor George Kennan. “I feel as if as I am in the shadow of my most famous and illustrious predecessor, George Kennan,” Haass remarked. Providing more details, Haass specified that he felt the same special obligation

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<sup>45</sup> Richard N. Haass, “Imperial America,” November 11, 2000, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/haass/2000imperial.htm>.

to develop a global strategy for the United States. After World War II, Kennan delivered “a series of lectures in which he sought to develop a strategy for reconstructing an international order in the aftermath of our great victory in the Second World War and in the face of the mounting Soviet challenge,” Haass explained. “The United States faces a similar task today.”<sup>46</sup>

As he settled into his new role, Haass provided more insights into his thinking. Concerned that too many of his colleagues had grown too narrowly focused on the issue of how to respond to the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Haass urged his colleagues to maintain their focus on their global objectives. “The terrorist attacks of September 11th and our response to them have inevitably drawn the lion's share of policymakers' attention,” Haass explained. “Nonetheless, our foreign policy should be based upon an appreciation of the fundamental dynamics shaping the international environment – and not just the events of the past 9 weeks no matter how traumatic or significant they may be.” Indeed, Haass urged his colleagues to keep their focus on their global strategy.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, Haass found that administration officials largely shared his views. As he issued his advice, Haass acknowledged that administration officials had agreed to focus their efforts on implementing a global strategy. “Today, at the dawn of a new century, the Bush Administration is forging a hard-headed multilateralism suited to the demands of this global era,” Haass explained. The administration will work closely with its partners to “promote our values and interests now and help structure an international environment to sustain them well into the future.” In other words, Haass explained that

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46 Richard N. Haass, “The Bush Administration's Response to Globalization,” September 21, 2001, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/5508.htm>.

47 Richard N. Haass, “Policymakers and the Intelligence Community in This Global Era,” November 14, 2001, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/6423.htm>.

the Bush administration intended to structure the international system to the advantage of the United States.<sup>48</sup>

Early in 2002, Haass provided more details about the administration's intentions. In a public speech, Haass explained that the administration had forged a hard-headed multilateralism with the goal of integrating every region of the world into an American world system. "In the 21st century, the principal aim of American foreign policy is to integrate other countries and organizations into arrangements that will sustain a world consistent with U.S. interests and values," Haass explained. With his remarks, Haass made it clear that the Bush administration intended to incorporate every region of the world into an integrated system that fell under the leadership of the United States. The administration's grand strategy "is guided by the principle of integration," Haass stated.<sup>49</sup>

A few months later, Haass then provided another key insight. Making a direct reference to the imperial doctrine that he had outlined in his study *The Reluctant Sheriff* (1997), Haass explained that the administration had decided to pursue the principle of integration by making the United States into an international sheriff. Today, "the United States is a realistic sheriff, one who understands that, in today's world, we still need a sheriff, and that only the United States can play such a role," Haass asserted. Moreover, Haass noted that the Bush administration had implemented a more forceful version of his imperial doctrine. After explaining that he had initially planned for the United States to patrol the world as a reluctant sheriff that reluctantly conducted foreign policy by posse, Haass conceded that the Bush administration had implemented his imperial doctrine with

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48 Richard N. Haass, "Multilateralism for a Global Era," November 14, 2001, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/6134.htm>.

49 Richard N. Haass, "Defining U.S. Foreign Policy in a Post-Post-Cold War World," April 22, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/9632.htm>.

no reluctance whatsoever. “Over the past 18 months – and especially in the nine months since September 11 – we have buried the reluctant sheriff,” Haass commented. In short, Haass confirmed that the Bush administration had implemented his imperial doctrine right from the start of its time in office.<sup>50</sup>

Shortly after he left the administration, Haass then provided direct confirmation that the administration had implemented an imperial foreign policy. When he publicly addressed the administration's decision to wage a war of aggression against Iraq in 2003, Haass asserted that the administration had gone to war with the purpose of enforcing a global empire. “Empire is about control – the center over the periphery,” Haass explained. While the administration may have certainly presented a very different rationale for the war, Haass confirmed that the Bush administration had waged an imperial war against Iraq. “Successful empire demands both an ability and a willingness to exert and maintain control,” he noted.<sup>51</sup>

In short, Haass acknowledged that the United States played an imperial role in the world. Whether he envisioned the United States as an international sheriff, found inspiration in the British empire, or cited the center-periphery model, Haass made it clear that U.S. officials began the twenty-first century by working to impose a system of imperial order on the world. As a result, Haass provided the most direct confirmation that the United States shaped the basic contours of world order as a powerful empire.

## The Military Structure of Imperialism

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50 Richard N. Haass, “From Reluctant to Resolute: American Foreign Policy after September 11,” June 26, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/11445.htm>.

51 Richard N. Haass, “Wars of Choice,” *Washington Post*, November 23, 2003.



With his many statements, Haass provided a direct way of coming to terms with the American empire. While many of his colleagues remained reluctant to speak openly about the United States as an empire, Haass let it be known that U.S. officials intended to impose their will on the world as the leaders of a powerful empire.

At the same time, the leaders of the United States provided more direct evidence for the existence of their global empire. While Haass certainly provided one of the clearest explanations of the empire, U.S. officials maintained a global military apparatus that revealed the physical reality of the empire. Indeed, the leaders of the United States maintained a sprawling military apparatus of hundreds of military bases around the world that made the United States appear a lot like a formal empire.<sup>52</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials made no secret of the tremendous scope of their global military presence. When the Bush administration entered office, the Defense Department explained in its annual Base Structure Report that it possessed the largest physical apparatus in the world. “The Defense Department is the world’s largest ‘landlord,’” the Defense Department reported.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, the Defense Department developed a major new plan to enhance its global military posture. Under the direction of the Bush administration, the Department

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52 For more discussion, see the following sources: Joseph Gerson and Bruce Birchard, eds., *The Sun Never Sets...: Confronting the Network of Foreign U.S. Military Bases* (Boston: South End Press, 1991); Christopher Sandars, *America's Overseas Garrisons: The Leasehold Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Chalmers Johnson, “U.S. Military Bases in Other People's Countries,” in *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 137-170; David Vine, *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2015).

53 U.S. Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report*, 2001, DoD-2.

of Defense began working to reorganize its global military apparatus to more effectively conduct military operations across the globe.<sup>54</sup>

As the first part of its plan, the Defense Department decided that it would maintain a powerful military presence in the two additional core regions of the world. “The United States will maintain its critical bases in Western Europe and Northeast Asia, which may also serve the additional role of hubs for power projection in future contingencies in other areas of the world,” the Defense Department reported.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, the Defense Department decided to significantly bolster its military presence throughout the periphery. The current “overseas presence posture, concentrated in Western Europe and Northeast Asia, is inadequate for the new strategic environment, in which U.S. interests are global,” the Defense Department determined. In the new century, the United States will require “additional bases and stations beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia.”<sup>56</sup>

After the Defense Department introduced its plans, the Bush administration then began to implement the program. With the goal of strengthening the global military posture of the United States, the Bush administration declared that “the United States will require bases and stations within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, as well as temporary access arrangements for the long-distance deployment of U.S. forces.”<sup>57</sup>

As the Bush administration began implementing the plans, the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld provided additional clarification. Although he insisted that new approach would ultimately reduce the overseas U.S. military presence, Rumsfeld

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54 U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, September 30, 2001.

55 *Ibid.*, 27.

56 *Ibid.*, 25, 26.

57 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 29.

insisted that the process would create “a more flexible and effective force posture for the 21st century.” To make his case, Rumsfeld explained that the Defense Department would consolidate its control over the various sites at the center of the international system. The “main operating bases in places like Germany, Italy, the U.K., Japan, and Korea will be consolidated but retained,” Rumsfeld explained. After making his point, Rumsfeld then noted that the Defense Department would acquire access to additional sites throughout the periphery. “In the broader Middle East, we propose to maintain what we call 'warm facilities' for rotational forces and contingency purpose,” Rumsfeld explained. “In Africa and the Western Hemisphere, we envision a diverse array of smaller cooperative security locations for contingency access.” Altogether, Rumsfeld made it clear that the administration intended to significantly strengthen its military presence throughout the world.<sup>58</sup>

As the Bush administration moved forward with the plans, the Department of Defense also provided additional reassurances. Despite the fact that it had begun to close a number of its sites around the world while it acquired contingency access to others, the Defense Department insisted that it would still provide the United States with a tremendously powerful global military apparatus. “Our network of quality support facilities and installations continues to provide the strength and stability of the staff that supports the lethal tip of the spear,” the Defense Department reported.<sup>59</sup>

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58 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *The Global Posture Review of United States Military Forces Stationed Overseas*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., September 23, 2004, 9. For more discussion, see the following sources: Jon D. Klaus, “U.S. Military Overseas Basing: Background and Oversight Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, November 17, 2004; Robert D. Critchlow, “U.S. Military Overseas Basing: New Developments and Oversight Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, October 31, 2005.

59 U.S. Department of Defense, *Base Structure Report*, 2006, DoD-2, DoD-20.

Indeed, the leaders of the United States began the twenty-first century by maintaining a powerful military presence across the globe. Not only did they implement a new basing strategy to strengthen their global military apparatus, but they also kept hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers stationed at hundreds of U.S. military bases around the world. With their approach, U.S. officials maintained a direct military presence in every region of the world.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, the leaders of the United States maintained a powerful military apparatus that gave concrete meaning to their imperial grand strategy. By keeping their most powerful bases in the trilateral center and gaining access to additional sites throughout the periphery, U.S. officials placed a direct imprint of their imperial structure on the world. Consequently, U.S. officials began the new century by maintaining a powerful military apparatus that outlined the basic shape of their global American empire.

#### Key Non-Military Nodes

With their global military apparatus in place, the leaders of the United States put on full display the reality of the global American empire. Not only did they acquire direct control over many parts of the world, but they also projected a clear image of their global structure of imperialism.

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<sup>60</sup> For more discussion, see David Vine, *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2015). Currently, “there are around eight hundred U.S. bases in foreign countries, occupied by hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops,” Vine reports (3).

At the same time, U.S. officials gave more definition to their global empire. At the start of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials began to catalog many of the additional components of their imperial system. By identifying the many additional sites around the world that played a key role in sustaining U.S. power, they developed a blueprint of the many key non-military nodes of their global structure of imperialism.<sup>61</sup>

During the final years of the Bush administration, U.S. officials first began to call attention to the additional nodes of their global empire. As they implemented the National Infrastructure Protection Plan to enhance the security of critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) inside the United States, administration officials found that many of the most important sites existed beyond U.S. borders. “The Federal Government and private sector corporations have a significant number of facilities located outside the United States that may be considered CIKR,” the Department of Homeland Security reported.<sup>62</sup>

With so many of the facilities playing a significant role in providing the United States with a strategic edge in global affairs, U.S. officials determined that they must secure the many additional sites around the world. Critical infrastructure and key resources “must be protected both at home and abroad,” the Department of Homeland Security concluded. In other words, U.S. officials decided to take “coordinated, comprehensive, and aggressive global action” to identify and protect critical infrastructure and key resources around the world.<sup>63</sup>

Starting in 2007, officials from both the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department launched the Critical Foreign Dependencies Initiative to identify the

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61 For more discussion, see Sue Roberts, Anna Secor, and Matthew Zook, “Critical Infrastructure: Mapping the Leaky Plumbing of US Hegemony,” *Antipode* 44, no. 1 (January 2012): 5-9.

62 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Infrastructure Protection Plan*, 2009, 12.

63 *Ibid.*, 53, 125.

most critically important sites. To begin their approach, they looked for sites that shared a direct connection with the United States, such as pipelines, undersea cables, and various U.S. facilities located in other countries. In addition, they searched for sites that featured an indirect connection with the United States, such as foreign assets, foreign resources, and international transit routes. Finally, they searched for any remaining sites that played a critically important role on a global scale, such as international networks. Altogether, U.S. officials turned their attention to the entire globe to identify “key assets or resources critical to the U.S.,” just as the State Department instructed its diplomats.<sup>64</sup>

After U.S. officials settled on their approach, officials from both the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State then identified the sites. In their first comprehensive listing of the many different sites, officials from both organizations identified hundreds of sites in more than fifty countries around the world. Ultimately, U.S. officials created “a comprehensive inventory of CI/KR that are located outside U.S. borders,” officials at the State Department explained.<sup>65</sup>

When they listed the sites, U.S. officials also confirmed that they had located many of the most critically important sites in the two additional core regions of the world. Just as they had maintained their most critically important military bases in Western Europe and Northeast Asia, U.S. officials located some of their most critically important sites throughout Europe and the Asia Pacific region. For example, they found key sites in

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64 Ibid., 128-129; Embassy Ljubljana, “SLOVENIA: CI/KR RESPONSE FOR S/CT,” 08LJUBLJANA42, February 1, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/02/08LJUBLJANA42.html>.

65 Secretary of State, “REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:CRITICAL FOREIGN DEPENDENCIES (CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND KEY RESOURCES LOCATED ABROAD),” 09STATE15113, February 18, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09STATE15113.html>.

twenty different countries in Europe and many more sites in eleven different countries in the Asia Pacific region.<sup>66</sup>

At the same time, U.S. officials located many additional sites throughout the periphery. For instance, they identified numerous sites in twelve countries in Latin America and additional sites in thirteen countries in the Middle East. Moreover, U.S. officials located a smaller number of sites in both South Asia and Africa.<sup>67</sup>

With their project, U.S. officials made it clear that their global American empire extended into many additional parts of the world. Despite the fact that the hundreds of sites remained outside of U.S. borders, U.S. officials identified the sites as critical infrastructure and key resources for the United States. In other words, they identified all of the sites as key components of their base of power in the world.

Finally, U.S. officials created a listing of sites that provided a clearer image of the basic shape of their global American empire. By locating many of the most critically important sites in the two additional core regions of the world and ascertaining the remainder of the sites in the periphery, U.S. officials added greater definition to the main contours of their global structure of imperialism. In short, they created a blueprint of the hierarchical structure of their global American empire.

## Summary of the Dissertation

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66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

Through their efforts to identify critical infrastructure and key resources around the world, U.S. officials provided another useful starting point for defining the present nature of their global American empire. Just as they had done with their global military apparatus, U.S. officials made it clear that they maintained a direct stake in every region of the world along the basic lines of their global structure of imperialism.

At the same time, the leaders of the United States provided more direct insight into the basic nature of their global American empire. As they worked to maintain their control over each region of the world, U.S. officials indicated through their words and actions the inner working of their global empire.

To more clearly identify the main features of the global American empire, this dissertation takes a closer look at the actions of U.S. officials in each region of the world during the opening decade of the twenty-first century. Drawing on the many documents that are available in the public domain, such as the internal documentary record, the public statements of U.S. officials, and the archive of diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks, this dissertation documents how officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama played an imperial role in every region of the world.

The organization of this dissertation follows the same organization of the global structure of imperialism. The first major section shows that U.S. officials managed two powerful anchors of imperial order alongside the United States at the center of the international system. A second major section indicates that U.S. officials kept the remaining regions of the world under their influence on the periphery. Altogether, the dissertation's structure reflects the imperial structure that U.S. officials imposed on the world.



Chapter 1 opens the first section of the dissertation by showing that U.S. officials oversaw a Germany-centered Europe as one of their primary anchors of imperial order. For the most part, the chapter focuses on how U.S. officials kept Germany positioned at the center of the continent while they confined Russia to the periphery. At the same time, the chapter makes it clear that U.S. officials relied on their European allies to exert far more control over the rest of the world. In sum, Chapter 1 demonstrates that U.S. officials oversaw a powerful but subordinate Germany-centered Europe as one of the most powerful components of their global structure of imperialism.

Chapter 2 shows that U.S. officials administered a comparable Japan-centered Asia Pacific region as another one of their anchors of imperial order. In the first place, the chapter establishes that U.S. officials positioned Japan as one of the main pillars of the international system. At the same time, the chapter explores how U.S. officials positioned both Japan and South Korea as powerful anchors of regional order while they actively constrained the rise of China. In all, Chapter 2 demonstrates that U.S. officials managed a powerful but subordinate Japan-centered Asia Pacific region as another one of the main components of their global structure of imperialism.

Chapter 3 begins the second major section of the dissertation by showing that U.S. officials kept Latin America under their control on the periphery. At first, the chapter covers how U.S. officials enforced a system of hemispheric order that linked a dominant United States with a peripheral Latin America in a hemispheric American system. From there, the chapter then reviews how U.S. officials augmented their power in the hemisphere by working through Colombia and Mexico. Altogether, Chapter 3 demonstrates that U.S. officials maintained a sphere of influence in Latin America.

Chapter 4 shows that U.S. officials played an even more dominant role in the Middle East. In the first place, the chapter makes it clear that U.S. officials favored the region for its oil. In addition, the chapter establishes that U.S. officials focused their efforts on Saudi Arabia while they worked to reinforce their power by taking advantage of Iraq. In all, Chapter 4 demonstrates that U.S. officials made a peripheral Middle East into one of their main centers of power in the world.

Chapter 5 shows that U.S. officials played an influential role in South Asia. Primarily, the chapter describes how U.S. officials worked to transform the region into a strategic hub at the heart of the Eastern Hemisphere. By focusing on the actions of U.S. officials in the countries of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, the chapter reviews how U.S. officials worked to link all three countries into an integrated regional system. Altogether, Chapter 5 demonstrates that U.S. officials made tremendous efforts to transform a peripheral South Asia into a strategic hub at the heart of Asia.

Finally, Chapter 6 shows that U.S. officials pursued imperial ambitions in Africa. First, the chapter outlines how U.S. officials approached Africa as a frontier that remained open for grabs. From there, the chapter then reviews how U.S. officials worked to strengthen their control over the continent by transforming South Africa and Nigeria into powerful anchors of continental order. In sum, Chapter 6 demonstrates that U.S. officials worked to secure a powerful hold over a peripheral Africa.

In short, this dissertation shows that U.S. officials began the twenty-first century by applying an imperial strategy to every region of the world. Not only does it document how officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations assigned a particular function to each region of the world, but it also shows how officials in both administrations

worked to keep each region of the world functioning as integrated parts of a global structure of imperialism. By closely examining the actions of officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations in each area of the world at the start of the new century, this dissertation reveals the specific way in which the United States functioned as an empire.

## Conclusion

When the U.S. official Karl Rove identified the United States as an empire at the outset of the twenty-first century, he provided an important insight into the basic nature of the United States. Although he did not provide many details about what he meant by the term “empire,” his colleagues in Washington have left a long record that has given substantive meaning to his comments.

In the first place, U.S. officials have defined the United States as an empire since the earliest days of U.S. history. Not only did the first generation of U.S. leaders found the nation as an empire, but they also harbored great ambitions to transform the original thirteen colonies into one of the most powerful empires in the world.<sup>68</sup>

In more recent years, U.S. officials have even achieved the kind of imperial power that the founders of the country would have found difficult to imagine. From the end of

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68 For more discussion, see the following sources: R. W. Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); William Appleman Williams, *The Contours of American History* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1961); Lloyd C. Gardner, Walter F. LaFeber, and Thomas J. McCormick, *Creation of the American Empire: U.S. Diplomatic History* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1973); Bradford Perkins, *The Creation of a Republican Empire, 1776-1865*, vol. 1 of *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); William Earl Weeks, *Dimensions of the Early American Empire, 1754-1865*, vol. 1 of *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

World War II until the early twenty-first century, U.S. officials have managed the most powerful empire in history.<sup>69</sup>

At the start of the new century, officials in Washington fully embraced their imperial ambitions. Although most officials in the Bush and Obama administrations refrained from describing the United States as an empire, they remained determined to enforce a global system of imperial order.<sup>70</sup>

For starters, officials in both administrations followed the same kind of imperial grand strategy that George Kennan had outlined for the United States after World War II. Just as Kennan had proposed, U.S. officials worked to order the international system in a way that enabled the United States to maintain a position of disparity.

At the same time, officials in both administrations operated according to the comparable strategy of Richard Haass. After Haass had largely refined and updated Kennan's strategy at the end of the twentieth century, officials in both administrations embraced Haass's imperial doctrine to enforce a global system of imperial order. Through their efforts, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations began the twenty-first century by functioning as the latest set of leaders to enforce a global American empire.

Furthermore, the leaders of the United States began the new century by providing some key insights into the basic nature of their global American empire. Although they

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69 For more discussion, see the following sources: Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987); Paul Kennedy, "The Eagle Has Landed," *Financial Times*, February 2, 2002. "Nothing has ever existed like this disparity of power; nothing," Kennedy commented.

70 For more discussion, see the following sources: Thomas E. Ricks, "Empire or Not? A Quiet Debate Over U.S. Role," *Washington Post*, August 21, 2001; Patrick E. Tyler, "In Washington, a Struggle to Define the Next Fight," *New York Times*, December 2, 2001; Kevin Bacon, "American Imperialism, Embraced," *New York Times*, December 9, 2001; Emily Eakin, "All Roads Lead to D.C.," *New York Times*, March 31, 2002; John Bellamy Foster, "The Rediscovery of Imperialism," *Monthly Review* 54, no. 6 (November 2002): 1-16; Dan Morgan, "A Debate Over U.S. 'Empire' Builds in Unexpected Circles," *Washington Post*, August 10, 2003.

kept most of their internal records secret from the public, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations demonstrated through their words and actions how the United States functioned as an empire.

At the most basic level, officials in both administrations implemented an imperial grand strategy to shape the basic contours of world order. Rather than pursuing formal empire, they worked to uphold the same system of imperial order that their predecessors had imposed on the world after World War II.

At the same time, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations applied a specific model to the world. By using the very same center-periphery model that their predecessors had designed for the postwar world, they worked to keep the international system organized around a dominant trilateral center and a subordinate periphery in a global structure of imperialism.

Consequently, the leaders of the United States opened the twenty-first century by very clearly demonstrating what it meant when someone like Karl Rove described the United States as an empire. Through their statements and actions, they revealed the process, development, and present nature of the global American empire.

## Section 1

### Anchors of Imperial Order

## Chapter 1

### Europe

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- Europe: The Epicenter of America's Global and Strategic Thinking
  - The Transatlantic Engine of the Global Economy
  - The Transatlantic Military Alliance with Global Reach
  - Manipulating the Political Dwarves of Europe
- Germany: The Engine of Europe
  - Big and Scary? Sure
- Russia: Keeping the Bear in Its Cage
  - Provoking the Bear
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

To lead a global empire, the leaders of the United States have begun their efforts by focusing their attention on one of the other major power centers of the world.

Extending their reach across the Atlantic Ocean, U.S. officials have acquired significant advantages in global affairs by harnessing the power of Europe. “The United States and Europe are centers of power and wealth and, as such, have special responsibility to help

our fellow human beings and, yes, help shape the world,” the State Department official Daniel Fried explained at the start of the twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup>

One of the few scholars who has surveyed the history of relations between the United States and Western Europe has even argued that the leaders of the United States made Western Europe into a key component of their global empire. Following World War II, “American influence expanded in most parts of the world – certainly in Western Europe,” Geir Lundestad explained in his study *The United States and Western Europe since 1945* (2003). “In fact, so important was the American role there, that it could be argued that Western Europe became part of an American sphere of influence, even an American 'empire.’”<sup>2</sup>

In other works, other scholars have drawn similar conclusions. For example, the scholar Ronald Steel argued in his essay “Europe: The Phantom Pillar” (2003) that U.S. officials played the dominant role in the transatlantic alliance between the United States and Europe. “For all the architectural analogies about twin pillars and the rhetoric of formal equality, the structure of the alliance remains conceptually what it was during the early days of the Cold War,” Steel explained. “It is an alliance in which the controlling levers are operated by the United States.” Moreover, Steel found that U.S. officials controlled the levers for a very specific purpose. Pointing to the global ambitions of U.S. officials, Steel specified that U.S. officials relied on Europe as its junior partner in global

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1 Daniel Fried, “Europe’s Role in the World,” May 9, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/84621.htm>.

2 Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From “Empire” by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.



affairs. “What Washington envisages, for all its rhetoric about equality, is a somewhat stronger little brother who will help the United States,” Steel explained.<sup>3</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama sought similar advantages from Europe. While they certainly spoke of their European allies as their special partners in global affairs, officials in both administrations hoped to continue using Europe to augment U.S. power. In short, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations began the twenty-first century by working to keep a powerful but subordinate Europe operating alongside the United States as one of the main anchors of their global structure of imperialism.

#### Europe: The Epicenter of America's Global and Strategic Thinking

Throughout U.S. history, the leaders of the United States have largely agreed that their plans for the world must begin with Europe. Since the founders of the United States had obtained their independence from the British empire, the leaders of the United States have always considered their place in the world by first considering where they stood in comparison to Europe. Moreover, U.S. officials have remained certain that the leaders of Europe played one of the most consequential roles in world history. While they certainly disagreed with their European counterparts on various issues, U.S. officials always viewed the European powers as some of the most powerful shapers of the modern world.

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<sup>3</sup> Ronald Steel, “Europe: The Phantom Pillar,” in *The American Century in Europe*, ed. Laurence Moore and Maurizio Vaudagna (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 69, 76.

Consequently, the leaders of the United States have remained convinced that their plans for the world must begin with Europe.

At the end of World War II, U.S. officials clearly established that their plans for the postwar world began with Europe. Providing the guiding vision, the Director of Policy Planning George Kennan explained that U.S. officials must concentrate their efforts on reconstructing Europe into a powerful force for the postwar period. “The most important and urgent element in foreign policy planning is the question of the restoration of hope and confidence in Western Europe and the early rehabilitation of the economies of that area,” Kennan explained. “The character and outcome of the action we may take with relation to western Europe will have overwhelming implications for our policy elsewhere.” Convinced that the outcome in postwar Europe held tremendous consequences for the position of the United States in the postwar world, Kennan urged his colleagues to focus their efforts on restoring the continent to much of its former status. Ultimately, “the problems of this area must be considered first,” Kennan insisted.<sup>4</sup>

Taking the view that Europe must come first, officials in Washington then began taking action to address their concerns. In the years after World War II, they quickly began working to reconstruct Europe into one of the most powerful forces in global affairs. As they began their approach, U.S. officials first made it clear that they intended to rebuild the region in a way that reinforced U.S. power. “What we are trying to do is to get organized so that they will become a tremendous asset,” the U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower explained. To achieve their objectives, U.S. officials channeled a large

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<sup>4</sup> “Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan),” May 16, 1947, in U.S. Department of State, *The British Commonwealth; Europe*, vol. 3 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), 220.

amount of funds to their political allies in the area. With programs such as the Marshall Plan, they began helping their European allies to enter the postwar period with renewed strength. Clearly, “we are pouring into this region a very great amount of our productivity,” Eisenhower confirmed. Altogether, U.S. officials made a powerful push to transform the region into one of their most powerful assets in global affairs.<sup>5</sup>

Once they began to succeed in their efforts, U.S. officials then reaffirmed their basic commitment to Europe. With a revitalized Europe emerging alongside the United States at the center of the international system during the early 1970s, U.S. officials publicly announced that they still viewed Europe as their basic starting point for their global strategy. “The alliance between the United States and Europe has been the cornerstone of all postwar foreign policy,” the National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger asserted.<sup>6</sup>

For the remainder of the twentieth century, officials in Washington maintained the same basic position. A few years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the U.S. President Bill Clinton identified Europe as a top priority for the United States. “Europe remains central to the interests of the United States,” Clinton explained. After all, “the core of our security remains with Europe.” With his remarks, Clinton made it clear that U.S. officials still viewed Europe as one of the most important areas of the world. “It is why I am committed to keeping roughly 100,000 American troops stationed in Europe,” he added.<sup>7</sup>

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5 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *United States Foreign-Aid Programs in Europe*, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., July 7 to July 23, 1951, 274.

6 Henry A. Kissinger, “The Year of Europe,” *The Department of State Bulletin* 68, no. 1768 (May 14, 1973): 593.

7 William J. Clinton, “Remarks to Future Leaders of Europe in Brussels,” January 9, 1994, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1994*, Book I – January 1 to July 31,

At the start of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials continued to keep their focus on Europe. While the Bush administration's decision to wage a war of aggression against Iraq in 2003 created frictions in the transatlantic alliance, administration officials confirmed that they still attributed special importance to their European partners. "We believe in the utility of partnerships, especially the transatlantic partnership," the Director of Policy Planning Mitchell B. Reiss explained. "We cannot imagine any replacement for the relationship that we have developed over more than half a century." At a time when many commentators openly questioned the durability of the alliance, Reiss made it clear that the Bush administration intended to keep working closely with its European allies. "The United States and Europe need to do what we have always done – work together to address the great challenges of our time in Europe and beyond," Reiss explained.<sup>8</sup>

At the start of the Bush administration's second term in office, President Bush made an especially strong push to put to rest any of the lingering doubts. When he visited Europe in February 2005, Bush identified the transatlantic alliance as "the main pillar of our security." In spite of the occasional friction, "no temporary debate, no passing disagreement of governments, no power on Earth will ever divide us," he stated. With his remarks, Bush confirmed that his administration intended to retain Europe as a key ally. After all, "when Europe and America stand together, no problem can stand against us," he stated.<sup>9</sup>

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1994 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 10.

8 Mitchell B. Reiss, "Revitalizing Transatlantic Relations: Bridging the Divide," May 11, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/32448.htm>.

9 George W. Bush, "Remarks in Brussels, Belgium," February 21, 2005, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2005*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2005 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 275.

After Bush reaffirmed the central importance of the transatlantic alliance, additional officials then provided extra emphasis. For example, the State Department official Kurt Volker explained in November 2006 that no passing disagreements had ever posed a serious risk to the alliance. “Sure, we argue over Iraq and Guantanamo and climate change,” Volker commented. “But beneath it all, we are actually on the same team.” To emphasize his point, Volker explained that the team members worked together to pursue common goals for the world. “The truth is that Americans and Europeans are both using hard and soft power and we are doing so in coordinated fashion, toward common ends,” he explained. In short, Volker insisted that the transatlantic alliance remained strong. “The big story is this,” he explained. The ties between the United States and Europe remain “unique in history” and must be understood as “arguably uniquely the most important single historical development in the modern world.”<sup>10</sup>

The following year, the State Department official R. Nicholas Burns provided more emphasis. Speaking before the Atlantic Council in February 2007, Burns stated that no other region of the world held more importance for U.S. strategy. “And if you asked any American diplomat – any American member of the Atlantic Council – for the last five or six decades what area of the world was most important, most vital for American national interest, it was certainly Europe,” he explained. “It was the epicenter of America's global and strategic thinking.” Indeed, Burns identified Europe as the most important area of the world for U.S. foreign policy. “It's why we stationed millions of young men in Europe from the spring of 1944 until the present day,” he added.<sup>11</sup>

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10 Kurt Volker, “The Future of Europe: The Ties that Bind and Divide,” November 13, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/75936.htm>.

11 R. Nicholas Burns, “U.S.-European Alliance,” February 21, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/us/rm/2007/81231.htm>.

Throughout Washington, additional officials shared similar beliefs. For example, the presidential candidate Barack Obama attributed special importance to Europe when he traveled to the region in July 2008 as part of his presidential campaign. “America has no better partner than Europe,” Obama stated.<sup>12</sup>

After Obama won the presidential election, additional officials made similar points about Europe. For example, the U.S. diplomats who managed relations with the European Union often identified their European allies as their uniquely important partners. “The European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States are America's most valuable international partners on matters vital to our national security and global economic and political stability,” the diplomats reported.<sup>13</sup>

In January 2010, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton articulated the same basic idea. “Much of what we hope to accomplish globally depends on working together with Europe,” Clinton remarked.<sup>14</sup>

Later in 2010, the State Department official Philip H. Gordon then provided additional confirmation. In the first place, Gordon described the transatlantic alliance as a key factor in U.S. global strategy. In recent history, “there is one constant throughout: U.S.-European cooperation has been essential to achieving our strategic objectives,” Gordon explained. “It was true during the Cold War and is arguably more true now than it has ever been.” In addition, Gordon identified European leaders as the most important partners for U.S. officials in the world. “We know we need strong partners in the world,

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12 Barack Obama, “Remarks of Senator Barack Obama: A World that Stands as One,” July 24, 2008, [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/07/24/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obam\\_97.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/07/24/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_97.php).

13 USEU Brussels, “EU SCENESETTER FOR CODEL KANJORSKI,” 09BRUSSELS1193, August 28, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09BRUSSELS1193.html>.

14 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks on the Future of European Security,” January 29, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/01/136273.htm>.

and we look around the world for those strong partners,” Gordon explained. “First and foremost, we find them in Europe.” Altogether, Gordon confirmed that U.S. officials began their plans for the world with Europe.<sup>15</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States approached Europe as a uniquely important area of the world. Whenever they considered their plans for the world, they placed Europe at the center of their strategic thinking. While they periodically encountered disagreements with their European allies, they consistently viewed a powerful transatlantic alliance as the main pillar of their global strategy. As a result, U.S. officials agreed that they must begin their approach to the world with Europe.

#### The Transatlantic Engine of the Global Economy

By starting their approach to the world with Europe, the leaders of the United States also gained an especially powerful advantage in global affairs. Given the close integration of the U.S. and European economies, U.S. officials gained tremendous advantages from a powerful transatlantic economy. While they certainly relied on the economic power of the United States to drive many aspects of the global economy, U.S. officials significantly augmented their economic power in the world by channeling many of their most important economic initiatives through the transatlantic economy. In short, the leaders of the United States took advantage of the transatlantic economy to gain significant leverage over the development of the global economy.

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<sup>15</sup> Philip H. Gordon, “The United States and Europe: An Agenda for Engagement,” October 18, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2010/149608.htm>; Philip H. Gordon, “European Security Roundtable,” October 28, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2010/150246.htm>.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the leaders of the United States often pointed to the significant economic benefits that they gained from the transatlantic alliance. When the U.S. President George W. Bush visited Europe in February 2005, he explained that the transatlantic economy played a central role in powering the global economy. “Our robust trade is one of the engines of the world’s economy,” he explained. In addition, Bush indicated that the leaders of the transatlantic alliance relied on the combined economic power of the transatlantic economy to pull more countries into the international economic system. “Our alliance is determined to promote development and integrate developing nations into the world economy,” Bush explained. Altogether, Bush praised the transatlantic economy for driving the global economy and pulling other national economies into the global trading system.<sup>16</sup>

A little over a year later, the State Department official Daniel Fried pointed to many of the same benefits. Speaking before a congressional subcommittee in March 2006, Fried identified the transatlantic economy as the engine of the global economy. “Our economies generate over \$2.5 trillion in transatlantic trade and investment each year and account for millions of jobs on either side of the Atlantic,” Fried explained. “Even with the rise of emerging economies such as China and India, our relationship will be the engine of the global economy for at least the next generation.” Moreover, Fried noted that U.S. officials relied on the transatlantic economy to achieve many of their preferred economic reforms in the global economy. Today, “our positive, cooperative relationship generates global growth and economic reform,” Fried noted. In all, Fried characterized

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16 George W. Bush, “Remarks in Brussels, Belgium,” February 21, 2005, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2005*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2005 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 275, 278.



that transatlantic economy as a powerful engine that powered the global economy and shaped its basic structure.<sup>17</sup>

Throughout Washington, other observers attributed even more importance to the transatlantic economy. For example, the analyst Raymond J. Ahearn at the Congressional Research Service described the transatlantic economy as one of the most important components of the global economy. “Not only is the U.S.-EU trade and investment relationship the largest in the world, but it is also arguably the most important,” Ahearn argued. To support his point, Ahearn explained that the leaders of both the United States and Europe combined their economic power in a way that provided them with unparalleled power in the global economy. “The United States and the European Union, acting in concert, are the superpowers of the world trading system,” he asserted.<sup>18</sup>

In another report, a team of analysts at the Congressional Research Service provided additional emphasis. “The transatlantic economy dominates the world economy by its sheer size and prosperity,” the analysts reported. To emphasize their point, the analysts explained that the leaders of the transatlantic alliance could take advantage of the transatlantic economy to shape the structure of the world trading system. “The combined weight of these two economic superpowers means that how the U.S. and EU manage their relationship and the difficult issues involving domestic regulations, competition policy, and foreign investment could well help determine how the rest of the world deals with similar issues,” the analysts reported. Indeed, the analysts suggested that both U.S.

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17 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the Committee on International Relations, *The U.S.-European Relationship: Opportunities and Challenges*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., March 8, 2006, 13.

18 Raymond J. Ahearn, “Trade Conflict and the U.S.-European Union Economic Relationship,” Congressional Research Service, April 11, 2007. For the quotes, see the Summary at the beginning of the report and page CRS-3.

and European officials could potentially dictate their economic terms to the rest of the world.<sup>19</sup>

Shortly after the Obama administration entered office, the U.S. diplomats who managed relations with the European Union pointed to similar factors. In an internal report, the diplomats explained that the two superpowers of the world trading system played a central role in setting the terms of trade for much of the world. “The United States and the European Union have the largest economic relationship in the world and remain the leaders in setting the global economic and regulatory agenda,” the diplomats explained.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, administration officials intended to take advantage of the transatlantic economy to shape the global economic and regulatory agenda. In December 2009, the State Department official Robert D. Hormats pointed to the administration's intentions when he urged a congressional committee to support the administration's efforts to extend the basic structure of the transatlantic economy to the rest of the world. “We need to build on this strong transatlantic foundation as we continue to construct new international economic rules and architecture to meet today’s challenges,” Hormats stated. With his remarks, Hormats indicated that the Obama administration wanted to use the transatlantic economy to fit a certain economic architecture to the global economy. “This is why my colleagues and I in the administration intend to take a very hands-on approach to

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19 Raymond J. Ahearn, John W. Fischer, Charles B. Goldfarb, Charles E. Hanrahan, Walter W. Eubanks, and Janice E. Rubin, “European Union – U.S. Trade and Investment Relations: Key Issues,” Congressional Research Service, February 14, 2008, CRS-2, CRS-3.

20 USEU Brussels, “Working with the EU to Spur Transatlantic Economic Integration and Global Growth,” 09BRUSSELS78, January 21, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/01/09BRUSSELS78.html>.

developing our economic relationship with Europe and with the EU in particular,” he explained.<sup>21</sup>

The following year, the U.S. diplomat Philip D. Murphy expressed similar ambitions. In a public speech, Murphy explained that the leaders of the transatlantic economy could shape the development of the entire world. “What we do together as partners sets the course for the prosperity of our nations,” Murphy explained. “It also sets the bar for the rest of the world.”<sup>22</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States acquired significant advantages from the transatlantic economy. By maintaining a powerful transatlantic economy with their European allies, U.S. officials acquired much more influence over the development of the global economy. At the most basic level, U.S. officials relied on the transatlantic economy to power the development of the global economy. At the same time, they worked closely with their European allies to shape the rules that defined how countries participated in the international economic system. Consequently, the leaders of the United States acquired powerful leverage over the development of the world trading system.

### The Transatlantic Military Alliance with Global Reach

As they gained significant economic benefits from the transatlantic economy, the leaders of the United States also gained another major advantage from their European

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21 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Strengthening the Transatlantic Economy: Moving Beyond the Crisis*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., December 9, 2009, 9.

22 Philip D. Murphy, “The Transatlantic Marketplace 2010: Challenges and Opportunities Beyond 2010,” October 28, 2010, [http://germany.usembassy.gov/about/ambassador/speeches/2010/10/28/transatlantic\\_marketplace/](http://germany.usembassy.gov/about/ambassador/speeches/2010/10/28/transatlantic_marketplace/).

allies. With the cooperation of European officials, U.S. officials ran the most powerful military alliance in the world, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While they certainly relied on their own military power to police the world, U.S. officials significantly augmented their military power in the world by working through NATO.

Certainly, U.S. officials had initially designed NATO for regional purposes. When they had organized NATO with European officials after World War II, U.S. officials mainly planned for the military alliance to send a powerful message the Soviet Union. “The basic objective of the Western Union Defense Pact is to convince Russia that war would not pay,” U.S. officials explained. More specifically, U.S. officials intended for NATO to prevail in a major regional war against the Soviet Union. If “a major war should develop, the strategic concept envisages an immediate air offensive, a ground defense in Germany as far to the East as possible, an air defense of the countries of the western union, a defense of the Middle East and North Africa, the control of sea communications, and, finally, an offensive on land as early as possible,” U.S. officials explained. In sum, U.S. officials intended for NATO to defeat the Soviet Union in a major regional war that extended throughout Europe and its periphery.<sup>23</sup>

In more recent years, U.S. officials developed more ambitious goals for NATO. Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the Bush administration began working to transform NATO from a regional institution with a regional focus into a powerful military force with global reach. “We all need to have highly mobile, sustainable forces with modern combat capabilities,” the Secretary of State Colin Powell explained. “Forces that

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23 “Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Forrestal),” NSC 9/6, November 24, 1948, in U.S. Department of State, *Western Europe*, vol. 3 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), 290.

can get to the fight – wherever it is – and carry out a mission with efficiency and precision.” With his remarks, Powell indicated that the Bush administration wanted to transform NATO into an active military force that conducted military operations all across the globe. “The kinds of challenges NATO may be facing in the future won’t always be located in Central Europe,” Powell stated. “NATO has to have the ability to move to other places.”<sup>24</sup>

In fact, the Bush administration quickly implemented its plans. By the time the administration had begun its second term in office, it had begun using the military alliance to conduct numerous operations throughout the world. “Consider our path since the end of the Cold War,” the State Department official Kurt Volker explained. “In 1994, NATO was an alliance of 16, without partners, having never conducted a military operation. By 2005, NATO had become an alliance of 26, engaged in eight simultaneous operations on four continents with the help of 20 Partners in Eurasia, seven in the Mediterranean, four in the Persian Gulf, and a handful of capable contributors on our periphery.” Indeed, the Bush administration oversaw the rapid transformation of NATO into an active military force that conducted many different military operations all across the globe.<sup>25</sup>

During the administration's second term in office, additional officials pointed to the same transformation. “What do the following places have in common?” the U.S. Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland asked in October 2006. “Panjwai, Ar-Rustamiyah,

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24 Colin L. Powell, “NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting,” May 14, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2002/10140.htm>. For more discussion, see Paul Gallis, “The NATO Summit at Prague, 2002,” Congressional Research Service, March 1, 2005.

25 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the Committee on International Relations, *The United States and NATO: Transformation and the Riga Summit*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., May 3, 2006, 7.

Bagh, Leposavic, El Fashir, and Little Rock, Arkansas.” After raising her question, Nuland then provided the answer. “All of these places are places where NATO has deployed within the last 18 months,” Nuland explained. “Fifty thousand soldiers operating in the last 18 months on four continents around the world.” Indeed, Nuland confirmed that NATO had quickly begun to project its power throughout the world. The military operations demonstrate “that we have an alliance that is taking on global responsibilities, that it increasingly has the global capabilities to meet those challenges, and that is doing it in concert with global partners,” Nuland explained.<sup>26</sup>

A few months later, the State Department official Daniel Fried provided more details. After describing NATO as “a transatlantic institution with global missions, global reach, and global partners,” Fried specified that NATO could now operate anywhere in the world. “There is no ‘in area/out of area,’” he remarked. “Everything is NATO's area, potentially.” While Fried certainly acknowledged that NATO remained a regional organization, he made it clear that the transatlantic military alliance had begun to play an unprecedented new role in the world. “NATO is in the process of developing the capabilities and the political horizons to deal with problems and contingencies around the world,” Fried explained. “That is a huge change.”<sup>27</sup>

The following year, the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe Bantz J. Craddock pointed to the same change. Citing the “60,000 deployed NATO military forces on three continents under my command,” Craddock explained that NATO had begun conducting the kinds of operations that it had never before attempted. “During the cold

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26 Victoria Nuland, “NATO: A 21st Century Alliance That Is Delivering,” October 30, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/75477.htm>.

27 Daniel Fried, “Transatlantic Security: NATO and Missile Defense,” April 17, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/83176.htm>.

war, NATO did not conduct any combat operations, but today it is involved in six operations on three continents performing a variety of missions,” Craddock explained. Clearly, “the NATO military structure is operating at an unprecedented operational tempo.”<sup>28</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, the U.S. diplomats who managed relations with NATO even urged the new president to accelerate the tempo. In one of their internal reports, the diplomats advised Obama that “NATO needs to be able to deploy more forces to greater distances and more rapidly than it can do at present.” Indeed, the diplomats encouraged Obama to empower NATO in a way that enabled the military alliance to more effectively “engage in a far-off corner of the globe.”<sup>29</sup>

Not long after the diplomats submitted their recommendation, administration officials confirmed that they harbored similar ambitions. In February 2010, the U.S. Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder explained that the administration intended for NATO to engage in many far-off corners of the globe. In the years ahead, “NATO will have to operate beyond the territorial confines of the North Atlantic Treaty,” Daalder explained. “And it does, which is why we’re in Afghanistan.” Pointing to military operations in Afghanistan as an example of NATO’s growing reach, Daalder insisted that people must accept the fact that NATO would continue to expand its reach throughout the world. After all, “NATO is an actor in a globalized world,” he commented. “And NATO will be involved as an actor in that globalized world, far from the shores, as it has been today,

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28 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *NATO: Enlargement and Effectiveness*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., March 11, 2008, 22, 23.

29 Mission USNATO, “SCENESETTER FOR POTUS’S MEETING WITH OUTGOING NATO SYG JAAP DE HOOP SCHEFFER,” 09USNATO314, July 20, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/07/09USNATO314.html>.

when it has launched the largest military operation in the history of the alliance, 5,000 kilometers from the headquarters in Brussels.”<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, the leaders of the United States gained a major advantage from NATO. By maintaining a powerful transatlantic military alliance with their European allies, U.S. officials significantly strengthened their military power in the world. Despite the fact that they had initially organized NATO with the intention of reinforcing their dominant position in postwar Europe, U.S. officials began the twenty-first century by transforming NATO into a far more powerful military force that could project its power into every region of the planet. In short, the leaders of the United States began to take advantage of the transatlantic military alliance to much more actively police the world.

#### Manipulating the Political Dwarves of Europe

To secure the tremendous advantages that they gained from Europe, the leaders of the United States also applied an imperial political strategy to the region. Unwilling to risk the many advantages that they obtained from Europe, U.S. officials continually intervened in European politics to keep the region open to their influence. Through their efforts, U.S. officials acquired a powerful say over the fate of Europe.

In fact, U.S. officials found that their European counterparts provided them with many opportunities to guide the region's political process. As the Special Envoy for European Affairs C. Boyden Gray explained in an internal report in May 2008, the

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<sup>30</sup> Ivo Daalder, “Special Briefing on the Future of NATO,” February 23, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2010/137121.htm>.



leaders of the European Union (EU) often followed the lead of U.S. officials on matters of global significance. “On critical foreign policy issues (Balkans, Middle East, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Russia), EU officials still cooperate closely with their Washington counterparts, and official EU statements generally say the right things,” Gray noted.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, U.S. officials found other ways of getting their European counterparts to say the right things. Despite the fact that they regularly celebrated Europe as a democratic continent in which the people of Europe determined their own fate, U.S. officials found many different ways to manipulate the political process to their advantage.

Leading the way, the U.S. diplomats who managed relations with the European Union often identified strategies for swaying the political process in the European Union. In June 2008, for example, the diplomats identified one particularly effective strategy that European officials had already used on their own to circumvent the political process. “The most effective member states have found ways around the paralysis of the official process,” the diplomats explained. “They work the system (both member states and the institutions) early, informally, and systematically.” Recognizing that the most effective member states found it possible to work the system, the diplomats believed that they could take advantage of the same approach. “The US can profit from this example,” they argued. “By reaching out early, we can fashion operational strategies that leverage member state differences and that can better coordinate Washington and field efforts.” In other words, the diplomats suggested that they could acquire powerful leverage over the

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<sup>31</sup> USEU Brussels, “YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE MAY 13 TRANSATLANTIC ECONOMIC COUNCIL, FROM SPECIAL ENVOY GRAY,” 08BRUSSELS704, May 9, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08BRUSSELS704.html>.

political process in the European Union by exploiting divisions among European leaders.<sup>32</sup>

As the Obama administration entered office in January 2009, other observers pointed to similar possibilities. For example, one former U.S. official informed the diplomats that the leaders of the United States could easily work the system. It was almost difficult to believe “how easy EU institutions are to penetrate and how malleable they can be if approached with an apt understanding of the EU coalition building process,” the former official explained. Convinced that the EU system featured many weaknesses, the former official insisted that “Washington has an opportunity to drive the EU agenda precisely because of the EU’s loose operational style.” Moreover, the former official described how the leaders of the United States could drive the EU agenda. Going into the specific details, the former official explained that one way “this could be realized is by meeting bilaterally with the various states that matter on a particular issue in the early stages of policy formulation.” From there, U.S. officials could then achieve their objectives by “identifying the member states that can punch above their weight on particular issues, and then forming partnerships with a constellation of such states to advance or block specific proposals.” Indeed, the former U.S. official insisted that the leaders of the United States could directly intervene in the political process to achieve their desired results.<sup>33</sup>

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32 USEU Brussels, “GETTING THE MOST OUT OF FOREIGN POLICY COOPERATION WITH THE EU,” 08BRUSSELS943, June 20, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/06/08BRUSSELS943.html>.

33 USEU Brussels, “CENTRAL EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE SHOWS COALITION BUILDING IS KEY TO EU POLICYMAKING,” 09BRUSSELS496, April 2, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/04/09BRUSSELS496.html>.

Sharing the same belief, the diplomats highlighted specific opportunities to implement the strategy. In April 2009, the diplomats explained in one of their internal reports that they could drive the EU agenda by taking advantage of the Central European states. “The accession of the Central European states to the EU greatly enhances our ability to form and build coalitions that can sway the policy of the EU as a whole,” the diplomats explained. While the Central European states had only recently joined the European Union, the diplomats believed that U.S. officials could take advantage of the states to gain significant leverage over the political process. Clearly, “the Central European member states are becoming more skilled at playing the EU policy game,” the diplomats reported. “We should increasingly consider playing the game with them, and especially on areas of greatest concern to them.” Close cooperation with the Central European states will “help ensure that we get the right results with the EU.”<sup>34</sup>

At the time, the diplomats also detected another opportunity to get the right results. In another one of their internal reports, the diplomats suggested that they could acquire more power over the EU by extending the EU policy game to military matters. “By proactively engaging the European Union on security topics before an EU consensus is reached, we can regain the diplomatic initiative in transatlantic relations and better leverage EU assets,” the diplomats explained. To make their case, the diplomats argued that they could gain significant political advantages by taking advantage of the growing military ambitions of EU leaders. “The EU cannot fulfill its ambitions without working closely with the United States, and U.S. leverage and access to EU decision-making

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34 USEU Brussels, “CENTRAL EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE SHOWS COALITION BUILDING IS KEY TO EU POLICYMAKING,” 09BRUSSELS496, April 2, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/04/09BRUSSELS496.html>.

therefore increases as the EU becomes more internationally active,” the diplomats explained. In short, the diplomats saw the military policy of the EU as another opening for them to maintain the upper hand in diplomatic relations.<sup>35</sup>

As they worked to maintain the diplomatic initiative, the diplomats also employed additional tactics to win the EU policy game. Not only did they highlight many different opportunities to penetrate the EU, but they actively applied various measures to steer the political process. For example, the diplomats explained in one report in February 2010 that they exercised “early, sustained, and strategic outreach” to sway the policies of the European Union. “USG produced technical non-papers have proven to persuade EU analysis over the long term and influence program modifications during renewal decisions,” the diplomats explained. “Some other avenues for USG outreach have included: UN Security Council sanctions committees; information/intelligence sharing on a bilateral or EU-wide basis; weekly State (EUR/ERA) phone calls with the rotating EU Presidency; monthly demarches to the EU’s Foreign Affairs Council (FKA the GAERC); ad hoc demarches; U.S.-EU political dialogues (FKA troikas); U.S.-EU Summits; technical and legal discussions or workshops with EU institutions; and indirect influence through like-minded NGOs.” In short, the diplomats confirmed that they employed many different tactics to shape the political process in the European Union.<sup>36</sup>

Through their efforts, the U.S. diplomats in Europe acquired tremendous influence over the transatlantic alliance. While the leaders of Europe may have certainly made things easy for the diplomats by following the lead of the United States on various

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35 USEU Brussels, “ENGAGING THE EU ON DEFENSE ISSUES,” 09USEUBRUSSELS552, April 9, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/04/09USEUBRUSSELS552.html>.

36 USEU Brussels, “THE EU AND SANCTIONS (INTRODUCING THE EU, PART VIII),” 10BRUSSELS211, February 23, 2010, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10BRUSSELS211.html>.

matters in global affairs, the diplomats employed many political tactics to maintain the upper hand in European politics. Consequently, the U.S. diplomats played an influential role in determining the policy of the European Union.

When the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* assessed the influence of the U.S. diplomats, it could only draw one basic conclusion about the extent of their impact. “US Diplomats in the EU: Manipulating the Political Dwarves of Europe,” the news magazine reported.<sup>37</sup>

### Germany: The Engine of Europe

As U.S. officials manipulated the political dwarves of Europe, they also focused their efforts on one particular country. While they certainly directed their attention to a number of countries in the area, U.S. officials made their greatest efforts to guide the fate of Germany. As long as they could maintain their control over Germany, U.S. officials believed that they could maintain their control over the rest of the continent.<sup>38</sup>

During the early twentieth century, the leaders of the United States clearly identified Germany as the key to their plans for the continent. Before the outbreak of World War II, the U.S. diplomat Breckinridge Long outlined the basic principles in a letter to the U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. “There are only two governments in

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37 Gregor Peter Schmitz, “US Diplomats in the EU: Manipulating the Political Dwarves of Europe,” *Spiegel Online International*, December 10, 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/us-diplomats-in-the-eu-manipulating-the-political-dwarves-of-europe-a-733991.html>.

38 For more discussion, see the following sources: Hans W. Gatzke, *Germany and the United States: A “Special Relationship?”* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); Manfred Jonas, *The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Detlef Junker, “The United States, Germany, and Europe in the Twentieth Century,” in *The American Century in Europe*, ed. Laurence Moore and Maurizio Vaudagna (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 94-113.

Europe capable of being a real victor,” Long explained. “One is Germany, and the other is Russia.” Although Hitler had already come to power in Germany, Long believed that a victorious Germany would provide the United States with the most advantages in the region. “I shudder to think of a Russian domination of Europe,” he added. “While a German domination would be hard and cruel – at least in the beginning – it would be an intensification of a culture which is more akin to ours than would be that of Russia.” Indeed, Long identified Germany as the preferable center of power in Europe.<sup>39</sup>

After World War II, officials in Washington shared the same basic sentiments. Although they had briefly turned against Germany during the war, joining the Soviet Union in a united effort to defeat the Nazis, U.S. officials quickly returned to the idea that Germany should function as the main center of power in Europe. At the State Department, the Director of Policy Planning George Kennan presented the basic logic. “There was a great deal in Hitler's so-called new order which would have made sense if the guiding spirit behind it had not been Hitler,” Kennan explained. With his remarks, Kennan indicated that U.S. officials could use a powerful but less militaristic Germany to impose their preferred form of order on the continent. “We have to nurse our recent enemies, the Germans, back to economic strength without instigating them to renewed aggression or making them the masters of our recent allies,” Kennan noted.<sup>40</sup>

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39 Breckinridge Long to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 19, 1935, Papers as President: The President's Secretary's File (PSF), 1933-1945, Box 41, Italy – Long, Breckinridge, 1933-1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. Available online at <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/franklin/?p=collections/findingaid&id=502>.

40 George Kennan, “Contemporary Problems of Foreign Policy,” National War College, September 17, 1948, George Kennan Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Available online at <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC076/c03141>.

In fact, U.S. officials largely achieved their plans. Although Germany remained divided for most of the postwar period between a powerful West Germany under the influence of the United States and a weaker East Germany under the influence of the Soviet Union, U.S. officials eventually transformed West Germany into the main center of power in postwar Europe. In a speech to the people of West Germany in 1989, the U.S. President George H. W. Bush marked the transformation by welcoming the country into position alongside the United States at the center of the international system. The leaders of both the United States and West Germany “have always been firm friends and allies, but today we share an added role: partners in leadership,” Bush declared.<sup>41</sup>

Not long thereafter, U.S. officials then achieved their more fundamental vision for the country. With the unification of Germany in 1990 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, U.S. officials oversaw the emergence of a new order in Europe that centered around a powerful Germany. “Our shared achievement has been just plain breathtaking,” the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher remarked during his visit to Germany in 1996. “Germany is the united heart of an increasingly united continent, and that continent now looks to Germany as a symbol and as a catalyst for the integration it is striving to achieve.” In other words, U.S. officials had overseen the emergence of a Germany-centered Europe.<sup>42</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials only continued to view Germany as the key to the continent. Although the Secretary of Defense Donald

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41 George Bush, “Remarks to the Citizens of Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany,” May 31, 1989, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1989*, Book I – January 20 to June 30, 1989 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), 651.

42 Warren Christopher, “A New Atlantic Community For the 21st Century,” *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 7, no. 37 (September 9, 1996): 449.

Rumsfeld had caused a brief stir in bilateral relations by dismissing the countries of France and Germany as irrelevant members of “old Europe” during the transatlantic debate over the war in Iraq, administration officials continued working closely with German officials to manage the fate of the continent. Certainly, “the Bush Administration has never underestimated the importance of our relationship with Germany, and has worked hard to contain and repair any damage to our mutual friendship,” the State Department official John R. Bolton explained during his visit to the country in February 2004. The “allied bonds remain flexible as well as unbreakable,” the Secretary of State Colin Powell agreed.<sup>43</sup>

With U.S. officials determined to put the controversy over the war in Iraq behind them, they continued to reaffirm their commitment to Germany. For example, the U.S. Ambassador to Germany William R. Timken repeatedly insisted that U.S. officials hoped to continue working closely with German officials. “Effective U.S.-German cooperation is the key to strong transatlantic ties and very much in both countries’ national interest and the interest of the world,” Timken stated. After all, “Germany is in the heart of Europe, has the world’s third largest economy and is the world’s leading exporter.” In addition, Timken confirmed that U.S. officials wanted to see Germany play the central role in continental Europe. Germany must play “its proper role as a driver of regional and

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43 Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Secretary Rumsfeld Briefs at the Foreign Press Center,” January 22, 2003, <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=1330>; John R. Bolton, “The German-American Relationship After Iraq,” February 12, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/t/us/rm/29351.htm>; Colin L. Powell, “Gemeinsame Grundsätze,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 31, 2004, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/gastbeitrag-gemeinsame-grundsaeetze-1143001.html>. For the official English translation of Powell’s op-ed, see Colin L. Powell, “Flexible and Unbreakable,” March 31, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/30860.htm>.



global economic growth,” Timken insisted. In short, Timken confirmed that U.S. officials still wanted to see Germany function as the heart of Europe.<sup>44</sup>

Periodically, U.S. officials also provided some of the reasons why they held their views. In January 2006, the Treasury Department official Robert Kimmitt explained that Germany kept the rest of the continent moving forward. “The German economy is the engine of Europe,” Kimmitt explained. The country produces “almost 30% of total output” and remains “the top export market for most of the rest of the EU.” Given the country's central economic role, Kimmitt believed that the rest of Europe required its German engine to keep functioning. “If Germany is not firing on all cylinders, then neither is the rest of Europe,” he remarked.<sup>45</sup>

Even when they did not cite the specific reasons, U.S. officials still made it clear that they viewed Germany as the key country in Europe. For example, the State Department official Farah Pandith identified Germany as “one of Europe's most important countries” and “a key strategic ally of the United States.” The country “remains Europe’s economic Wunderkind” and “plays a central role in the new strategic contests of our time,” she stated. Indeed, Pandith identified Germany as the key country in Europe. “Nothing, or not much, will happen in Europe without Germany,” she added. In fact, “nothing ever has and it is difficult to believe that it ever will.”<sup>46</sup>

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44 William R. Timken, “Statement of Ambassador-Designate to Germany,” July 27, 2005, [http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/timken\\_hearing.html](http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/timken_hearing.html); William R. Timken, “Remarks to the American Chamber of Commerce,” November 9, 2005, [http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/timken\\_11\\_09\\_05.html](http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/timken_11_09_05.html).

45 Robert M. Kimmitt, “Reinvigorating the US-German Economic Partnership,” January 13, 2006, <http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/js3081.htm>.

46 Farah Pandith, “Engaging With the World After 9/11,” September 11, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/92361.htm>.

In the subsequent Obama administration, U.S. officials continued to make many of the same points about Germany. For example, President Obama identified Germany as a key ally during his visit to the country in April 2009. Certainly, “we are grateful to have such an extraordinary ally,” Obama remarked. “And I think I speak on behalf of the American people that we consider the relationship between the United States and Germany to be one of our most important relationships.”<sup>47</sup>

In the following months, the U.S. diplomats in Germany provided additional emphasis. The partners in leadership have created “one of the most productive and special alliances we have in the world today,” the diplomats reported. Little compared to “the unique and special relationship we have built and sustained with Germany over the last 60 years.”<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, the U.S. Ambassador to Germany Philip D. Murphy identified the partnership between the United States and Germany as one of the most important alliances in the world. “As for that special partnership, there is no question that America's relationship with Germany has been among the most important global alliances over the past 60 years, the results of which have been breathtaking,” Murphy remarked. In fact, Murphy concluded that U.S. officials had no more important partner in the world. “This is America’s most important bilateral relationship – both from the historical perspective,

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47 Barack Obama, “The President's News Conference With Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany in Baden-Baden, Germany,” April 3, 2009, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2009*, Book I – January 20 to June 30, 2009 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), 426.

48 Embassy Berlin, “RETHINKING U.S. FORCES REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE: MISSION GERMANY'S PERSPECTIVE,” 09BERLIN935, August 4, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09BERLIN935.html>; Embassy Berlin, “FURTHER MISSION GERMANY VIEWS ON PLANNED U.S. FORCE REDUCTIONS IN EUROPE,” 09BERLIN1157, September 18, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/09/09BERLIN1157.html>.

looking back over the success story of modern diplomacy that has played out over the past 60 years – from the very urgent perspective of today,” Murphy insisted.<sup>49</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States viewed Germany as one of the most important countries in Europe. While they certainly did not want to see the German government make another effort to take control of the European continent, just as the Nazis had attempted during the early twentieth century, they still viewed Germany as the key to achieving their preferred version of continental order. As a result, U.S. officials worked to keep in place a powerful but subordinate Germany-centered Europe as the main form of continental order.

#### Big and Scary? Sure

During their involvement in Germany, U.S. officials also gained a significant advantage from the country. Not only did they rely on a powerful German engine to keep the continent functioning, but U.S. officials also constructed a massive surveillance apparatus in Germany to gather intelligence on their targets in both Europe and its periphery. Indeed, the leaders of the United States transformed Germany into one of their main centers of surveillance in the area.

At the end of World War II, U.S. officials first began to create their espionage apparatus in Germany. Turning to Reinhard Gehlen, who had worked under Hitler during the war, U.S. officials created the Gehlen Organization to conduct covert operations

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<sup>49</sup> Philip D. Murphy, “Philip Murphy’s Welcome Remarks,” August 21, 2009, [http://germany.usembassy.gov/murphy\\_082109.html](http://germany.usembassy.gov/murphy_082109.html); Philip D. Murphy, “Impressions of Germany,” April 20, 2010, [http://germany.usembassy.gov/murphy\\_042010.html](http://germany.usembassy.gov/murphy_042010.html).

throughout the area. “Between 1945 and 1949, the US Army handled the Gehlen Organization and funded its intelligence collection,” the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) confirmed in an internal report.<sup>50</sup>

By creating the Gehlen Organization, U.S. officials also empowered many Germans with notorious reputations. Not only had Gehlen worked under Hitler during the war, but he had also brought many former Nazis into his organization. When the CIA took over the Gehlen Organization in mid-1949, the move “irrevocably linked the CIA to former members of the General Staff of the defeated Wehrmacht and Nazi Germany's intelligence services, some of whom had notorious wartime reputations,” the CIA acknowledged.<sup>51</sup>

In spite of the notorious wartime reputations of their German allies, U.S. officials continued working closely with their German partners. After the Gehlen Organization became the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) in 1956 to become the main intelligence organization in Germany, U.S. officials began strengthening their relations with their German associates. For example, officials at the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) began working with their counterparts at the BND to conduct signals intelligence (SIGINT) on the various forms of communications signals that passed through the area.

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50 Kevin C. Ruffner, ed., *Forging an Intelligence Partnership: CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1945-1949: A Documentary History*, CIA History Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1999, 1:x, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 146, National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, DC. Available online at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB146/>.

51 *Ibid.*, 1:xiii. For more discussion, see the following sources: Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988); Mary Ellen Reese, *General Reinhard Gehlen: The CIA Connection* (Fairfax: George Mason University Press, 1990); Timothy Naftali, “Reinhard Gehlen and the United States,” in *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, ed. Richard Breitman, Norman J. W. Goda, Timothy Naftali, and Robert Wolfe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 375-418.

In 1962, “NSA established a relationship with its SIGINT counterparts in Germany, the BND-TA,” the NSA confirmed in an internal report.<sup>52</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials continued working closely with their counterparts at the BND. In June 2005, one NSA official outlined a particularly close link between the NSA and the BND in an internal report. “NSA personnel interact daily with BND counterparts, coordinating policy, conducting technical exchanges, expanding the range of cooperation in SIGINT, and deepening the partnership in many ways,” the official reported.<sup>53</sup>

In fact, NSA officials ran some of their most critically important programs from a number of locations in Germany. At the European Security Center (ESC), for example, NSA officials conducted detailed analysis of the information they collected on their targets in both Europe and the broader region. The ESC supports “military operations through the European Command theater, which includes not only Europe, but also much of Africa and parts of the Middle East,” one official explained. Ultimately, the center functions as “a complete production facility, performing collection, processing, analysis and dissemination.”<sup>54</sup>

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52 National Security Agency/Central Security Service, “NSA Intelligence Relationship with Germany - Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND),” January 17, 2013. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/the-germany-file-of-edward-snowden-documents-available-for-download-a-975917.html>. See the link titled “Comprehensive internal summary of the history and current state of cooperation between the NSA and BND.”

53 Special US Liaison Activity Germany, “One-Year Anniversary for SUSLAG,” June 10, 2005. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/the-germany-file-of-edward-snowden-documents-available-for-download-a-975917.html>. See the link titled “Report on the one-year anniversary of the NSA liaison unit SUSLAG at the new site in the Mangfall Kaserne in Bad Aibling.”

54 Chief, Operations Division, Army Cryptologic Operations (ACO), “European Security Center to Begin Operations,” March 29, 2004. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/the-germany-file-of-edward-snowden-documents-available-for-download-a-975917.html>. See the link titled “Report on the beginnings of the European Security Center (ESC) in the Dagger Complex.”

With the center providing so much useful information, the Bush administration then decided to expand the center. “Good as it is, the ESC is about to get better,” one NSA official observed during the final years of the Bush administration. The site will soon begin “expanding or adding more missions that will support national, theater, and regional intelligence needs.” With the site rapidly adding more missions, one official even described the site as one of the most important centers for the NSA in the world. The site has quickly become “the largest Analysis and Production activity in Europe,” the official reported. Its “products are included in the President's Daily Brief (PDB) on average twice a week.”<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, the NSA maintained other powerful sites throughout Germany. For example, the NSA ran another major center called the European Technical Center. “The European Technical Center (ETC) in Wiesbaden, Germany, is NSA's primary communications hub in that part of the world,” one official explained. As a regional hub, the center provides “communications connectivity, SIGINT collection, and data-flow services to NSAers, warfighters and foreign partners in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.”<sup>56</sup>

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55 A&P's Director, Enterprise Management (S2), “The European Security Center to Become the 'ESOC,’” September 11, 2006. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/the-germany-file-of-edward-snowden-documents-available-for-download-a-975917.html>. See the link titled “Report on the changing of the ESC’s name to European Security Operations Center (ESOC);” SIGINT Director, “The ECC -- NSA's Newest Cryptologic Center,” June 13, 2011. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/the-germany-file-of-edward-snowden-documents-available-for-download-a-975917.html>. See the link titled “Report on the changing of the ESOC’s name to European Cryptologic Center (ECC) including details on missions launched from there.”

56 Director, European Technical Center (F25), “NSA Communications Hub in Europe Is Modernized,” October 20, 2011. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/the-germany-file-of-edward-snowden-documents-available-for-download-a-975917.html>. See the link titled “Report on the technical expansion of the European Technical Center in the Mainz-Kastel neighborhood of Wiesbaden.”

Taking advantage of their sprawling surveillance apparatus in Germany, the NSA also collected a tremendous amount of information in the country. By classifying the country as a “3rd party foreign partner,” the NSA monitored the tens of millions of records that passed through Germany on a daily basis. “We can, and often do, target the signals of most 3d party foreign partners,” NSA officials confirmed.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, the NSA employed its massive surveillance apparatus to perform the bulk collection of the kinds of tools that people used to communicate with one another on a regular basis. For example, the NSA directly monitored e-mails, chat rooms, text messages, and telephone calls.<sup>58</sup>

As they conducted their work, NSA officials also used powerful tools to search through the vast amounts of data. Using tools such as XKEYSCORE (XKS), NSA officials located very specific information about their targets. “XKS has become so important because with it, analysts can downsize their gigantic shrimping nets to tiny, handheld goldfish-sized nets and merely dip them into the oceans of data, working smarter and scooping out exactly what they want,” one official explained. Even if XKEYSCORE seemed scary to some people, NSA officials believed that the tool provided them with unparalleled advantages. “Maybe XKS is a seven-headed dragon,”

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57 Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill, “Boundless Informant: the NSA's secret tool to track global surveillance data,” *Guardian*, June 8, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/08/nsa-boundless-informant-global-datamining>; Laura Poitras, Marcel Rosenbach, and Holger Stark, “Partner and Target: NSA Snoops on 500 Million German Data Connections,” *Spiegel Online International*, June 30, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/nsa-spies-on-500-million-german-data-connections-a-908648.html>; Laura Poitras, Marcel Rosenbach, Fidelius Schmid, Holger Stark, and Jonathan Stock, “Cover Story: How the NSA Targets Germany and Europe,” *Spiegel Online International*, July 1, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/secret-documents-nsa-targeted-germany-and-eu-buildings-a-908609.html>.

58 Ibid.

the official conceded. “Big and scary? Sure. Strong and powerful? Oh yeah.” Either way, “it is ours to do with whatever we like, including catching shrimp.”<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, NSA officials used their tools to target some very big shrimp. For example, NSA officials monitored the communications of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Starting in 2002, they began monitoring Merkel’s correspondence with other high-level officials. In addition, they tapped her personal cellphone to monitor her private communications. From the time the surveillance began during the Bush administration to the time the Obama administration got caught conducting the surveillance, NSA officials kept one of the closest allies of the U.S. government under their watch.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, U.S. officials conducted additional forms of political espionage. In violation of international law, operatives from both the NSA and CIA ran some of their most secretive programs directly from U.S. embassies in Germany. Working out of a secret unit called the Special Collection Service (SCS), the operatives posed as U.S. diplomats to spy on their targets.<sup>61</sup>

59 European Cryptologic Center, SIGDEV (F22), “Dragons, Shrimp, and XKEYSCORE: Tales from the Land of Brothers Grimm,” April 13, 2012. Available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/the-germany-file-of-edward-snowden-documents-available-for-download-a-975917.html>. See the link titled “Report on an XKeyscore training session at the ECC / Dagger Complex.” For more discussion of XKEYSCORE, see the following sources: Glenn Greenwald, “Xkeyscore: NSA tool collects ‘nearly everything a user does on the internet,’” *Guardian*, July 31, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/31/nsa-top-secret-program-online-data>; Morgan Marquis-Boire, Glenn Greenwald, and Micah Lee, “XKEYSCORE: NSA’s Google for the World’s Private Communications,” *Intercept*, July 1, 2015, <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/07/01/nsas-google-worlds-private-communications/>; Micah Lee, Glenn Greenwald, and Morgan Marquis-Boire, “Behind the Curtain: A Look at the Inner Workings of NSA’s XKEYSCORE,” *Intercept*, July 2, 2015, <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/07/02/look-under-hood-xkeyscore/>.

60 “Embassy Espionage: The NSA’s Secret Spy Hub in Berlin,” *Spiegel Online International*, October 27, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/cover-story-how-nsa-spied-on-merkel-cell-phone-from-berlin-embassy-a-930205-2.html>; Laura Poitras, Marcel Rosenbach, and Holger Stark, “A’ for Angela: GCHQ and NSA Targeted Private German Companies and Merkel,” *Spiegel Online International*, March 29, 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/gchq-and-nsa-targeted-private-german-companies-a-961444.html>; “New NSA Revelations: Inside Snowden’s Germany File,” *Spiegel Online International*, June 18, 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/new-snowden-revelations-on-nsa-spying-in-germany-a-975441.html>.

61 Ibid.



Once they had built their massive surveillance infrastructure in Germany, U.S. officials also detected a significant cultural shift in the country. In early 2010, the U.S. diplomats in Germany found that many of the German people had grown increasingly uncomfortable with the growing presence of U.S. intelligence agencies in their country. “Paranoia runs deep especially about U.S. intelligence agencies,” the U.S. diplomats reported.<sup>62</sup>

Of course, paranoia ran deep in Germany for a very good reason. By working closely with German officials, the leaders of the United States made Germany into one of their main centers of surveillance in the world. In the first place, they took advantage of their massive surveillance apparatus to support the many military operations that they ran throughout Europe and the broader region. At the same time, they performed the bulk collection of the many different types of communications that passed through the country. Whether they cast a wide net or targeted specific individuals, such as the German Chancellor, the leaders of the United States constructed the kind of sprawling surveillance apparatus that enabled them to monitor the communications of virtually anyone in the region.

#### Russia: Keeping the Bear in Its Cage

As they maintained their watch on Germany, the leaders of the United States also focused much of their attention on another country in the region. While they certainly

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<sup>62</sup> Embassy Berlin, “CHANCELLOR MERKEL ANGERED BY LACK OF GERMAN MEP SUPPORT FOR TFTP,” 10BERLIN180, February 12, 2010, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10BERLIN180.html>.

began their approach with Germany, U.S. officials devoted a comparable amount of their attention to Russia. Convinced that Russia featured the potential to displace Germany as the main center of power in Europe, U.S. officials worked to keep the other major power center in the area confined to the periphery of Europe.

After the end of the second world war, U.S. officials clearly signaled that they did not want Russia to play a powerful role in Europe. As the Director of Policy Planning George Kennan explained after the war, officials in Washington intended to push their wartime ally “back into the area in which it belongs, that is, to get it out of Central Europe, get its grip released on this eastern sector of the European power potential and get that again attached to Western Europe.” With their own plans to use the eastern sector of the European power potential to empower Western Europe, U.S. officials determined that they must do everything in their power to push the Russians out of Eastern Europe. The United States must “maneuver this Russian bear back into his cage and keep him there where he belongs,” Kennan insisted.<sup>63</sup>

At the end of the twentieth century, U.S. officials even achieved their goal. After containing the Soviet Union from much of the international system throughout the Cold War, U.S. officials saw the Soviet Union quickly collapse from 1989 to 1991. In the process, U.S. officials saw the Russian bear recede from Eastern Europe.<sup>64</sup>

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63 George Kennan, “Contemporary Problems of Foreign Policy,” National War College, September 17, 1948, George Kennan Papers, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Available online at <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/MC076/c03141>. For more discussion, see John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

64 For more discussion, see the following sources: Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, “Ticket to the Market: The Journey After Communism,” in *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace That Is Remaking the Modern World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 262-295; Stuart D. Goldman, “Russia,” Congressional Research Service, June 15, 2000.

During the final decade of the twentieth century, U.S. officials took a number of additional steps to further weaken Russia. As the former State Department official E. Wayne Merry explained before a congressional committee in September 1999, U.S. officials applied a policy of “shock therapy” to the former power center to transform post-Soviet Russia into another exploitable country on Europe’s periphery. “The United States absolutely insisted on radical market reform and employed our dominance of international financial institutions to force-feed it on Russia,” Merry explained. “In the process we allied ourselves with some of the most ruthless, undemocratic and rapacious people in the country, people who are so shameless they actually refer to themselves as ‘The Oligarchs.’”<sup>65</sup>

Satisfied with the results, officials in Washington then began to imagine that they could transform post-Soviet Russia into a new kind of ally. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Bush administration made a major push to use a weakened Russia to its advantage. “We’re transforming our relationship from one of hostility and suspicion to one based on cooperation and trust,” President Bush explained.<sup>66</sup>

In November 2001, Bush and the Russian President Vladimir Putin even declared in a joint statement that they intended to create “a new relationship for the 21st century.” Setting aside some of the more confrontational policies of the past, both presidents agreed to bring the countries together on matters of mutual concern. “The United States and

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65 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Corruption in Russia*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., September 23 and 30, 1999, 39.

66 George W. Bush, “The President’s News Conference With President Vladimir Putin of Russia,” November 13, 2001, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2001*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2001 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 1391.

Russia have overcome the legacy of the Cold War,” the two presidents declared. “Neither country regards the other as an enemy or threat.”<sup>67</sup>

Of course, the rapprochement did not last long. Once Putin began working to restore Russia to its former status as a major player in the region, U.S. officials quickly changed their mind about their plans to create a new relationship with Russia for the new century.

In April 2006, the U.S. diplomats in France signaled the shift in thinking by resorting to the same style of rhetoric that their predecessors had used throughout the Cold War. After noting that French officials had sometimes warned against “waking the sleeping Russian bear,” the diplomats employed the same kind of rhetoric to note that French officials “could not have failed to notice that the bear was already awake.”<sup>68</sup>

Back in Washington, the State Department official Mary Warlick provided more direct confirmation of the shift. “The promise of strategic partnership, particularly in the immediate post 9/11 period, has not been fulfilled,” Warlick explained. While she believed that the leaders of the two countries had achieved “profound” changes in bilateral relations since the end of the Cold War, Warlick acknowledged the Bush administration had ultimately decided to take a tougher stance against Russia. “Under the leadership of Secretary Rice, our Russia policy is based on a realistic appraisal of Russia

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67 George W. Bush, “Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on a New Relationship Between the United States and Russia,” November 13, 2001, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2001*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2001 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 1399.

68 Embassy Paris, “POLISH EMBASSY ON FRANCO-POLISH AND FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS,” 06PARIS2306, April 7, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/04/06PARIS2306.html>.

and our relations with Russia,” Warlick explained. “We cooperate with Russia wherever we can, and push back when we must.”<sup>69</sup>

Later in the year, the State Department official David Kramer provided more explanation for the shift. In a public speech, Kramer explained that U.S. officials had changed their minds because Russia had begun to recover from its weakened position on the periphery. “We liked the 1990s, but Russia didn't,” he explained. “Russia likes this decade, but we are concerned.” In other words, Kramer indicated that the Bush administration could not tolerate a Russia that reemerged as a major player in the area.<sup>70</sup>

In fact, many observers began expressing some alarm about Russia. For example, the U.S. Special Envoy for European Affairs C. Boyden Gray reported to the State Department in April 2008 that many leaders in both the United States and Europe saw Russia as a threat. “The EU sees the same security threat from Russia as we do,” Gray explained. Throughout Europe, “the concerns about the bear to the East are very real.”<sup>71</sup>

Now viewing Russia as a threat, administration officials also began to sharpen their rhetoric. In September 2008, for example, the State Department official William J. Burns explained that U.S. officials would have to “work with Russia in a hardheaded way.” While he certainly acknowledged that officials from both countries would continue to work together on many issues, Burns made his point with a much tougher tone. Certain factors “remain cold-bloodedly very much in both of our interests,” he remarked.<sup>72</sup>

69 Mary Warlick, “Discussion on Russia/G8 Issues,” April 19, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/65206.htm>.

70 David Kramer, “U.S.-Russian Relations Today,” October 12, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/75949.htm>.

71 USEU Brussels, “YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE MAY 13 TRANSATLANTIC ECONOMIC COUNCIL, FROM SPECIAL ENVOY GRAY,” 08BRUSSELS704, May 9, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08BRUSSELS704.html>.

72 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Russia's Aggression Against Georgia: Consequences and Responses*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., September 17, 2008, 21, 22.

As officials in the Bush administration hardened their position, officials in the incoming Obama administration indicated their intentions to take a similar approach. Although the President-elect Barack Obama insisted in December 2008 that “it's going to be important for us to reset U.S.-Russian relations,” he indicated that he planned to adopt the same kind of hardheaded strategy. “We want to cooperate with them where we can, and there are a whole host of areas, particularly around nonproliferation of weapons and terrorism, where we can cooperate,” Obama explained. “But we also have to send a clear message that they have to act in ways that are not bullying their neighbors.” In short, Obama indicated that his administration would cooperate with Russian when possible but push back when necessary.<sup>73</sup>

After the new administration entered office, the State Department official Philip H. Gordon provided more details. The Obama administration has not adopted “a naïve view that somehow we can just be nice to Russia and they’ll be nice to us and everything will be fine,” Gordon explained. “It’s a hard-headed view about our interests and their interests.”<sup>74</sup>

Later in the year, Gordon provided additional clarification. “Our strategy is simple,” Gordon explained. “Where we have common interests with Russia, we shall seek to cooperate. Where we have differences, we will not hesitate to voice them.” With his remarks, Gordon described the very same strategy that the Bush administration had

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73 Barack Obama, interview by Tom Brokaw, *Meet the Press*, NBC, December 7, 2008, [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/28097635/ns/meet\\_the\\_press/t/meet-press-transcript-dec/](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/28097635/ns/meet_the_press/t/meet-press-transcript-dec/).

74 Philip H. Gordon, “A New Era for Transatlantic Cooperation,” September 30, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2009/130145.htm>.

implemented during its second term in office. “This is the essence of the 'reset' with Russia,” he added.<sup>75</sup>

Clearly, the Obama administration did not reset relations with their Russian counterparts. Rather than applying a new strategy to the country, the Obama administration decided to cooperate with Russian officials on matters of common concern and push back against the Russians everywhere else.

More generally, the Obama administration pursued the same general objective for Russia. Like its predecessors, it sought to prevent Russia from playing a dominant role in Europe. As a result, the Obama administration worked to keep Russia in a weakened position on the periphery of Europe.

In short, the leaders of the United States pursued one major goal for Russia. No matter what strategy they applied to the country, they sought to keep the Russian bear locked in its cage. While they periodically agreed to work with Russian officials on certain issues, they remained determined to marginalize Russia.

### Provoking the Bear

As they pursue their goal for Russia, the leaders of the United States also took much more direct action against the country. Never fully satisfied with their objective of keeping the Russian bear locked in its cage, U.S. officials made tremendous efforts to

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<sup>75</sup> Philip H. Gordon, “The U.S.-Europe Partnership Under the Obama Administration,” December 9, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2009/133417.htm>.

establish their control over the area around the cage. In other words, U.S. officials constantly worked to establish their own powerful position in the area around Russia.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, U.S. officials made some of their most ambitious efforts to strengthen their position in the region. As they applied their policy of shock therapy to Russia, they began working to incorporate many of the newly independent countries of Eastern Europe into NATO. Although Russian officials repeatedly insisted that they had received assurances from U.S. officials at the end of the Cold War that NATO would not expand eastward, U.S. officials gave no serious consideration to the objections as they began working to bring more countries into the transatlantic military alliance.<sup>76</sup>

Of course, not everyone in Washington agreed with the approach. For example, the former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock repeatedly warned his colleagues that the expansion of NATO to the east would increase tensions in the area. The expansion of NATO “could only intensify tension with Russia,” Matlock warned. Concerned about the implications, Matlock urged his colleagues to reconsider the strategy. Certainly, “the closer NATO gets to the current Russian borders, the more the expansion is going to seem provocative to the Russian Government,” Matlock warned. “It seems to me there is no other way the Russians can read this.”<sup>77</sup>

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76 For more discussion, see the following sources: Mark Kramer, “The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia,” *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (April 2009): 39-61; Mary Elise Sarotte, “Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990,” *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (January 2010): 119-140.

77 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *NATO's Future: Problems, Threats, and U.S. Interests*, 104th Cong., 1st sess., April 27 and May 3, 1995, 78; U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward NATO Enlargement*, 104th Cong., 2nd sess., June 20, 1996, 30.



At the same time, officials in Washington moved ahead with their plans. Setting aside the warnings, they decided to expand NATO toward Russia. For example, the Clinton administration welcomed the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland into the military alliance in 1999. The entry of the three countries “will make NATO stronger,” the U.S. President Bill Clinton insisted.<sup>78</sup>

Early in the twenty-first century, the Bush administration brought more countries into the military alliance. In March 2004, the Bush administration welcomed seven additional countries into NATO, including Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. “The NATO Alliance now flies seven new flags and reaches from the Bay of Biscay to the Black Sea,” President Bush observed.<sup>79</sup>

At the risk of further inflaming relations with Russia, the Bush administration also decided to bring more countries into NATO. Expressing few concerns about the potential consequences, the Bush administration kept working to expand the alliance. “We do believe the NATO enlargement should continue,” the State Department official Daniel Fried confirmed in October 2005. Moreover, Fried brushed aside the potential consequences. “The Russians furiously opposed Poland’s NATO membership, furiously opposed Baltic membership in NATO, predicting all kinds of dire things if these dangerous developments came to pass,” he commented. “Well, they came to pass, dire

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78 William J. Clinton, “Statement on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” March 12, 1999, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1999*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 1999 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 363.

79 George W. Bush, “Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring Seven Nations on Their Accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization,” March 29, 2004, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2004*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2004 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 476.

things did not happen, and the Baltic/Russian/Polish relations have their ups and downs, but we don't look at these places as flash points, not any more.”<sup>80</sup>

While officials such as Fried expressed few concerns about the implications of further enlargement, other officials still viewed NATO expansion as a potential flash point. In October 2006, for example, the U.S. diplomats in Russia reported that the people of Russia increasingly feared that U.S. officials wanted “to encircle Russia with hostile regimes and NATO bases.” In addition, the diplomats warned that Russian leaders remained committed to the idea that “Russia must defend itself along the border of the former Soviet Union.” For Russian officials, “the architecture of the 'Post-Soviet Space' must stay intact to keep Russia whole and free of foreign domination,” the diplomats explained.<sup>81</sup>

In February 2007, the diplomats issued a more direct warning. After the Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a highly critical speech of the foreign policy of the Bush administration in which he criticized the enlargement of NATO as “a serious provocation,” the diplomats interpreted the speech as a powerful reminder of the potential consequences of NATO expansion. “Putin's biting tone was viewed in Moscow as an effort to lay down markers that a resurgent Russia's interests must be respected,” the diplomats explained. From the perspective of Russian officials, “Putin was saying, albeit bluntly, that Russia was ready to cooperate on certain issues, but that a strengthened Russia would defend its interests as it saw them.”<sup>82</sup>

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80 Daniel Fried, “Wider Europe and the Transatlantic Link,” October 25, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/55910.htm>.

81 Embassy Moscow, “RUSSIA'S GEORGIA POLICY: 'THE CAUCASUS BENEATH ME,’” 06MOSCOW7385, July 12, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/07/06MOSCOW7385.html>.

82 Wladimir W. Putin, “Speech at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy,” February 10, 2007, <http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?>

Back in Washington, administration officials recognized the same message. The State Department official Daniel Fried, who had previously downplayed the warnings of Russian officials, identified the issue. “Many Russians cite NATO enlargement, the pro-Western orientation and aspirations of Georgia and to some extent Ukraine, and the unqualified and enthusiastic integration of the Baltics and even Central Europe into the Euroatlantic community, as an affront,” Fried explained. Providing more details, Fried specified that many Russians viewed the emerging post-Soviet order as “unjust” and wanted it “challenged and to some extent rolled back.” With his remarks, Fried made it clear that many Russians felt increasingly threatened by the latest developments in the region. “We are witnessing a backlash,” he remarked.<sup>83</sup>

Amid the backlash, the U.S. diplomats in Russia warned that Russian officials had also laid down some very specific markers. In January 2008, the diplomats explained in one of their internal reports that Russian officials would not permit the countries of Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO. “Russia has made clear that Ukrainian (and Georgian) NATO membership is a red line for them, and would affect not only Russia's relations with those countries, but also with the Alliance as a whole,” the diplomats explained. In short, the diplomats made it clear that the Russian government would not permit Ukraine and Georgia to join NATO.<sup>84</sup>

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[menu\\_2007=&menu\\_konferenzen=&id=179&sprache=en&](https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/02/07MOSCOW613.html); Embassy Moscow, “PUTIN IN MUNICH: SHARP TONE, BUT FAMILIAR COMPLAINTS,” 07MOSCOW613, February 12, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/02/07MOSCOW613.html>.

83 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Strategic Assessment of U.S.-Russian Relations*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., June 21, 2007, 9.

84 Embassy Moscow, “RUSSIAN OPPOSITION TO UKRAINIAN NATO MAP UNCHANGED,” 08MOSCOW147, January 18, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08MOSCOW147.html>.

In other reports, the diplomats identified the same red lines. “Nyet Means Nyet: Russia's NATO Enlargement Redlines,” the diplomats titled one of their reports. As they noted in their report, Russian officials viewed NATO enlargement to Ukraine and Georgia as “a potential military threat.”<sup>85</sup>

With their reports, the diplomats also made it clear that virtually everyone in Russia opposed the entry of Ukraine and Georgia into the military alliance. “Defense and security experts note that NATO enlargement is one of the few security areas where there is almost complete consensus among Russian policymakers, experts and the informed population: they are strongly against NATO's enlargement eastward, particularly to Ukraine and Georgia,” the diplomats reported.<sup>86</sup>

In spite of the warnings, officials in Washington still decided to bring the two countries into the military alliance. As President Bush explained in April 2008, the leaders of NATO “must make clear that NATO welcomes the aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine for their membership in NATO.” Dismissing the warnings of Russian officials, Bush insisted that he would bring the two countries into NATO. “Ukraine and Georgia is a very difficult issue for some nations here; it’s not for me,” he commented.<sup>87</sup>

Facing pressure from the Bush administration, the members of NATO then agreed to incorporate both Ukraine and Georgia into the organization. “NATO welcomes

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85 Embassy Moscow, “NYET MEANS NYET: RUSSIA'S NATO ENLARGEMENT REDLINES,” 08MOSCOW265, February 1, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/02/08MOSCOW265.html>.

86 Embassy Moscow, “RUSSIA'S EXPECTATIONS FOR NATO SUMMIT DEPEND ON MAP FOR UKRAINE AND GEORGIA,” 08MOSCOW806, March 25, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/03/08MOSCOW806.html>.

87 George W. Bush, “Remarks in Bucharest, Romania,” April 2, 2008, and George W. Bush, “Remarks Following a Discussion With Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert 'Jaap' de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Bucharest, Romania,” April 2, 2008, both in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2008-2009*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2008 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012), 451, 462.

Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO," the leaders of NATO announced in April 2008. Eventually, "these countries will become members of NATO."<sup>88</sup>

After the leaders of NATO made their announcement, the U.S. diplomats who managed relations with NATO also confirmed the decision. "While Allies delayed a decision to move Ukraine and Georgia into the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process, Allies more importantly agreed that Ukraine and Georgia will become NATO members," the diplomats explained. "The question is now 'when,' not 'if.'"<sup>89</sup>

Once administration officials decided to bring the two countries into the military alliance, the U.S. diplomats in Russia then began warning that the move could result in serious consequences. "While many Russian officials and experts appear increasingly resigned to further movement on MAP for Ukraine and Georgia, as early as December, they continue to be unequivocal about the consequences," the diplomats warned. "From Lavrov's 'Russia will do everything to prevent Ukraine and Georgia from joining the Alliance,' to Chief of Defense General Baluyevskiy's threat to resort to 'military measures' if Ukraine joins NATO, the GOR is intent on reinforcing its dire views on further enlargement on its borders."<sup>90</sup>

In fact, Russian officials soon fulfilled the warnings. After the Georgian government attacked the break-away region of South Ossetia on August 7, 2008 and

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88 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Bucharest Summit Declaration," April 3, 2008, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm).

89 Mission USNATO, "NATO'S BUCHAREST SUMMIT DECLARATION, CABLE 1 OF 2," 08USNATO121, April 8, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08USNATO121.html>; Mission USNATO, "NATO'S BUCHAREST SUMMIT DECLARATION, CABLE 2 OF 2," 08USNATO122, April 8, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08USNATO122.html>.

90 Embassy Moscow, "RUSSIA 'LOSES' BUCHAREST," 08MOSCOW1090, April 18, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08MOSCOW1090.html>.

killed a number of Russian peacekeepers during the operation, Russian officials responded by moving their military forces into the area to reassert their dominance. In a conflict that ultimately left hundreds of people dead, Russian officials sent a powerful message that they would respond with force to any challenges along their borders.<sup>91</sup>

Undeterred by the response, officials in the Bush administration still refused to abandon their plans to enlarge NATO. With tensions in the region at their peak, the U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney traveled to Georgia to announce that the administration still intended to bring Georgia into the military alliance. “America is fully committed to Georgia's Membership Action Plan for NATO, and to its eventual membership in the Alliance,” Cheney announced. Rather than condemning the Georgian government for its assault against South Ossetia, which had triggered the deadly conflict with Russia, Cheney praised the Georgian government as an ally that belonged in NATO. “As the

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91 For more discussion of the conflict, including the estimates of the number of casualties, see Jim Nichol, “Russia-Georgia Conflict in August 2008: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests,” Congressional Research Service, March 3, 2009. For some examples of U.S. officials confirming the responsibility of the Georgian government for initiating the conflict, see the following sources: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Russia's Aggression Against Georgia: Consequences and Responses*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., September 17, 2008. “Georgia’s decision to use force to reassert its sovereignty over South Ossetia, against our strong and repeated warnings, was shortsighted and ill-advised,” the State Department official William J. Burns stated (8). “Despite our warnings, the Georgian Government decided to use force to reassert its sovereignty in South Ossetia. And we believe that was ill-advised,” Burns later repeated (37); Condoleezza Rice, “Secretary Rice Addresses U.S.-Russia Relations At The German Marshall Fund,” September 18, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/09/109954.htm>. “On August 7th, following repeated violations of the ceasefire in South Ossetia, including the shelling of Georgian villages, the Georgian government launched a major military operation into Tskhinvali and other areas of the separatist region. Regrettably, several Russian peacekeepers were killed in the fighting,” Rice explained; John Beyrle, “Public Remarks by Ambassador Beyrle,” October 22, 2008, <http://moscow.usembassy.gov/beyrleint102208.html>. “We made very clear to Georgia that we did not support the use of force to resolve the status of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia and we consider that the Georgian leadership made a mistake in using force in the way they did to try to resolve that issue,” Beyrle stated.

current members of NATO declared at the Summit in Bucharest, Georgia will be in our alliance,” Cheney asserted.<sup>92</sup>

The following month, the State Department official William J. Burns provided additional confirmation. Speaking before a congressional committee, Burns explained that “all of us in the NATO Alliance agreed, at the Bucharest Summit, that not only should the road remain open for new members, including Georgia and Ukraine, but it was a pretty strong statement that, somewhere down the road, those countries are going to become members of NATO.”<sup>93</sup>

After the Bush administration left office, the subsequent Obama administration took the same basic approach to the issue. Dedicated to the idea that NATO must continue to grow, the Obama administration remained determined to the task of bringing more countries into the military alliance.

Of course, the U.S. diplomats in Russia continued to issue warnings about the implications of NATO enlargement. “Even given the more positive rhetoric of late, Russia remains resolutely opposed to Georgian, and particularly Ukrainian, membership in NATO,” the diplomats reported. Whenever they reported on the issue, they made it a point to highlight the strong opposition of the Russian government. “Russia continues to strongly oppose NATO enlargement, particularly to Georgia and Ukraine, claiming that

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92 Dick Cheney, “Remarks by Vice President Cheney and President Saakashvili of Georgia After Meeting,” September 4, 2008, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/09/20080904.html>.

93 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Russia's Aggression Against Georgia: Consequences and Responses*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., September 17, 2008, 38.

the U.S. promised at the time of German reunification that there would be no deployment of Alliance forces eastward,” the diplomats explained.<sup>94</sup>

At the same time, the Obama administration continued with the task of NATO expansion. In April 2009, the administration made one major move by welcoming the countries of Albania and Croatia into the military alliance. “The Atlantic alliance is 60 years old, and it’s a measure of our vitality that we are still welcoming new members,” President Obama remarked.<sup>95</sup>

With support from the Obama administration, the leaders of NATO also reaffirmed their commitment to bringing Ukraine and Georgia into the military alliance. “At Bucharest we agreed that Ukraine and Georgia will become members of NATO and we reaffirm all elements of that decision,” NATO officials explained. “We are maximising our advice, assistance and support for their reform efforts in the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Commission and NATO-Georgia Commission.”<sup>96</sup>

Given the latest developments, the U.S. diplomats in Russia then issued one of their strongest warnings. In a report to the State Department in June 2009, the diplomats warned administration officials to prepare for retaliation. “Russia opposes any further enlargement of NATO,” they warned. “The August war in Georgia signaled Moscow’s

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94 Embassy Moscow, “RUSSIA AND NATO AFTER GEORGIA,” 09MOSCOW511, March 3, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/03/09MOSCOW511.html>; Embassy Moscow, “SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF CODEL ROGERS TO MOSCOW, APRIL 7-10,” 09MOSCOW861, April 3, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/04/09MOSCOW861.html>.

95 Barack Obama, “Remarks to the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg, France,” April 4, 2009, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2009*, Book I – January 20 to June 30, 2009 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), 430.

96 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration,” April 4, 2009, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_52837.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm).



readiness to expend material and men to achieve this goal, even at the cost of international opprobrium.”<sup>97</sup>

At the risk of provoking a major conflict with Russia, the Obama administration still moved forward with its plans. As the Defense Department official Alexander Vershbow privately assured Georgian officials in October 2009, the Obama administration “believes there are multiple paths to NATO membership.” Even if the administration began quietly pursuing new options that “could serve as functional equivalents to MAP,” Vershbow insisted that both countries would eventually gain membership.<sup>98</sup>

Two months later, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered a similar message to Ukrainian officials. The Obama administration “envisioned multiple pathways to NATO membership,” Clinton informed her Ukrainian counterparts. The administration “continued to support Ukraine's eventual membership in NATO.”<sup>99</sup>

Indeed, the leaders of the United States kept working to bring more countries into NATO. Despite the fact that Russian officials had clearly signaled their willingness to respond with force to any threats along Russian borders, U.S. officials remained determined to bring Georgia and Ukraine into NATO and further expand the military alliance to the east. As a result, officials in Washington continued working to harden their position in the region in a way that constantly provoked Russia.

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97 Embassy Moscow, “IMPLICATIONS OF REARMING GEORGIA FOR U.S.-RUSSIAN 'RESET,’” 09MOSCOW1591, June 17, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/06/09MOSCOW1591.html>.

98 Embassy Tbilisi, “GEORGIA: ASD VERSHBOW LEADS SECURITY WORKING GROUP,” 09TBILISI1949, October 29, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09TBILISI1949.html>.

99 Secretary of State, “(U) Secretary Clinton's December 9, 2009 Meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Petro Poroshenko,” 09STATE129520, December 18, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09STATE129520.html>.

## Conclusion

Of course, the leaders of the United States pursued their regional objectives as part of their much more ambitious agenda for Europe. Without limiting their focus to Russia, U.S. officials sought to shape the fate of the entire continent.

With Russia, U.S. officials mainly saw the biggest challenge to their plans for the region. While they certainly applied many different strategies to Russia, U.S. officials consistently worked to keep the country in a weakened position on the periphery of Europe.

At the same time, U.S. officials worked to keep Germany positioned as the main center of power in the continent. Despite the fact that they imposed various constraints on the country, especially by constructing a massive surveillance apparatus that kept their German allies under their constant watch, U.S. officials worked closely with their German allies to keep a united Germany functioning as the united heart of a united Europe.

Through their efforts, U.S. officials gained tremendous advantages from the region. For example, U.S. officials took advantage of a powerful transatlantic economy to shape the structure of the international economic system. In addition, U.S. officials turned to NATO for assistance in their efforts to police the world.

Since they obtained so many advantages from the region, U.S. officials also continued to view Europe as their top priority in global affairs. As long as they could

maintain their control over Europe, U.S. officials felt that they could maintain powerful leverage over the rest of the world.

As a result, U.S. officials made it the first major objective of their imperial grand strategy to keep Europe under their control as one of the main pillars of their global empire. Indeed, U.S. officials began their approach to the world by doing everything in their power to keep a powerful but subordinate Germany-centered Europe functioning alongside the United States as one of the most powerful anchors of their global structure of imperialism.

## Chapter 2

### The Asia Pacific Region

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- A Nation of the Pacific
- Japan: The Foundation for Regional Order
  - Avoiding “Asia for the Asians” Formulations
- South Korea: A Critical Anchor
  - Tying South Korea to the United States
  - The Day-to-Day Reality
- China: A Potential Competitor
  - A Status Quo Power
  - Avoiding the Fate of the Soviet Union
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

For the leaders of the United States, the location of the continental United States in between two giant oceans has always meant that their empire has diverged in two opposite directions. As they have extended their power eastward to create a powerful transatlantic alliance, they have also projected their power westward to establish a

powerful position in the Asia Pacific region. “We are both a trans-Atlantic and a trans-Pacific nation,” the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton proclaimed in the early twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, many historians have found that U.S. officials played the dominant role in the Asia Pacific region. During the early 1970s, the historian John Dower argued in a series of essays that U.S. officials asserted their control over the region by creating a powerful but subordinate Japan-centered system as the main form of regional order. After World War II, U.S. officials transformed the Pacific Ocean into an “American lake” and achieved a “Pax Americana in Asia,” Dower asserted.<sup>2</sup>

In the following decade, the historian William S. Borden made a comparable argument. In his book *The Pacific Alliance* (1984), Borden argued that U.S. officials created a Japan-centered system as one of the main poles of power in a globally integrated world system. “Japan formed the Asian equivalent of Germany – the ‘engine’ or ‘spark plug’ of European production and trade – and also the Asian equivalent of Europe as a whole, since Japan was the sole industrial center in East Asia,” Borden contended.<sup>3</sup>

Around the same time, the historian Bruce Cumings reached a similar conclusion. In a number of works, Cumings argued that U.S. officials created a Japan-centered

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1 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Foreign Policy Address at the Council on Foreign Relations,” July 15, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/july/126071.htm>.

2 John Dower, “Occupied Japan and the American Lake, 1945-1950,” in *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations*, ed. Edward Friedman and Mark Selden (New York: Random House, 1971), 155; John W. Dower, “The Superdomino in Postwar Asia: Japan in and out of the Pentagon Papers,” in *Critical Essays Edited by Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn and an Index to Volumes One-Four*, vol. 5 of *The Pentagon Papers: The Senator Gravel Edition* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 102.

3 William S. Borden, *The Pacific Alliance: United States Foreign Policy and Japanese Trade Recovery, 1947-1955* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 15.

system as one of the core regions of a capitalist world system. “In the Asian region, Japan was to be the engine of growth, shorn of military and political power but gaining a powerful (even if second-rank) industrial position in the world economy,” Cumings asserted.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the twentieth century, the diplomatic historian Walter LaFeber arrived at the same basic conclusion. Surveying the history of relations between Japan and the United States in his book *The Clash* (1997), LaFeber found that officials in Washington positioned postwar Japan at the center of a new regional system. “Indeed, no knowledgeable observer could conclude that the primary U.S. aim had been to democratize Japan,” LaFeber commented. “The highest objectives were, first, to use Japan as the hub of an open, multilateral capitalism in Asia; second, to contain communism; and third, to reassure neighbors by keeping Japan orderly and controlled.”<sup>5</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama pursued similar objectives in the region. While the region's internal dynamics began shifting in some dramatic ways during the early twenty-first century, officials in both administrations committed themselves to enforcing the same kind of regional hierarchy. Through their efforts, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations began the twenty-first century by working to keep a powerful but

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- 4 Bruce Cumings, “Power and Plenty in Northeast Asia: The Evolution of U.S. Policy,” *World Policy Journal* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1987/1988): 82. Also see the following sources: Bruce Cumings, “The origins and development of the Northeast Asian political economy: industrial sectors, product cycles, and political consequences,” *International Organization* 38, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 1-40; Bruce Cumings, “Japan's Position in the World System,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 34-63; Bruce Cumings, *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
- 5 Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 295.

subordinate Japan-centered system functioning as another one of the main anchors of their global structure of imperialism.

### A Nation of the Pacific

In fact, U.S. officials have historically played a dominant role in the Asia Pacific region. Since they first began to complete their westward conquest of the North American continent during the late nineteenth century, U.S. officials have repeatedly projected their power into the area. Not did they acquire a series of island colonies in the region, such as Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa, but they also played a powerful role in shaping the development of the entire area. As a result, U.S. officials have played a central role in determining the fate of the Asia Pacific region throughout much of U.S. history.<sup>6</sup>

During the late nineteenth century, U.S. officials first began to acquire significant control over the region. As they waged a vicious war to colonize the Philippines, U.S. officials celebrated their efforts by portraying the United States as the dominant power in the Pacific. The United States has emerged as “the paramount power of the Pacific,” the U.S. diplomat John Barrett declared.<sup>7</sup>

During the war, the U.S. Congressman Albert J. Beveridge made similar claims. “The Pacific is our Ocean,” Beveridge announced. The United States has built a “commercial empire over the Pacific.” At the time, Beveridge even insisted that the

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6 For the background, see Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

7 John Barrett, “The Paramount Power of the Pacific,” *North American Review* 169, no. 513 (August 1899): 165.

leaders of the United States deserved to rule over the region. “God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration,” Beveridge remarked. “No! He has made us the master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns.”<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the twentieth century, the leaders of the United States maintained the same basic mindset. For example, the U.S. President Harry Truman concluded at the end of World War II that “we should maintain complete control of Japan and the Pacific.” A few years later, his successor Dwight D. Eisenhower expressed his agreement. “We have got to keep the Pacific as an American lake,” Eisenhower stated.<sup>9</sup>

In more recent years, the leaders of the United States have shared many of the same beliefs. For example, numerous officials in the administration of George W. Bush proclaimed their determination to remain directly involved in the area. “The United States has been an Asia-Pacific player for two centuries,” the State Department official Evans J. R. Revere remarked in May 2005. “We will remain so.”<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, U.S. officials acknowledged that the United States still wielded tremendous power in the area. For example, the State Department official Christopher Hill informed a congressional committee in March 2006 that the United States retained significant influence throughout the entire region. “By any measure – historically,

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8 U.S. Congress, *Congressional Record*, 56th Cong., 1st sess., 1900, 704, 707, 711.

9 Harry S. Truman to James F. Byrnes (unsent), January 5, 1946, in Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 80; “Memorandum by Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to the Secretary of State,” June 2, 1954, in U.S. Department of State, *East Asia and the Pacific (in two parts), Part 1*, vol. 12 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 531.

10 Evans J. R. Revere, “The Bush Administration’s Second-Term Foreign Policy Toward East Asia,” May 17, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2005/46420.htm>.



geographically, economically, culturally – the United States is an Asia-Pacific power,” Hill explained.<sup>11</sup>

At times, other observers put the matter more directly. In September 2006, the analyst Dick K. Nanto at the Congressional Research Service reported that the United States played a dominant role in the area. “The United States already is viewed as a hegemonic power in Asia with as many as 100,000 military personnel forward deployed in the Pacific Command and strong alliance relationships with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, and Australia/New Zealand plus close security relations with Singapore and Taiwan,” Nanto explained.<sup>12</sup>

Periodically, some officials even identified the United States as the ultimate power in the Asia Pacific region. “For decades now the first position in the Asian power structure has been occupied by the United States,” the U.S. diplomat J. Thomas Schieffer explained in September 2007. “Both militarily and economically the United States has been without peer in Asia since the end of the last war.”<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. officials insisted that the United States would continue to play a powerful role in the region. When the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates visited Asia in May 2008, he explained that “the United States is a Pacific nation with an enduring role in Asia.” To emphasize his point, Gates asserted “with confidence that *any* future U. S. administration’s Asia security policy is going to be grounded in the fact that the United

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11 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on International Relations, *East Asia in Transition: Opportunities and Challenges for the United States*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., March 8, 2006, 25.

12 Dick K. Nanto, “East Asian Regional Architecture: New Economic and Security Arrangements and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, September 18, 2006, CRS-4.

13 J. Thomas Schieffer, “Japan and America's Interest in Northeast Asia,” September 6, 2007, <http://japan2.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20070906-79.html>.

States remains a nation with strong and enduring interests in this region – interests that will endure no matter which political party occupies the White House next.” Indeed, Gates insisted that the United States would play a permanent role in the region. The Asia Pacific region remains “a region to which the United States belongs and in which we shall stay,” he asserted.<sup>14</sup>

In the following years, additional officials also confirmed their intentions to remain permanently involved in the area. After the Obama administration entered office, the U.S. diplomat Kathleen Stephens explained that the United States would always remain involved in the region. “The U.S. is in East Asia to stay,” Stephens asserted.<sup>15</sup>

Likewise, the State Department official Kurt M. Campbell provided additional confirmation. “There should be no doubt that the United States itself is a Pacific nation,” Campbell informed a congressional committee in January 2010. The United States will remain in the region as “a resident power.” In case anyone missed his point, Campbell repeated that the United States would remain centrally involved in the area. “As the region continues to grow and as new groupings and structures take shape, the United States will be a player, not a distant spectator,” he remarked.<sup>16</sup>

Later in the year, Campbell also provided some additional insights. Speaking before another congressional committee, he identified the Asia-Pacific region as a key component of the administration's plans for the world. “America’s future is intimately tied to that of the Asia-Pacific, and our economic and strategic interests in the region are

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14 Robert M. Gates, “Speech,” May 31, 2008, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1253>.

15 Kathleen Stephens, “Ambassador Stephens’ Speech at the 34th KIDA Defense Forum – As Delivered,” December 3, 2009, [https://seoul.usembassy.gov/113\\_120309.html](https://seoul.usembassy.gov/113_120309.html).

16 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Principles of U.S. Engagement in Asia*, 11th Cong., 2nd sess., January 21, 2010, 8, 10, 13.

among the most important in the world,” he stated. To explain why, he specified that many of the region's key features affected U.S. power. The region features “critical strategic chokepoints for global commerce, emerging power centers that will have profound implications for U.S. and international interests, and a foundation for American power projection in the greater Asia-Pacific,” Campbell explained. Finally, Campbell assured his colleagues that the Obama administration would make every effort to strengthen its position in the area. “In recognition of our deep and abiding interests in the region, we are working hard to ensure our alliances in the Asia-Pacific are among our strongest and most active,” he stated.<sup>17</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States remained determined to play a powerful role in the Asia Pacific region. Although they favored their transatlantic ties to Europe for providing them with a strong base of power in the world, U.S. officials viewed their ties to the Asia Pacific region as another key foundation for their global power projection. As a result, U.S. officials insisted that they must remain permanently involved in the region as the leaders of a powerful nation of the Pacific.

Japan: The Foundation for Regional Order

As they projected their power into the Asia Pacific region, the leaders of the United States also focused their efforts on one particular country. While they certainly maintained strong alliances with a number of their Asian allies, U.S. officials made it

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *The Current Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., September 16, 2010, 13.

their first priority to control the fate of Japan. As long as they could control Japan, U.S. officials believed that they could maintain a powerful hold over the region.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of World War II, U.S. officials clearly identified Japan as the key to their plans for the region. Although they had devastated the country in a horrific war that killed millions of people, even dropping a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and another one on Nagasaki, U.S. officials placed the country at the center of their plans to reshape the region to their advantage for the postwar world. “The Japanese provide, it seems to us, far more the natural workshop for the Far East in general,” the Director of Policy Planning George Kennan explained.<sup>19</sup>

As U.S. officials began developing their plans for Japan, Kennan also outlined how they could transform the country into the region's workshop. In the first place, Kennan suggested that U.S. officials must empower the country to play the central role in a regional trading system. To solve “the terrific problem of how then the Japanese are going to get along unless they again reopen some sort of empire toward the south,” he

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18 For the background, see the following sources: John Dower, “Occupied Japan and the American Lake, 1945-1950,” in *America's Asia: Dissenting Essays on Asian-American Relations*, ed. Edward Friedman and Mark Selden (New York: Random House, 1971), 146-206; John W. Dower, “The Superdomino in Postwar Asia: Japan in and out of the Pentagon Papers,” in *Critical Essays Edited by Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn and an Index to Volumes One-Four*, vol. 5 of *The Pentagon Papers: The Senator Gravel Edition* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), 101-142; William S. Borden, *The Pacific Alliance: United States Foreign Policy and Japanese Trade Recovery, 1947-1955* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Bruce Cumings, “The origins and development of the Northeast Asian political economy: industrial sectors, product cycles, and political consequences,” *International Organization* 38, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 1-40; Bruce Cumings, “Power and Plenty in Northeast Asia: The Evolution of U.S. Policy,” *World Policy Journal* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1987/1988): 79-106; Bruce Cumings, “Archaeology, Descent, Emergence: Japan in British/American Hegemony, 1900-1950,” in *Japan in the World*, ed. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 79-111; Bruce Cumings, “Japan's Position in the World System,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 34-63; Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997).

19 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, *Institute of Pacific Relations*, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., Part 5, October 12, 17, 18, and 19, 1951, 1558.

advised his colleagues to oversee the “opening up of trade possibilities, commercial possibilities for Japan on a scale very far greater than anything Japan knew before.” At the same time, Kennan insisted that U.S. officials must ensure that they maintained their control over the country. Moving forward, “it seems to me absolutely inevitable that we must keep completely the maritime and air controls as a means of holding our – of keeping control of the situation with respect to Japanese in all eventualities,” Kennan stated. To prevent a repeat of World War II, U.S. officials must “retain the ability to control their situation by controlling the overseas sources of supply and the naval power and the air power without which it cannot become again aggressive.” Altogether, Kennan argued that U.S. officials must create a powerful but subordinate Japan-centered system.<sup>20</sup>

Sharing the same vision, U.S. officials then began working to transform their former enemy into a powerful but subordinate ally at the center of the Asia Pacific region. To begin their efforts, U.S. officials created “an indestructible partnership” with the Japanese government, as the U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower explained in 1960. In addition, they began working with their Japanese counterparts to position Japan as the main center of power in the region. “The long-term goal of U.S. policy toward Japan is the development of Japan as a major power center in Asia acting in concert with U.S. and Free World interests,” State Department officials explained. Altogether, U.S. officials began working to create a Japan-centered system as the main form of regional order.<sup>21</sup>

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20 Ibid., 1558, 1559.

21 Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Remarks at the Signing of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States,” January 19, 1960, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960-1961* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 113; “Department of State Guidelines Paper,” undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Northeast Asia*, vol. 22 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996), 732.

By working closely with Japanese officials, the leaders of the United States then achieved their objectives. As the National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger observed in a major speech in 1973, “Japan has emerged as a major power center.”<sup>22</sup>

For the remainder of the twentieth century, U.S. officials also openly celebrated their achievement. When the U.S. President Bill Clinton addressed Japanese officials in April 1996, he marked the country's rapid transformation as “one of the greatest success stories the world has ever known.” In addition, Clinton heaped praise upon his predecessors for making the transformation possible. “After World War II, a wise generation of Americans reached out a hand of reconciliation to support your extraordinary evolution, first with a security guarantee that allowed you to focus on rebuilding and with aid that helped to lay the foundation of economic growth,” Clinton remarked. In short, Clinton marked the reemergence of Japan as a major power center as a major achievement.<sup>23</sup>

At times, U.S. officials also reaffirmed the basic reasons why they remained so excited about the transformation. In October 2000, a study group that included many influential U.S. officials explained that postwar Japan enabled the U.S. government to impose its preferred form of order on the region. “Most significantly, Japan’s alliance with the United States has served as the foundation for regional order,” the study group reported.<sup>24</sup>

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22 Henry A. Kissinger, “The Year of Europe,” *The Department of State Bulletin* 68, no. 1768 (May 14, 1973): 593.

23 William J. Clinton, “Remarks to the Diet in Tokyo,” April 18, 1996, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1996*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 1996 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 595.

24 “The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership,” INSS Special Report, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 11, 2000, 2.

Under the Bush administration, a number of officials pointed to similar benefits. In November 2004, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan Howard H. Baker, Jr. explained that Japan enabled U.S. officials to more effectively shape the main contours of world order. “We are perhaps as powerful as any two nations on Earth, now,” Baker remarked.<sup>25</sup>

Around the same time, the Director of Policy Planning Mitchell B. Reiss made a similar argument. After noting that “Japan is America's key ally in the Pacific,” Reiss explained that Japan significantly enhanced the ability of U.S. officials to achieve their strategic objectives in both the Asia Pacific region and the rest of the world. There remains, “quite simply, no regional or global challenge the United States cannot tackle more effectively in partnership with Japan,” Reiss remarked.<sup>26</sup>

In the following years, U.S. officials only continued to favor the country for many of the same reasons. For example, the subsequent U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer often insisted that the alliance between Japan and the United States provided the United States with tremendous advantages in the Asia Pacific region. “And if you're going to have a presence in Asia and you're going to be here in Asia, the first thing you're going to do is be sure that the US-Japan alliance is strong, because when the US-Japan alliance is strong, everything else falls into place,” Schieffer explained. Indeed, Schieffer insisted that the alliance made it possible for U.S. officials to achieve anything they desired in the region. “I think that a strong U.S.-Japan alliance makes all things possible in Asia,” he remarked.<sup>27</sup>

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25 Howard H. Baker, Jr., “Ambassador Baker Addresses America-Japan Society,” November 12, 2004, <http://japan2.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20041112-65.html>.

26 Mitchell B. Reiss, “America and Japan: A Common Vision,” November 30, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/rem/39180.htm>.

27 J. Thomas Schieffer, “Ambassador Schieffer Addresses Japan National Press Club,” October 24, 2007, <http://japan2.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20071024-76.html>; J. Thomas Schieffer, “Address to The Foreign

Under the subsequent Obama administration, officials maintained similar views. For example, the U.S. diplomats in Japan informed President Obama in November 2009 that the alliance between Japan and the United States remained critically important to U.S. strategy in the region. Undoubtedly, “the U.S.-Japan Alliance remains the indispensable foundation of U.S. strategy in Asia,” the diplomats reported.<sup>28</sup>

During his visit to the region, President Obama also attributed special importance to Japan. After explaining in a speech that his predecessor Dwight D. Eisenhower had identified the alliance between Japan and the United States as an “an indestructible partnership,” Obama noted that he considered Japan to be one of his main priorities for the region. Japan “will always be a centerpiece of our efforts in the region,” Obama stated.<sup>29</sup>

The following year, the State Department official Kurt Campbell then outlined some of the reasons why U.S. officials kept the country at the center of their plans for the region. In January 2010, Campbell explained that the postwar alliance between Japan and the United States had enabled U.S. officials to fulfill their main goals for the region. “It’s no exaggeration to say that it has been the cornerstone and the foundation of everything that we’ve managed to accomplish over the course of the last few generations in Asia,” Campbell remarked.<sup>30</sup>

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Correspondents Club of Japan: “The Price of Security in a Changing World,” May 20, 2008, <http://japan2.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20080520-72.html>.

28 Embassy Tokyo, “SCENESETTER FOR THE PRESIDENT’S NOVEMBER 13-14 VISIT TO JAPAN,” 09TOKYO2589, November 9, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09TOKYO2589.html>.

29 Barack Obama, “Remarks in Tokyo,” November 14, 2009, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2009*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2009 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013), 1675, 1680.

30 Kurt M. Campbell, “Briefing on the 50th Anniversary of U.S.-Japan Alliance,” January 19, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2010/01/135400.htm>.



Later in the year, Campbell conveyed the same basic message to a congressional committee. Undoubtedly, “the very foundation of our ability to operate in the Asia-Pacific region, in addition to the foundation for peace and stability and the ability for us to project power outside of the Asia-Pacific region resides in a strong, enduring partnership between the United States and Japan,” Campbell explained. To emphasize his point, Campbell noted that the alliance “has been the central feature that has led to the most dramatic period of economic dynamism in the history of the world over the course of the last 30 years in the Asia-Pacific region.” Indeed, Campbell identified the alliance as the single most important factor for U.S. strategy in the region. “It is truly our foundation and it gives us stability to be able to do the kinds of things that we seek to as a nation in the Asia-Pacific region,” he explained.<sup>31</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States attributed tremendous importance to Japan. Despite the fact that they had waged a tremendously violent war against the country during World War II, U.S. officials remained convinced that the country remained the key to achieving their objectives for the Asia Pacific region. As a result, U.S. officials remained determined to uphold a powerful but subordinate Japan-centered system as the main form of regional order.

#### Avoiding “Asia for the Asians” Formulations

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<sup>31</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, *Japan: Recent Security Developments*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., July 27, 2010, 6, 8.

As they worked to uphold their Japan-centered system, the leaders of the United States also made one thing very clear to their Japanese allies. Whenever Japanese officials raised the possibility of leading the region in a new direction, U.S. officials quickly intervened in the discussion to declare their opposition to any alternative system of regional order. Determined to avoid a situation in which Japanese officials attempted to push the United States out of the region, just as an earlier generation of Japanese officials had attempted during World War II, U.S. officials constantly implored their Japanese allies to refrain from getting any ideas of excluding the United States from the region.

During the final years of the Bush administration, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer often delivered the basic message. In April 2006, Schieffer gave a speech in Tokyo in which he warned his Japanese audience to avoid any talk of excluding the United States from the region. “What makes the United States uncomfortable is when people start talking about somehow trying to exclude the United States from Asia,” Schieffer explained. To emphasize his point, Schieffer issued a direct warning to his Japanese audience. The leaders of the United States dislike “the notion that somehow someone might be trying to exclude us from the area,” Schieffer stated. “And that would be something that would not be met with favor in the United States.”<sup>32</sup>

Sharing the same concerns, officials in the subsequent Obama administration often issued the same kinds of warnings. With the goal of maintaining an indestructible partnership between the United States and Japan, administration officials repeatedly

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<sup>32</sup> J. Thomas Schieffer, “Ambassador Schieffer Addresses Research Institute of Japan,” April 19, 2006, <http://japan2.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20060419-71.html>.

warned their Japanese counterparts not to get any ideas of excluding the United States from the region.

When a number of Japanese officials began calling for a new regional approach that relied less on the United States and focused more on Asia, administration officials quickly signaled that they would not tolerate any reduced role for the United States in the region. Any regional order that excluded the United States would be “unacceptable,” administration officials warned. Ultimately, “the United States cannot accept the idea of excluding it from the regional community.”<sup>33</sup>

At the time, administration officials also began issuing direct warnings to the Japanese government. After the new Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama commented in October 2009 that Japan “tended to be too reliant on the United States” and specified that “I would like to develop policies that focus more on Asia,” administration officials began repeatedly warning their Japanese counterparts that such statements were unacceptable.<sup>34</sup>

Leading the charge, the State Department official Kurt Campbell made it clear that U.S. officials would not tolerate such statements. “Prime Minister Hatoyama's comments in Beijing drew surprise from the highest levels of the U.S. Government,” Campbell informed his Japanese counterparts. To emphasize his point, Campbell warned his Japanese counterparts that any more calls for policies that focused more on Asia and less on the United States would create a major problem in bilateral relations. “Imagine the Japanese response if the U.S. Government were to say publicly that it wished to

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33 Embassy Tokyo, “DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 10/13/09,” 09TOKYO2349, October 13, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09TOKYO2349.html>.

34 Elaine Kurtenbach, “China, Japan, Skorea to consider free trade pact,” *Associated Press*, October 10, 2009.

devote more attention to China than Japan,” Campbell explained. “Such remarks would create a crisis in U.S.-Japan relations, from which recovery would be difficult.” As he delivered his message, Campbell even instructed his Japanese counterparts to stop making their proposals altogether. Japanese officials must “avoid phrasing their desire for better Chinese and South Korean relations at the expense of the United States,” Campbell demanded. Altogether, Campbell demanded that Japanese officials must stop making their proposals.<sup>35</sup>

In the weeks after the Japanese prime minister made his comments, Campbell then issued a number of similar warnings. In early November 2009, Campbell instructed Japanese officials in that the Japanese prime minister must avoid using exclusionary language in an upcoming speech. Make sure that “any references to Hatoyama's East Asia Community (EAC) concept not exclude the U.S. from membership,” Campbell instructed. Any “exclusionary language would not be well-received in Washington.” Indeed, Campbell instructed Japanese officials that the leader of Japan could not say certain things in the speech. After all, “the U.S. is trying to be more active in Asia and does not want the perception that it is unwelcome,” he added.<sup>36</sup>

In the following months, Campbell only continued to deliver the same basic message. During one meeting with Japanese officials in February 2010, Campbell made his point as clearly as possible. When “discussing regional architecture,” Japanese officials must “continue to avoid 'Asia for the Asians' formulations,” Campbell instructed.

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35 Embassy Tokyo, “A/S CAMPBELL, GOJ OFFICIALS DISCUSS PM HATOYAMA'S COMMENTS ON U.S./CHINA/SOUTH KOREA,” 09TOKYO2377, October 15, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09TOKYO2377.html>.

36 Embassy Tokyo, “ASSISTANT SECRETARY CAMPBELL'S NOVEMBER 5 LUNCH WITH VFM YABUNAKA,” 09TOKYO2617, November 12, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09TOKYO2617.html>.

In other words, Campbell demanded that the Japanese government must never try to create a regional system around the idea of an Asia for the Asians.<sup>37</sup>

With their many warnings, the leaders of the United States also imposed a major constraint on their Japanese allies. By repeatedly instructing their Japanese counterparts to avoid Asia for the Asians formulations, U.S. officials made it clear that Japanese officials must remain subordinate to the power of the United States. Although U.S. officials certainly wanted to keep Japan positioned at the center of a regional system, they intended to keep the United States positioned at the top of the Asian power structure.

#### South Korea: A Critical Anchor

To secure their dominant position in the region, the leaders of the United States also turned to another country for assistance. Rather than focusing all of their efforts on Japan, U.S. officials extended their involvement to South Korea. By working closely with the South Korean government, U.S. officials believed that they could significantly strengthen their power in the region.

In fact, the leaders of the United States played a central role in creating South Korea. After World War II, U.S. officials took advantage of their direct military presence in the southern portion of the Korean peninsula to create the new country of South Korea. In a tremendously violence process that left about one hundred thousand people dead,

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<sup>37</sup> Embassy Tokyo, "A/S CAMPBELL FEBRUARY 2 MEETING WITH VFM YABUNAKA," 10TOKYO214, February 3, 2010, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10TOKYO214.html>.

U.S. officials employed their power to install the dictator Syngman Rhee as the leader of a South Korean client state.<sup>38</sup>

Not long after they created their client state, U.S. officials also spearheaded a massive military intervention in the region to ensure that their client state held together. After a separate government in North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950 with the goal of overthrowing the South Korean government and unifying the Korean peninsula, U.S. officials retaliated with a massive military operation that left as many as three million Koreans dead.<sup>39</sup>

Through their efforts, U.S. officials succeeded in maintaining a powerful position in the region. Although the Korean War had left the Korean peninsula bitterly divided between one government in North Korea and the U.S. client state in South Korea, U.S. officials ultimately obtained a powerful regional asset in the South Korean government. “The retention of our strong strategic posture in Korea is essential to the overall balance of power in the Pacific and East Asia,” the U.S. Admiral Ulysses Sharp observed in October 1966.<sup>40</sup>

For the remainder of the twentieth century, officials in Washington only continued to view South Korea as an essential part of their strategic posture. Although a major democratic movement in the country eventually prevailed in creating a new system of

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38 For more discussion, see the following sources: Bruce Cumings, *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, vol. 1 of *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Bruce Cumings, *The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, vol. 2 of *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2010).

39 Ibid.

40 “Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Sharp) to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Wheeler),” October 10, 1966, in U.S. Department of State, *Part 1: Korea*, vol. 29 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 198.

electoral politics during the late 1980s, U.S. officials continued to work closely with South Korean leaders to shape the balance of power in the region.<sup>41</sup>

When the U.S. President Bill Clinton visited South Korea in July 1993, he confirmed that the country remained critically important to U.S. strategy in the area. “The Korean peninsula remains a vital American interest,” Clinton explained. Providing more details, Clinton specified that the country helped U.S. officials shape the development of the entire area. “Korea can play a vital role in the region's new arrangements, for it stands at the center of northeast Asia, within 2 hours by air from Singapore, Tokyo, Beijing, and Vladivostok,” Clinton noted.<sup>42</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration similarly identified South Korea as a key to their plans for the region. For example, the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Christopher R. Hill identified South Korea as “a key partner for the United States in this part of the world.” To emphasize his point, Hill insisted that few countries in the world mattered more to the United States. Ultimately, “the U.S.-Korean alliance is one of the most important of its kind anywhere in the world,” Hill remarked.<sup>43</sup>

In the following years, the subsequent U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Alexander Vershbow similarly identified South Korea as a key ally of the United States. “The United States views the ROK as one of our primary partners in the world,”

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41 For more discussion, see Bruce Cumings, “The Virtues, II: The Democratic Movement, 1960-1996,” in *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 337-393.

42 William J. Clinton, “Remarks to the Korean National Assembly in Seoul,” July 10, 1993, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1993*, Book I – January 20 to July 31, 1993 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 1054, 1055.

43 Christopher R. Hill, “Strengthening the ROK-U.S. Alliance to Meet New Challenges,” September 24, 2004, [http://seoul.usembassy.gov/ambsp\\_09242004.html](http://seoul.usembassy.gov/ambsp_09242004.html).

Vershbow explained. “Korea is an important ally of the United States, and a key geo-strategic partner in the Northeast Asian region.” At times, Vershbow even identified the relationship between the United States and South Korea as one of the most historic alliances in the world. “I believe the relationship between our two countries has been one of the most successful alliances in the history of international relations,” Vershbow commented.<sup>44</sup>

In September 2006, the Defense Department official Richard P. Lawless also attributed special importance to the alliance. “The U.S.-ROK alliance and the United States military presence in Korea remain a critical element of the security architecture of Northeast Asia,” Lawless explained. “The maintenance of that relationship and the United States presence in Korea are of strategic importance to the United States.”<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. officials periodically reaffirmed the basic reasons why they favored the country. For example, the incoming U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Kathleen Stephens explained during her confirmation hearing in April 2008 that South Korea provided the United States with significant influence in a strategically important part of the world. “Strategically situated between China and Japan, the Korean peninsula remains of critical geopolitical importance to the region and to the United States,” Stephens explained.<sup>46</sup>

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44 Alexander Vershbow, “PRESIDENT BUSH'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE FUTURE OF U.S.-KOREAN RELATIONS,” January 12, 2006, [http://seoul.usembassy.gov/113\\_011206.html](http://seoul.usembassy.gov/113_011206.html); Alexander Vershbow, “U.S.-KOREA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT TALKS: MEETING THE CHALLENGE,” February 7, 2006, [https://seoul.usembassy.gov/113\\_020706.html](https://seoul.usembassy.gov/113_020706.html); Alexander Vershbow, “The U.S.-ROK Alliance: A History of Cooperation,” March 22, 2006, [https://seoul.usembassy.gov/113\\_032206.html](https://seoul.usembassy.gov/113_032206.html).

45 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *United States-Republic of Korea Alliance: An Alliance at Risk?* 109th Cong., 2nd sess., September 27, 2006, 19.

46 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Nominations of the 110TH Congress – Second Session*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., January 30 through September 24, 2008, 174.



Just a few weeks later, the outgoing Ambassador Alexander Vershbow similarly emphasized the importance of the country's location. In a report to the State Department official John Negroponte, Vershbow described South Korea as a “strategically placed ally.” The “coming series of high-level USG visits, which you kick off, is an opportunity to elevate our presence in the most strategic piece of real estate in northeast Asia,” he added.<sup>47</sup>

Under the subsequent Obama administration, many officials then began to attribute more importance to the country. For example, the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Kathleen Stephens felt that the Obama administration should formally include South Korea among the closest allies of the United States in the world. “We share values and strategic goals with this highly capable ally,” Stephens explained. Now, “we need to give substance to our shared aspiration to upgrade our bilateral relationship, putting it unmistakably into the first tier of U.S. allies.”<sup>48</sup>

In fact, President Obama shared similar views. In June 2010, Obama explained that he included the South Korean government among the top tier of U.S. allies. The “alliance is the lynchpin of not only security for the Republic of Korea and the United States, but also for the Pacific as a whole,” Obama stated.<sup>49</sup>

A few months later, the Defense Department official Wallace C. Gregson made a similar point. Speaking before a congressional committee, Gregson identified the alliance

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47 Embassy Seoul, “SCENESETTER FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MAY 7-8 VISIT TO SEOUL,” 08SEOUL903, May 1, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08SEOUL903.html>.

48 Embassy Seoul, “SCENESETTER FOR THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO KOREA,” 09SEOUL228, February 12, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09SEOUL228.html>.

49 Barack Obama, “Remarks Following a Meeting With President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea in Toronto,” June 26, 2010, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2010*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2010 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013), 880.

as a key component of U.S. strategy in the region. “The U.S.-ROK alliance is a key pillar of U.S. strategy for a region undergoing tremendous political, economic, and security-related change,” Gregson stated.<sup>50</sup>

After Gregson made his point, the State Department official Kurt Campbell then provided some clarification. As many officials began to describe South Korea in the same way that they described Japan, Campbell clarified that U.S. officials relied on two key allies in the region. “The basis of our strategy in Northeast Asia rests on two very strong and important allies,” Campbell explained. Providing more details, Campbell explained that U.S. officials first focused their efforts on Japan. “The United States’ relationship with Japan remains the cornerstone of our engagement and our security partners in the Asian Pacific region,” Campbell explained. “It’s hard to be successful in Asia without that very strong and central relationship.” At the same time, Campbell pointed to the growing importance of South Korea. “We also have taken real steps in recent years to strengthen the critical partnership, as General Gregson has underscored, with South Korea,” Campbell noted. With his remarks, Campbell made it clear that U.S. officials valued South Korea as another powerful pillar of regional order. “Our alliance relationship with the Republic of Korea serves as a critical anchor for our strategic engagement in the Asia-Pacific,” he explained.<sup>51</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States identified South Korea as another one of their main allies in the Asia Pacific region. While they continued to place Japan at the center of their plans for the region, they found that their alliance with the South Korean

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50 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *The Current Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., September 16, 2010, 5.

51 *Ibid.*, 11, 16.

government provided them with additional leverage. As a result, U.S. officials turned to the South Korean government to augment their power in the area.

### Tying South Korea to the United States

As they relied on South Korea to acquire more influence over the Asia Pacific region, the leaders of the United States also applied an imperial strategy toward South Korea. Not only did they maintain a direct military presence in the country, which provided them with substantial influence, but U.S. officials also took advantage of their tremendous economic power to gain additional leverage over the country. Once South Korea began playing an increasingly powerful economic role in the region, U.S. officials even began to view closer economic ties with South Korea as a strategic imperative.<sup>52</sup>

During the final years of the Bush administration, U.S. officials initiated one of their most ambitious efforts to strengthen their economic influence in South Korea. Starting in early 2006, administration officials began working to implement a new free trade agreement (FTA) with the South Korean government. “For the United States, an FTA will help us become more involved in one of the fastest growing and most dynamic economies in East Asia,” the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Alexander Vershbow explained. “For Korea, an FTA would enable Korea to become more closely integrated with the world’s largest and most advanced economy.” In short, Vershbow argued that the deal would bring the two nations closer together.<sup>53</sup>

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52 For the background, see Bruce Cumings, “Korean Sun Rising: Industrialization, 1953-1996,” in *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 299-336.

53 Alexander Vershbow, “Civil Society, Trade and the U.S.-ROK Relationship,” February 23, 2006, [http://seoul.usembassy.gov/113\\_022306.html](http://seoul.usembassy.gov/113_022306.html).

Shortly after he made his announcement, Vershbow then provided some additional clarification. In April 2006, Vershbow explained that a new trade deal would create an economic equivalent to the longstanding military alliance between the two countries. “For the past 53 years, the fundamental basis of the U.S.-ROK alliance has been our security relationship based on our Mutual Defense Treaty,” Vershbow explained. “The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement we will begin negotiating in June would be the economic version of the Mutual Defense Treaty.” In short, Vershbow explained that the deal would create a powerful new pillar in bilateral relations between the United States and South Korea. “It will, in short, make the U.S.-R.O.K. alliance even stronger,” he insisted.<sup>54</sup>

Back in Washington, a number of observers pointed to some additional implications. In May 2006, the analysts William H. Cooper and Mark E. Manyin at the Congressional Research Service reported that a new trade pact would very likely strengthen the presence of the United States throughout the broader region. “An FTA could ensure that the United States has an institutional presence in East Asia,” the analysts explained.<sup>55</sup>

The following year, the Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Karan K. Bhatia made a similar argument. “Not only will U.S. stakeholders benefit from increased market access provided by the FTA, the Agreement is important to our trade position and strategy in East Asia as a whole,” Bhatia explained. “A successful FTA with South Korea could provide an important boost to U.S. efforts to remain an active economic presence in a

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54 Alexander Vershbow, “Prospects for U.S.-Korean Relations,” April 27, 2006, [http://seoul.usembassy.gov/113\\_042706.html](http://seoul.usembassy.gov/113_042706.html).

55 William H. Cooper and Mark E. Manyin, “The Proposed South Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUSFTA),” Congressional Research Service, May 24, 2006, CRS-6.

strategically vital region.” Indeed, Bhatia insisted that the trade deal would strengthen U.S. economic influence throughout East Asia.<sup>56</sup>

At times, other officials provided a more direct assessment. For example, the State Department official Christopher R. Hill explained that the deal “will decisively anchor the U.S. presence in the most dynamic and rapidly-growing economic region on the globe.” In other words, Hill stated that the deal would firmly root the position of the United States in the region. Quite simply, “*the KORUS FTA will anchor our strategic economic position in East Asia,*” he explained. Its ratification “will further cement U.S. leadership in the dynamic Asian region.”<sup>57</sup>

As they worked to cement their position in the region, U.S. officials also sought additional advantages from the trade deal. For instance, U.S. officials wanted to use the deal to send a powerful message to the rest of the region. “The KORUS FTA, the first U.S. FTA in Northeast Asia, demonstrates conclusively U.S. resolve to remain engaged in the economically vibrant and strategically critical Asia-Pacific region,” the State Department official Alexander A. Arvizu explained. “It shows that we will continue to work aggressively to expand U.S. access to growing Asian markets and that we will not stand idly by while others talk about Asian economic groupings that would exclude the United States.”<sup>58</sup>

Under the Obama administration, many officials pointed to the same potential benefits. For example, the U.S. diplomats in South Korea informed President Obama in

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56 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, *The United States-South Korea FTA: The Foreign Policy Implications*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., June 13, 2007, 17.

57 *Ibid.*, 20, 21.

58 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A New Beginning for the U.S.-South Korea Strategic Alliance*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., April 23, 2008, 15.

November 2009 that the deal would provide the United States with a powerful new foothold in the region. “FTA Creates Foothold in Asia,” the diplomats reported. To emphasize their point, the diplomats specified that the deal would directly tie South Korea to the United States. “The Korea-U.S. (KORUS) Free Trade Agreement is a critical element of our effort to anchor Korea to the United States for the next generation, and likewise anchor the United States in Northeast Asia,” the diplomats explained. In addition, the diplomats agreed that the implementation of the deal would sent a powerful message to the rest of the region. “In addition to the substantial mutual trade benefits, the symbolic effects of the KORUS FTA would be profound, both in terms of our commitment to Northeast Asia and in further tying Korea to the United States,” they noted. Altogether, the diplomats insisted that the deal would provide the United States with a more powerful hold over South Korea and the surrounding area.<sup>59</sup>

Clearly, the leaders of the United States viewed the deal as a key element of their strategy for the region. “It’s not only important at an economic level, but it has enormous strategic consequences as well,” the State Department official Kurt Campbell explained. The deal will provide the United States with “staying power” in the area.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, the leaders of the United States believed they could use the trade deal to strengthen their grip over the Asia Pacific region. By adding an economic pillar to their military alliance with the South Korean government, they believed that they could more firmly tie South Korea to the United States and gain a powerful new economic foothold

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59 Embassy Seoul, “SCENESETTER FOR THE PRESIDENT’S VISIT TO KOREA, NOVEMBER 18-19,” 09SEOUL1772, November 5, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09SEOUL1772.html>.

60 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *The Current Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., September 16, 2010, 30, 31.

on the Asian continent. Consequently, U.S. officials viewed the deal as an important new way to strengthen their staying power in the Asia Pacific region.

### The Day-to-Day Reality

Of course, the leaders of the United States also faced significant challenges to their plans for South Korea. Over the course of their involvement in the country, U.S. officials encountered constant resistance from the people of South Korea. Although they maintained close ties with the South Korean government, U.S. officials found that they faced a persistent opposition from the South Korean people to many of their plans for the country.

Certainly, much of the resistance stemmed from the way in which U.S. officials created the country after World War II. By creating a client state that ruled over the southern portion of a divided Korean peninsula, U.S. officials embittered many South Koreans.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, U.S. officials created more opposition by the way in which they fought the Korean War. Since U.S. military forces committed so many atrocities and killed so many Koreans during the war, U.S. officials left many South Koreans bitterly opposed to the United States.<sup>62</sup>

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61 For more discussion, see the follow sources: Bruce Cumings, *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, vol. 1 of *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Bruce Cumings, *The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*, vol. 2 of *The Origins of the Korean War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2010).

62 Ibid.

In fact, U.S. officials created even more opposition to their involvement in the country throughout the postwar period. By extending their support to a series of dictators who ruled over the country for a number of decades, U.S. officials angered many South Koreans by delaying their efforts to bring democracy to the country. Wherever they went in the country, U.S. officials often heard South Korean protesters chanting “Yankee, go home.”<sup>63</sup>

In more recent years, U.S. officials have only continued to face significant resistance from the people of South Korea. In spite of their efforts to put their past actions behind them, U.S. officials found that many South Koreans still harbored many grievances toward the United States. During the Bush administration's first term in office, the analyst Mark E. Manyin at the Congressional Research Service explained that South Koreans took issue with many elements of U.S. policy. “The criticisms range widely and include accusations that the Bush Administration is not listening to South Koreans in general, that the Bush Administration is blocking rapprochement between North and South Korea, that U.S. forces in South Korea are not sufficiently accountable for crimes they commit in South Korea, that the United States is covering up alleged atrocities committed during the Korean War, and that the South Korean government too often caters to U.S. interests,” Manyin explained. Indeed, Manyin confirmed that South Koreans still harbored many serious grievances.<sup>64</sup>

At times, U.S. officials also acknowledged that they faced significant opposition from the South Korean people. For example, the U.S. diplomats in South Korea

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63 For more discussion, see Bruce Cumings, “The Virtues, II: The Democratic Movement, 1960-1996,” in *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 337-393.

64 Mark E. Manyin, “South Korean Politics and Rising 'Anti-Americanism': Implications for U.S. Policy Toward North Korea,” Congressional Research Service, May 6, 2003, CRS-8-CRS-9.



acknowledged in April 2007 that many South Koreans remained especially critical of the presence of tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers in the country. The presence of U.S. military forces “remains a tempting target for criticism from leftist politicians, student groups and activist NGOs who oppose the environmental and social costs of hosting U.S. Forces on Korean soil,” the diplomats explained. “Even conservative groups traditionally aligned with the USG, have had no compunction about scoring political points by opposing certain aspects of our U.S. Military transformation strategy.”<sup>65</sup>

In another report, the diplomats noted that they also faced a much more challenging political environment in the country. Certainly, “today's generation of politicians, including President Roh himself, are highly critical of past ROK authoritarian rulers, and by extension of U.S. support for those military governments,” the diplomats explained. Since they now had to work with elected officials, the diplomats found that they could no longer dictate their terms to the South Korean government. “For many Koreans, the mere perception of a demanding tone emanating from Washington harkens back to a time in modern Korean history that is now very fashionable to discredit,” they reported.<sup>66</sup>

The following year, the incoming U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Kathleen Stephens then publicly confirmed that U.S. officials faced significant challenges from the people of South Korea. Truthfully, “it is no surprise that there has long been some anti-American sentiment in South Korea,” Stephens explained. To make her case, Stephens noted that many of the past actions of the United States in the area had caused many

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65 Embassy Seoul, “THE POLITICS OF ALLIANCE RELATIONS (1 OF 3),” 07SEOUL1211, April 26, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/04/07SEOUL1211.html>.

66 Embassy Seoul, “THE POLITICS OF ALLIANCE RELATIONS (2 OF 3),” 07SEOUL1215, April 26, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/04/07SEOUL1215.html>.

South Koreans to develop especially critical views of the United States. “Part of that criticism stems from the division of the Korean Peninsula after World War II,” she explained. “Part is also rooted in the varying perceptions Koreans have of their process of democratization and of the role of the United States in those years.” In addition, Stephens noted that a number of more recent events had only created more opposition to the United States. “Incidents relating to the U.S. military presence have also inflamed anti-American feeling, such as after the tragic deaths in 2002 of two schoolgirls during a training exercise,” she noted. In brief, Stephens confirmed that South Koreans had many reasons for opposing the United States.<sup>67</sup>

A few weeks after Stephens issued her statement, the outgoing Ambassador Alexander Vershbow then made another key point. In an internal report, Vershbow noted that U.S. officials faced their biggest challenge in the Korean peninsula from the people of South Korea. “While the North Korean threat commands the most attention, the day-to-day reality of the U.S.-ROK Alliance revolves more around issues relating to the presence of our troops on the Peninsula and all the attendant problems that go along with that,” Vershbow acknowledged. In other words, Vershbow suggested that U.S. officials spent more time dealing with the challenges that they faced from the people of South Korea than the challenges that they faced from North Korean government.<sup>68</sup>

Under the subsequent Obama administration, the U.S. diplomats in the country pointed to many of the same kinds of challenges. For example, the diplomats reported in March 2009 that South Korean protesters held almost daily protests against the United

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67 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Nominations of the 110TH Congress – Second Session*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., January 30 through September 24, 2008, 195, 196.

68 Embassy Seoul, “SCENESETTER FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY’S MAY 7-8 VISIT TO SEOUL,” 08SEOUL903, May 1, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08SEOUL903.html>.

States. “There were approximately 180 anti-American demonstrations in Seoul over the past twelve months,” the diplomats reported. “If Post were to include anti-American candlelight vigils, the total number would be 260.” Moreover, the diplomats found that the protesters harbored numerous grievances. For the past year, “the demonstrations encompassed a broad range of issues, including but not limited to Six-Party talks, U.S. military forces in Korea, the war in Iraq and the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA),” they reported. In sum, the diplomats confirmed that they faced constant resistance from the people of South Korea.<sup>69</sup>

Back in Washington, some observers suggested that U.S. officials also faced a more fundamental challenge. In April 2010, the analyst Dick K. Nanto at the Congressional Research Service explained that many people in the region simply desired their independence. Undoubtedly, “many government elites and a growing segment of the public have recently been pushing for more independence of action and for government policies more in line with their, not America’s, national interests,” Nanto reported. With his assessment, Nanto indicated that many people in the region viewed the United States as the main obstacle to their freedom and independence. “East Asian nations often chafe under the weight of U.S. hegemony and a perceived unipolar world and all that this implies for their independence of action and what they view as their traditional values,” Nanto reported.<sup>70</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States faced a major challenge to their plans for the region. While they typically characterized North Korea as the main threat to their

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69 Embassy Seoul, “SECURITY ENVIRONMENT PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE (SEPM) - SPRING 2009,” 09SEOUL365, March 11, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/03/09SEOUL365.html>.

70 Dick K. Nanto, “East Asian Regional Architecture: New Economic and Security Arrangements and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, April 15, 2010, 34, 35.

regional strategy, U.S. officials encountered constant resistance from the people who lived in South Korea. As a result, U.S. officials faced the kind of day-to-day reality in South Korea that made it difficult for them to fulfill their objectives for the country.

#### China: A Potential Competitor

In fact, the leaders of the United States faced an even more significant challenge to their plans for the region. With the rapid transformation of China into a major economic power during the final decades of the twentieth century, U.S. officials faced an increasingly powerful China that increasingly challenged the position of the United States as the paramount power in the Pacific. At times, U.S. officials even imagined that an increasingly powerful China could create a new regional structure that diminished their staying power. Although they certainly faced significant challenges from the people of South Korea as well as the many other people in the area who desired their independence, U.S. officials identified an increasingly powerful China as the greatest challenge to their regional strategy.

Of course, U.S. officials have not always identified China as a challenge to their plans for the area. When they first began to play a dominant role in the Asia Pacific region during the late nineteenth century, U.S. officials typically viewed China as a potentially lucrative market that remained open for grabs. In China, the United States

faces “greater material opportunities than it will ever discover in all the other undeveloped portions of the world,” the U.S. diplomat John Barrett declared.<sup>71</sup>

From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, U.S. officials even spearheaded an international policy to secure their access to the markets of China. Implementing an “open door” policy, U.S. officials played a major role in keeping the markets of China open to the outside world.<sup>72</sup>

In the following decades, U.S. officials only continued with their efforts to keep the country's markets open for business. In 1900, for example, U.S. officials directly intervened in China to suppress the Boxer Rebellion, a major uprising in which Chinese nationalists attempted to expel all external powers from China. With a number of their allies, U.S. officials sent military forces to the country to crush the Boxer Rebellion and keep the door open to the China market.<sup>73</sup>

During the final years of World War II, U.S. officials again intervened in China. Sending over one hundred thousand U.S. soldiers into the country, the Truman administration empowered the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek to fight the Communist forces of Mao Zedong in the Chinese Civil War. Although the intervention ultimately failed, with the Communist forces prevailing in the civil war in 1949, U.S.

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71 John Barrett, “America's Duty in China,” *North American Review* 171, no. 525 (August 1900): 145-146.

72 For more discussion, see Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).

73 For more discussion of the historical role of the United States in China, see the following sources: John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983); Arnold Xiangze Jiang, *The United States and China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988); Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, 5th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

officials once again made it clear that they intended to play a major role in controlling the fate of the country.<sup>74</sup>

In more recent years, officials in Washington have also begun to face an entirely new kind of challenge from China. With the country rapidly transitioning from a largely defenseless country on the periphery of the international system to a potentially powerful competitor at the center, U.S. officials have grown increasingly concerned about their ability to control a rising China.

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration explained that they faced an increasingly powerful China. “Since the 19th century when ships of the Standard Oil Company sailed around Cape Horn carrying 'oil for the lamps of China,' those of us in the U.S. have been anticipating the day when China would emerge as a major economic power,” the State Department official E. Anthony Wayne explained. “Make no mistake about it – that day has finally arrived.”<sup>75</sup>

Facing an increasingly powerful China, administration officials voiced serious concerns about the country. For example, the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld openly questioned the intentions of the Chinese government when he visited China in October 2005. Many people “have questions about the pace and the scope of the China’s military expansion,” Rumsfeld remarked. “A growth in China’s power projection understandably leads other nations to question China’s intentions.” With his remarks, Rumsfeld made it clear that U.S. officials harbored serious concerns about the country's growing power. “Other actions – such as China’s pursuit of regional institutions that

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74 Ibid.

75 E. Anthony Wayne, “China's Emergence as an Economic Superpower and Its Implications for U.S. Business,” May 25, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/rm/2005/46950.htm>.

exclude other Pacific nations such as the United States – also lead others to wonder about China’s intentions,” Rumsfeld added. “And it raises questions about whether China will make the right choices.”<sup>76</sup>

Throughout Washington, other observers issued more direct warnings. For example, the analysts Dick K. Nanto and Emma Chanlett-Avery at the Congressional Research Service warned that the Chinese government intended to push the United States out of the region. “There is little doubt that China is using its rising economic and political power backed by its modernizing military to attempt to reduce U.S. influence in its periphery and to establish itself as the central power in the region,” the analysts reported.<sup>77</sup>

With many observers expressing great concerns about China, the Bush administration then began increasing its efforts to more directly shape the rise of China. For example, the Bush administration announced in a revised version of its National Security Strategy that it would begin placing more pressure on the Chinese government. “Our strategy seeks to encourage China to make the right strategic choices for its people while we hedge against other possibilities,” the Bush administration explained.<sup>78</sup>

As the Bush administration implemented its approach, a number of officials provided additional details. In February 2007, the State Department official John Norris informed a congressional review commission that the administration intended to shape the decisions of Chinese officials. “We don't simply assume that China will choose a

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76 Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Speech,” October 19, 2005, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=233>.

77 Dick K. Nanto and Emma Chanlett-Avery, “The Rise of China and Its Effect on Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea: U.S. Policy Choices,” Congressional Research Service, January 13, 2006, CRS-33.

78 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, 42.

benign path,” Norris explained. “Rather, our policy aims to help shape China's choices.” In other words, Norris indicated that the administration remained ready to implement additional measures to push the Chinese government in a certain direction. “We are prepared to work with China in positive ways to advance our common interests,” Norris explained. “We are also prepared to respond appropriately should China choose another direction.”<sup>79</sup>

The following year, the State Department official Thomas J. Christensen provided further clarification. Speaking before a congressional review commission, Christensen indicated that the administration had implemented an offensive shaping strategy. “There is something in addition to the standard hedging approach of maintaining a strong U.S. presence in Asia,” Christensen explained. “We believe our presence in the region is a positive shaping force for China's choices.” Indeed, Christensen indicated that the Bush administration was using its tremendous military power in the region to guide the development of China. The “strong set of U.S. alliances and security partnerships in the region” constitute “a big part of the shaping strategy,” Christensen explained.<sup>80</sup>

Later in the year, the Department of Defense provided additional confirmation of the implementation of a shaping strategy. After warning that “China is one ascendant state with the potential for competing with the United States,” the Department of Defense explained that it intended to more actively shape the rise of China. “For the foreseeable future, we will need to hedge against China’s growing military modernization and the impact of its strategic choices upon international security,” the Defense Department

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79 U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *The U.S.-China Relationship: Economics and Security in Perspective*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., February 1-2, 2007, 193.

80 U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *China's Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices, and Tools*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., March 18, 2008, 37.



reported. The ultimate goal “is to mitigate near term challenges while preserving and enhancing U.S. national advantages over time.”<sup>81</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials continued to apply the same shaping strategy to the country. In October 2009, the Defense Department official Suzanne Basalla and the State Department official Kurt Campbell confirmed that the Obama administration continued to realign the U.S. military presence in the region with the goal of shaping the rise of China. In recent years, the “most significant change” in the region “was the build-up of Chinese military assets,” Campbell explained. “This fact, which was now a driver of U.S. military assessments for the region, was implicit in Basalla’s presentation and could not be discussed publicly for obvious reasons.”<sup>82</sup>

Back in Washington, additional observers then provided more direct confirmation of the continuity in policy. For example, the analyst Dick K. Nanto at the Congressional Research Service reported that officials in the Obama administration intended to constrain the rise of China. “As for the rise of China, current U.S. strategy seems to be to engage China but also to place constraints on activities potentially inimical to U.S. security or economic interests,” Nanto reported.<sup>83</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States actively pushed back against an increasingly powerful China. Although they largely refrained from identifying China as an opponent or a competitor, fearing that any such language could inflame regional tensions, they decided to impose a series of constraints on the country while they worked

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81 U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, June 2008, 3.

82 Embassy Tokyo, “A/S CAMPBELL, GOJ OFFICIALS DISCUSS THE HISTORY OF U.S. FORCE REALIGNMENT,” 09TOKYO2378, October 15, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09TOKYO2378.html>.

83 Dick K. Nanto, “East Asian Regional Architecture: New Economic and Security Arrangements and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, April 15, 2010, 37.

to shape its development. Indeed, U.S. officials implemented an offensive shaping strategy that risked a major confrontation with China.

### A Status Quo Power

As U.S. officials implemented their offensive shaping strategy, they also harbored great ambitions for China. While they certainly feared that the Chinese government might attempt to craft a new form of regional order that excluded the United States from the area, U.S. officials still believed that China could play a constructive role in the region. As a result, U.S. officials believed that they could use the country to their advantage.

During the late 1960s, officials in the administration of Richard Nixon first came to believe that the ruling Chinese Communist Party could provide the United States with some advantages in the region. At the time, administration officials speculated that the “evolution of Peking's policies toward moderation would offer the prospect of increased stability in East Asia.” As long as they could get the Chinese government to abandon its support of revolutionary movements around the world and accept the existing structure of the international system, officials in the Nixon administration felt that China could reinforce the postwar system of global order. Perhaps “the US will be seen as willing to accept and live with Peking's entry into the international community and do what it can to take advantage of the change,” administration officials reported.<sup>84</sup>

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84 “Response to National Security Memorandum 14,” August 8, 1969, in U.S. Department of State, *China, 1969-1972*, vol. 17 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), 59.

In the following years, U.S. officials even received the opportunity to put their plans into practice. Following the death of the revolutionary leader Mao Zedong in 1976, U.S. officials watched the new Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping begin to withdraw his support of revolutionary movements around the world and begin to focus his attention on developing the country's economy within the existing framework of the international economic system.<sup>85</sup>

After the Chinese government implemented its new approach, U.S. officials then made their own momentous decision. Hoping to take advantage of the Chinese government's change in strategy, U.S. officials decided to begin working to reintegrate China into the international system.<sup>86</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, the State Department official Robert B. Zoellick provided a brief explanation of the major turn in events. Under Deng, "China's leaders reversed course," Zoellick explained. "Seven U.S. presidents of both parties recognized this strategic shift and worked to integrate China as a full member of the international system." With his remarks, Zoellick confirmed that the post-Mao Chinese government provided U.S. officials with the opening they desired to bring China back into the international system.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, Zoellick insisted that the post-Mao Chinese government wanted to avoid conflict with the United States. The Chinese government "does not seek to spread

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85 For more discussion, see the following sources: Merle Goldman, "The Post-Mao Reform Era," in John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 406-456; Chen Jian, "China, the Third World, and the Cold War," in *The Cold War in the Third World*, ed. Robert J. McMahon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 85-100.

86 Ibid.

87 Robert B. Zoellick, "Whither China? From Membership to Responsibility," September 21, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm>.

radical, anti-American ideologies,” he explained. Neither does it “see itself in a death struggle with capitalism.” Indeed, Zoellick reported that the Chinese government did not want to lead a global revolution against global capitalism. “And most importantly, China does not believe that its future depends on overturning the fundamental order of the international system,” he explained. “In fact, quite the reverse: Chinese leaders have decided that their success depends on being networked with the modern world.” In short, Zoellick insisted that the Chinese government had completely abandoned its revolutionary goals in favor of abiding by the existing norms of the international system. “Of course, the Chinese expect to be treated with respect and will want to have their views and interests recognized,” he added. “But China does not want a conflict with the United States.”<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, additional officials also pointed to the same shift. For example, the Director of the Policy Planning Staff David Gordon observed in January 2008 that Chinese officials now appeared to desire much closer ties with the United States. “The longtime view was zero sum: the United States, as the dominant world power, sought to prevent China from rising to its full potential and playing its rightful international role,” Gordon remarked. “Now,” he continued, “there seemed to be a less zero sum view of ties with Washington.”<sup>89</sup>

In fact, many officials had grown quite optimistic about China. For instance, the U.S. diplomats in China believed that the leaders of both China and the United States were destined to work together. “The United States and China share important and

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88 Ibid.

89 Secretary of State, “U.S.-JAPAN-KOREA POLICY PLANNING TALKS - WORKING LUNCH AND AFTERNOON SESSION,” 08STATE1522, January 7, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08STATE1522.html>.

growing political and economic interests that will bind us indefinitely, despite frictions,” the diplomats explained. To emphasize their point, the diplomats dismissed “the sense in some quarters in both Washington and Beijing that the United States and China are commencing a long-term struggle for global political, economic and military supremacy.” Indeed, the diplomats felt that the leaders of the two countries would overcome their differences and form a close relationship. “Countering these differences is the buildup of mutual trust between the U.S. and Chinese leadership and the willingness to work together in an increasingly broad spectrum of common strategic interests,” the diplomats reported.<sup>90</sup>

Continuing with their analysis, the diplomats also insisted that the Chinese government would continue to operate within the existing structure of the international system. “REALITY: STATUS QUO POWER,” the diplomats reported. To support their point, the diplomats specified that the Chinese government preferred the status quo. “Despite the flag-waving 'rising China' theme in popular culture and official media promising a more assertive Chinese international stance, the reality of China's foreign policy for at least the next five years is that China is committed to the international status quo as it reaps the benefits of U.S.-policed globalization,” the diplomats reported. Indeed, the diplomats reported that the Chinese government intended to work within the existing global structure of imperialism. The Chinese government “explicitly endorses the existing world order and declares that China's interest is in maintaining a stable international

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<sup>90</sup> Embassy Beijing, “Prospects for U.S.-China Relations,” 08BEIJING661, February 24, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/02/08BEIJING661.html>.

environment where it can pursue domestic economic and social development goals,” the diplomats reported.<sup>91</sup>

Periodically, some officials also provided reasons to believe that the Chinese government accepted the existing system of global order. For example, the State Department official Thomas J. Christensen informed a congressional review commission that the Chinese government acted in positive ways in international institutions. “In general we view China’s greater participation and assertiveness in multilateral institutions as a positive signal that China intends to address its concerns through dialogue and building consensus within these institutions rather than outside of them,” Christensen stated. “We believe that this approach has helped stabilize East Asia to the benefit of all, including the United States.” In addition, Christensen praised the Chinese government for playing a positive role in many parts of the world. “In general, we believe that China’s economic engagement with the developing world is a net positive for China and for the recipient countries,” he remarked. Altogether, Christensen portrayed the Chinese government as a responsible actor in global affairs. “It is quite difficult to support the contention that the primary motivation behind Chinese foreign policy is to diminish U.S. influence around the world,” he asserted.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, some officials could barely contain their excitement about the country. For example, the State Department official John Negroponte heaped praised upon China when he discussed the country before a congressional committee in May 2008. “China is an emerging great power with enormous potential to enhance prospects for peace,

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91 Ibid.

92 U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *China's Expanding Global Influence: Foreign Policy Goals, Practices, and Tools*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., March 18, 2008, 11, 13.

stability, prosperity, and human freedom in Asia and around the world,” Negroponte declared. Indeed, Negroponte identified China as one of the greatest forces for human freedom in the world.<sup>93</sup>

Even when U.S. officials did not praise the ruling Chinese Communist Party as a force for freedom, they still identified the Chinese government as a responsible player in international affairs. For example, the U.S. diplomats in China argued that “China has acted in a generally responsible way when addressing global economic concerns and the Chinese economy has proved to be quite resilient.” To emphasize their point, the diplomats titled one of the sections of their report “Playing a Constructive Role Internationally.”<sup>94</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials continued to insist that China played a constructive role internationally. In March 2009, the State Department official John Norris made the point by informing a congressional review commission that administration officials expected China to remain a force for stability in global affairs. “It’s true, as many analysts have pointed out, that sometimes the rise of major powers, the rise of new powers, has resulted in violence and instability, but with China, that has not been the case so far,” Norris remarked. “And we don’t expect it to be the case.”<sup>95</sup>

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93 U.S. Congress, Senate, *United States-China Relations in the Era of Globalization*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., May 15, 2008, 7.

94 Embassy Beijing, “SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT OF SENATOR CHUCK HAGEL TO BEIJING,” 08BEIJING3877, October 10, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08BEIJING3877.html>.

95 U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *China’s Military and Security Activities Abroad*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., March 4, 2009, 8.

A few months later, the U.S. diplomats in China provided additional emphasis by making a related point. When they welcomed a high-level official from the Obama administration to the country in September 2009, the diplomats explained that the Chinese government sought to maintain good relations with the new administration. “China's collective leadership remains convinced that a strong relationship with the United States is a prerequisite for China's continued economic development,” the diplomats explained. “Our bilateral differences remain significant, but the Chinese see the benefit of resolving, or at least managing, our disagreements quietly and not letting them hijack the overall relationship.” Indeed, the diplomats insisted that Chinese officials wanted to work closely with U.S. officials to maintain stable relations. Recent actions by the Obama administration “have been sufficient provocation for the Chinese to chill relations,” but the “restrained response from Beijing is clear evidence that they are committed to keeping relations on an even keel,” the diplomats explained.<sup>96</sup>

In one of their internal reports, the diplomats even suggested that U.S. officials had little to fear from China. In February 2010, the diplomats made their point by reporting that U.S. officials could safely ignore the Chinese government's public displays of military might. “Stomp Around And Carry A Small Stick: China's New 'Global Assertiveness' Raises Hackles, But Has More Form Than Substance,” the diplomats titled their report. With their report, the diplomats dismissed the hype over the Chinese government's displays of military power as mere sensationalism and propaganda. The

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96 Embassy Beijing, “SCENESETTER FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S VISIT TO CHINA, SEPTEMBER 28-29,” 09BEIJING2693, September 18, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/09/09BEIJING2693.html>.



most “thoughtful observers in China argue that this attitude has more form than substance and is designed to play to Chinese public opinion,” the diplomats explained.<sup>97</sup>

Indeed, U.S. officials saw very little to fear from China. Although they certainly harbored serious concerns about the potential implications of the rise of China for their Japan-centered system of regional order, they mostly viewed the Chinese government as a responsible actor that played a constructive role in international affairs. Consequently, U.S. officials believed that they could take advantage of an increasingly powerful China to more effectively enforce the main patterns of their global structure of imperialism.

#### Avoiding the Fate of the Soviet Union

As they worked to take advantage of China, U.S. officials also went to great lengths to manage one of the biggest potential problems with their political strategy. In the time since they officially reestablished diplomatic relations with the Chinese government in 1979, officials in Washington consistently minimized the fact that they formed close relations with a repressive dictatorship. Although they certainly voiced criticisms of the Chinese government, often by issuing carefully calibrated comments as part of their offensive shaping strategy, U.S. officials ultimately accepted the ruling Chinese Communist Party as the legitimate government of China.

During one particularly notable episode during the late twentieth century, U.S. officials clearly signaled their intentions to maintain good relations with the Chinese

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<sup>97</sup> Embassy Beijing, “STOMP AROUND AND CARRY A SMALL STICK: CHINA'S NEW 'GLOBAL ASSERTIVENESS' RAISES HACKLES, BUT HAS MORE FORM THAN SUBSTANCE,” 10BEIJING383, February 12, 2010, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10BEIJING383.html>.

government. After the ruling Chinese Communist Party killed hundreds of protesters in a massacre at Tiananmen Square in June 1989, the administration of George H. W. Bush declared that it would not let the massacre derail the overall relationship. “This is not the time for an emotional response, but for a reasoned, careful action that takes into account both our long-term interests and recognition of a complex internal situation in China,” President Bush explained. In spite of the massacre, “now is the time to look beyond the moment to important and enduring aspects of this vital relationship for the United States.” In short, President Bush downplayed the massacre with the goal of maintaining stable relations with the Chinese government.<sup>98</sup>

In the following years, U.S. officials continued to prioritize their relations with the Chinese government. While they certainly criticized the Chinese government for the massacre at Tiananmen Square and many other human rights violations, U.S. officials never made the kinds of moves that would risk their growing ties to the Chinese government.

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administration of George W. Bush consciously downplayed issues such as human rights. In January 2007, the Director of Policy Planning Stephen Krasner revealed the administration’s priorities when he explained that any focus on human values in the region could create problems. “In looking to develop Asian institutions, a value-based approach might be difficult,” Krasner explained. After all, when “looking at China, not all countries shared the same values.”

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98 George Bush, “The President's News Conference,” June 5, 1989, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1989*, Book I – January 20 to June 30, 1989 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), 669, 669-670. For more discussion, see Human Rights Watch, “China,” in *The Bush Administration's Record on Human Rights in 1989*, January 1990, 55-64. The report is available online at <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1989/WR89/>.

Concerned that Asian institutions that focused on human values would alienate the repressive Chinese Communist Party, Krasner discouraged his colleagues from including human values among their top priorities. “An interest-based approach, however, could work,” he added.<sup>99</sup>

In fact, Krasner harbored a very different kind of concern over China. Rather than worrying about the extent to which the Chinese government repressed the people of China, Krasner worried that the Chinese government might fail to maintain its hold on power. “China's rising power could most likely be accommodated,” he believed. “The greater problem,” he feared, “could come from chaotic internal developments in China that result in instability.” Indeed, Krasner feared that the people of China might overthrow the Chinese government far more than he feared the repressive nature of the Chinese government.<sup>100</sup>

Throughout Washington, many officials displayed the same preference for the Chinese government. As the Director of Policy Planning David Gordon explained during the early stages of the U.S. presidential campaign in the United States in 2008, most U.S. officials preferred to work with the Chinese government rather than take any kind of action that could weaken bilateral relations. Although “many presidential candidates are often critical of China, once elected they tend to seek stable relations,” Gordon explained.<sup>101</sup>

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99 Embassy Seoul, “POLICY PLANNING TRILATERAL, SESSION 1: THE KOREAN PENINSULA,” 07SEOUL220, January 23, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/01/07SEOUL220.html>.

100 Embassy Seoul, “POLICY PLANNING TRILATERAL, SESSION 3: CHINA AND INDIA,” 07SEOUL221, January 23, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/01/07SEOUL221.html>.

101 Embassy Beijing, “THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S DINNER WITH CHINESE ACADEMICS: TAIWAN, IRAN, NORTH KOREA, RUSSIA,” 08BEIJING178, January 18, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08BEIJING178.html>.

During the presidential campaign, the State Department official John Negroponte made a similar point. Concerned that the campaign rhetoric “could easily spill into criticism of our overall engagement policy,” Negroponte explained that administration officials would have to make every effort to prevent the rhetoric from destabilizing relations. “Careful management of the U.S.-China economic relationship,” he noted, “is thus important.”<sup>102</sup>

After the election, officials in the subsequent Obama administration continued to pursue stable relations with the Chinese government. In February 2009, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signaled the administration's intentions by explaining that she intended to work with authoritarian governments rather than trying alternative approaches. “I think that it's worth being perhaps more straightforward and trying to engage other countries on the basis of the reality that exists in a number of these settings to try to encourage more thoughtful deliberation about where we're going and how we're going to get there,” Clinton explained. “And so that's how I see it, and that's how I intend to operate.” In addition, Clinton confirmed that the Obama administration would not risk destabilizing the relationship with the Chinese government by pressing the Chinese government on issues such as human rights. Ultimately, “our pressing” on issues such as human rights “can't interfere” with other strategic priorities, Clinton explained. Altogether, Clinton made it clear that the Obama administration intended to maintain stable relations with the Chinese government.<sup>103</sup>

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102 Ibid.

103 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Working Toward Change in Perceptions of U.S. Engagement Around the World,” February 20, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/02/119430.htm>.

Moreover, administration officials remained more concerned about the same issues that had caused so much concern among their predecessors. Rather than feeling the greatest concern over the ways in which the Chinese government repressed the people of China, administration officials felt the most concerned about the many challenges that the people of China posed to the Chinese government. As the U.S. diplomats in China warned in an internal report, the ruling Chinese Communist Party remained “beset with internal, mostly localized, challenges – not external threats – to the ruling authorities.” Providing more details, the diplomats specified that ongoing “unrest and continuing tensions in Xinjiang, in both Han and Uighur communities, challenge the Party’s ability to maintain stability in that far-western province and have provoked rare popular calls for the regional Party Secretary (and CCP Politburo member) to step down.” In addition, “Tibet remains tense 18 months after deadly riots.” After outlining the ongoing social unrest, the diplomats then pointed to the potential problem. At the end of their report, they warned that the Chinese government could eventually lose its hold on power. “Tibet, Xinjiang and Beijing’s harsh treatment of peaceful dissenters are reminders that, six decades into CCP rule, the PRC leadership has to continue to seek a way forward that will avoid the fate of the Soviet Union,” the diplomats explained. In other words, the diplomats warned that the ongoing social unrest could cause the Chinese government to collapse.<sup>104</sup>

In the end, the leaders of the United States hoped to avoid any situation in which the people of China altered or abolished the Chinese government. Rather than siding with

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104 Embassy Beijing, “SCENESETTER FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY’S VISIT TO CHINA, SEPTEMBER 28-29,” 09BEIJING2693, September 18, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/09/09BEIJING2693.html>.

the many opposition movements that sought to change the repressive Chinese Communist Party, U.S. officials preferred to work with the Chinese government. As a result, U.S. officials prioritized their strategic objectives at the expense of human rights in China.

## Conclusion

Of course, the leaders of the United States based their priorities on their more ambitious objectives for the region. Rather than prioritizing issues such as human rights in China, U.S. officials began their approach to each country in the area by first considering how they could guide the fate of the entire Asia Pacific region.

For the most part, U.S. officials viewed China as the biggest potential challenge to their regional system. Although they certainly felt that they could incorporate China into their Japan-centered system, going to great lengths to maintain good relations with the ruling Chinese Communist Party, U.S. officials still hedged their approach by applying an offensive shaping strategy to the country. In essence, they worked to prevent the Chinese government from creating an alternative China-centered system as they steered the country into a subordinate position in their Japan-centered system.

At the same time, U.S. officials worked to keep Japan positioned as the main pole of power in the region. Although they certainly harbored some concerns about the Japanese government, U.S. officials maintained a powerful alliance with the Japanese government that provided them with the ability to shape the development of the rest of the region.

To reinforce their position in the area, U.S. officials also turned to an increasingly powerful South Korea. With the country quickly emerging as another center of power in the area, U.S. officials worked to position the country as another powerful pillar of regional order.

Through their efforts, U.S. officials also pursued their more general goal of keeping the United States positioned as the paramount power in the Pacific. Viewing the Asia Pacific region as another one of their bases of their power in the world, they remained determined to ensure that the United States remained at the top of the Asian power structure.

Consequently, the leaders of the United States worked to keep the Asia Pacific region under their control as another one of the main components of their global empire. Indeed, they made it their goal to keep a powerful but subordinate Japan-centered system functioning alongside the United States as another one of the main anchors of their global structure of imperialism.

## Section 2

### The Periphery



## Chapter 3

### Latin America

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- The American Hemisphere
  - The American System
  - Actively Pursuing Partners
- Colombia: A Well-Placed Country
  - Plan Colombia
  - Human Rights Violations are Inevitable
- Mexico: A Uniquely Important Neighbor
  - Applying the Colombia Model
  - The Violence Continues Unabated
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

As the leaders of the United States have maintained their anchors of imperial order at the center of the international system, they have also focused their attention on another region of the world. Turning their attention southward, U.S. officials have identified Latin America as another critically important component of their global

structure of imperialism. Undoubtedly, “the Americas are a vital interest,” the State Department official Arturo Valenzuela explained during the early twenty-first century. “It is a very, very important area.”<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, many historians have found that the United States held a commanding position in the hemisphere. The historian Peter H. Smith, who surveyed the long history of U.S. involvement in Latin America in his study *Talons of the Eagle* (1996), reported that the United States “has been stronger and richer” than Latin America since the early nineteenth century. “The nature and degree of this asymmetry have varied over time, but it has been a pervasive and persistent reality,” Smith asserted. “This means, among other things, that the United States has usually held the upper hand.” Indeed, Smith found that the United States maintained a position of “perennial predominance” over Latin America.<sup>2</sup>

Not long after Smith completed his study, the historian Lars Schoultz reached a similar conclusion. In his study *Beneath the United States* (1998), Schoultz found that the U.S. role in Latin America followed the principle of the Athenian historian Thucydides that “large nations do what they wish, while small nations accept what they must.” In other words, Schoultz agreed that the United States played the dominant role in the area. The basic insight of Thucydides has “remained the guiding principle of inter-American relations,” Schoultz asserted.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Arturo Valenzuela, “Town Hall at George Washington University,” November 3, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2010/151039.htm>.

2 Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7.

3 Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 315.

In a more recent study, the historian Stephen G. Rabe has also provided some more details about the nature of the U.S. role in Latin America. In his study *The Killing Zone* (2012), Rabe explained the United States did what it wished in an especially violent manner. During the Cold War, the United States repeatedly intervened in the region in ways that “helped perpetuate and spread violence, poverty, and despair within the region,” Rabe reported. To support his point, Rabe specified that the United States fueled decades of tremendously violent warfare that left hundreds of thousands of people dead. “The United States undermined constitutional systems, overthrew popularly elected governments, rigged elections, and supplied, trained, coddled, and excused barbarians who tortured, kidnapped, murdered, and 'disappeared' Latin Americans,” Rabe reported. In short, Rabe found that the United States played an imperial role in Latin America.<sup>4</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama continued to play an imperial role in Latin America. Following the lead of their predecessors, they implemented their own series of violent measures to assert their dominance over the region. Through their efforts, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations began the twenty-first century by working to keep Latin America under their control on the periphery of their global structure of imperialism.

## The American Hemisphere

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), xxix, 194.

As they projected their power into Latin America, the leaders of the United States cited one main reason to justify their involvement in the area. Starting with the simple matter of geography, U.S. officials identified the United States as an American nation that played a natural role in the Western Hemisphere. Not only did they characterize the United States as a nation of the Atlantic and a nation of the Pacific, but U.S. officials also extended their view southward to identify the United States as a nation of the Americas.<sup>5</sup>

During the early nineteenth century, one of the most influential leaders of the United States presented the basic logic. In December 1813, the prominent statesman Thomas Jefferson explained that the United States as well as the remaining colonies in the Americas all occupied a special position in the world. “America has a hemisphere to itself,” Jefferson noted. Indeed, Jefferson found that the people of the Americas all made their home in a separate and distinct “American hemisphere.”<sup>6</sup>

In the following years, U.S. officials employed similar ideas to define their place in the hemisphere. As the remaining American colonies began to gain their independence, U.S. officials increasingly spoke about the newly independent Latin American countries as their fellow American neighbors. For example, the Secretary of State William H. Seward advised a U.S. diplomat in November 1861 to speak about the American nations as countries that pursued similar interests in the same neighborhood. Today, “the several

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5 For the background, see Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954).

6 Thomas Jefferson to Baron de Humboldt, December 6, 1813, in H. A. Washington, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Being His Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private* (Washington, DC: Taylor & Maury, 1854), 6:268.

states founded on the American continent have common interests arising out of their neighborhood to each other,” Seward explained.<sup>7</sup>

For the remainder of U.S. history, U.S. officials employed similar notions. When the U.S. President-elect Herbert Hoover toured Latin America in November 1928, he seized on the idea of an American neighborhood to insist that the leaders of the United States wanted to maintain neighborly relations with the leaders of Latin America. “We have a desire to maintain not only the cordial relations of governments with each other, but the relations of good neighbors,” Hoover explained.<sup>8</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration spoke about the region in similar ways. For example, the Secretary of State Colin Powell informed a congressional committee in March 2002 that the nations of the Americas all resided in the same neighborhood. The nations of Latin America remain “in our part of the world, in our neighborhood, in our back yard,” Powell explained. At times, Powell also suggested that the American nations all shared a common home in the hemisphere. “This is our home,” Powell remarked.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout Washington, additional officials also spoke about the hemisphere as the home of the United States. For example, the State Department official Roger F.

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7 “Mr. Seward to Mr. Robinson,” November 12, 1861, in U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress*, 37th Cong., 2nd sess., December 3, 1861, 1:415.

8 “Text of Hoover's Neighborly Talks,” *New York Times*, November 27, 1928. Also see Herbert Hoover, “Election and President-Elect,” in *The Cabinet and the Presidency, 1920-1933*, vol. 2 of *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), 210-215. “Generally the theme stressed a 'good neighbor,’” Hoover explained (214).

9 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies for 2003*, Part 7, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 2002, 27; Colin L. Powell, “Remarks at the Swearing in of Roger Francisco Noriega as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs,” September 9, 2003, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2003/23915.htm>.

Noriega informed a congressional committee in April 2005 that the United States made its home in the hemisphere. “The Western Hemisphere is our home,” Noriega explained. “By virtue of geography, history, culture, demographics, and economics, the United States is linked to our Hemispheric partners in ways other countries cannot match.”<sup>10</sup>

Periodically, U.S. officials also insisted that the United States shared a special relationship with its neighbors in the hemisphere. As they emphasized the close links that tied together the United States and Latin America, U.S. officials described the nations of the Americas as members of a common community. For example, President Bush stated in March 2007 that the growing ties among people, businesses, and institutions made the hemisphere resemble a community of nations. Today, “our two continents are becoming more than neighbors united by the accident of geography; we’re becoming a community linked by common values and shared interests in the close bonds of family and friendship,” Bush remarked.<sup>11</sup>

Not long after Bush issued his remarks, the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice articulated the same idea. In October 2007, Rice portrayed the American nations as members of an American community. “We in the United States have always thought of ourselves as one part of a larger Pan-American Community,” Rice stated. Although she conceded that the leaders of the United States have “not always treated the states of Latin

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10 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on International Relations, *China's Influence in the Western Hemisphere*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., April 6, 2005, 13.

11 George W. Bush, “Remarks to the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Legislative Conference,” March 5, 2007, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2007*, Book I – January to June 30, 2007 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2011), 231.

America with respect and with a sense of equality,” Rice insisted that U.S. officials viewed themselves as common participants in a broader community project.<sup>12</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office in January 2009, U.S. officials continued to employ variations on the same basic idea. In May 2009, for example, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton argued that the American nations shared a common American identity. “We believe that we are all of the Americas,” Clinton remarked. After all, “we are linked by history, geography, economics, culture, family roots, family ties, and a common future.”<sup>13</sup>

The following year, the State Department official Arturo Valenzuela provided more emphasis. The leaders of the American nations share “the power of a shared vision: a vision of an Inter-American community,” Valenzuela stated.<sup>14</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States insisted that the American nations shared a very special connection. While they employed many different variations of their argument, U.S. officials typically asserted that the American nations all shared a common home in an American neighborhood. With their argument, U.S. officials insisted that the United States played a natural role in the hemisphere as the leader of an American community of nations.

## The American System

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12 Condoleezza Rice, “Remarks at the Organization of American States, Hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations,” October 9, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2007/10/93377.htm>.

13 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks at the 39th Washington Conference of the Council of the Americas,” May 13, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/05/123442.htm>.

14 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *U.S. Policy Toward the Americas in 2010 and Beyond*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., March 10, 2010, 17.

Of course, the leaders of the United States also pursued a much more ambitious agenda for the hemisphere. At the same time that they described the United States as a member of a much larger American community, U.S. officials also worked to position the United States as the most dominant power in the hemisphere. Indeed, U.S. officials sought to exert their control over the hemisphere.

Early in the nineteenth century, the leaders of the United States first began to outline their imperial ambitions. In May 1820, the U.S. official Henry Clay provided the guiding vision. “It is in our power to create a system of which we shall be the centre, and in which all South America will act with us,” Clay explained. Sensing an opportunity to bring the newly independent nations under the influence of the United States, Clay called on his colleagues to construct a new system of hemispheric order. Today, “let us become real and true Americans, and place ourselves at the head of the American system,” Clay declared.<sup>15</sup>

Not long after Clay introduced his vision, officials in Washington then began working to make the vision into the reality. On December 2, 1823, the U.S. President James Monroe made one of the first major moves by warning the leaders of Europe to refrain from extending their system of imperial rule to any additional portions of the Western Hemisphere. The leaders of the United States “consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere, as dangerous to our peace and

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15 U.S. Congress, *Annals of the Congress of the United States*, 16th Cong., 1st sess., December 16, 1819 to May 15, 1820, 2226, 2228. For more discussion, see Margaret Ruth Morley, “The Edge of Empire: Henry Clay’s American System and the Formulation of American Foreign Policy, 1810-1833” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1972).



safety,” Monroe proclaimed. With his statement, Monroe marked the Western Hemisphere as a special area of interest for the United States.<sup>16</sup>

For the rest of the nineteenth century, U.S. officials also provided further clarification of their intentions. As they began constructing their American system, they often cited what they called “the Monroe Doctrine” to insist that they had the right to intervene in hemispheric affairs to create a solely American hemisphere. With the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine, “America shall be wholly American,” the State Department explained in 1870.<sup>17</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, U.S. officials even succeeded in their efforts. Although they continued to face a series of challenges from the European powers as well as Latin American nationalists, U.S. officials successfully positioned the United States as the dominant power in the hemisphere. The United States has emerged as the “master of the situation,” the Secretary of State Richard Olney declared in July 1895. In hemispheric affairs, the United States has become “practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers.”<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the twentieth century, U.S. officials only recognized the same basic reality. Whenever they considered their plans for the hemisphere, U.S. officials found that

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16 U.S. Congress, *Annals of the Congress of the United States*, 18th Cong., 1st sess., December 1, 1823 to May 27, 1824, 22.

17 “Report from the Department of State in relation to the condition of the commercial relations between the United States and the Spanish-American states; transmitted to the Senate in obedience to a resolution,” July 14, 1870, in U.S. Congress, House, *Executive Documents Printed by Order of the House of Representatives, 1870-'71*, 41st Cong., 3rd sess., 1871, 257. For more discussion of the Monroe Doctrine, see Walter LaFeber, “The Evolution of the Monroe Doctrine from Monroe to Reagan,” in *Redefining the Past: Essays in Diplomatic History in Honor of William Appleman Williams*, ed. Lloyd C. Gardner (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1986), 121-141.

18 “Mr. Olney to Mr. Bayard,” July 20, 1895, in U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States with the Annual Message of the President, Transmitted to Congress December 2, 1895* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1896): 1:558.

they could largely impose their will on the hemisphere. The United States has obtained “hegemony in the inter-American system,” a study group organized by the Nixon administration reported in July 1969.<sup>19</sup>

Even when they faced resistance to their system of hemispheric order, such as the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the many revolutionary movements in Central America during the 1980s, U.S. officials largely agreed that the United States maintained a position of overwhelming dominance in the hemisphere. “The fact is that the Western Hemisphere is the sphere of influence of the United States,” the C.I.A. official Robert Gates asserted in December 1984.<sup>20</sup>

Sharing the same view, the Bush administration began the twenty-first century by working to maintain a sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere. Although administration officials refrained from publicly citing the Monroe Doctrine, which had always caused considerable controversy throughout Latin America, they made it clear that they intended to follow the spirit of the doctrine to keep the United States positioned at the head of the American system.<sup>21</sup>

During the Bush administration's first term in office, the State Department official Roger F. Noriega often hinted at the administration's intentions by pointing to its active

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19 “Study Prepared in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 15,” July 5, 1969, in U.S. Department of State, *Documents on American Republics, 1969-1972*, vol. E-10 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), Document 4.

20 Deputy Director for Intelligence Robert M. Gates to Director of Central Intelligence William J. Casey, “Nicaragua,” December 14, 1984, Document 3, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 210, National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, DC. Available online at <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB210/>. For more discussion of the revolutions in Central America, including the U.S. response, see Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993).

21 For more discussion, see William M. LeoGrande, “A Poverty of Imagination: George W. Bush's Policy in Latin America,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39, no. 2 (May 2007): 355-385

involvement in the area. “U.S. leadership is indeed at work in the region,” Noriega commented during a speech in September 2004. “We are acting creatively and vigorously – engaging bilaterally and operating multilaterally – to forge a comprehensive policy and, then, to carry it out alongside our neighbors.”<sup>22</sup>

During the Bush administration's second term in office, the State Department official Thomas Shannon provided further clarification. In September 2006, Shannon explained that the administration had adopted “a hemispheric approach” with the goal of holding together the American system. “We have to maintain a pan American approach to our policy because without that South America in particular, parts of South America, really run the risk of becoming Pluto, of kind of floating off to the far end of the universe and eventually being declared not a planet,” Shannon explained. In other words, Shannon indicated that the Bush administration intended to prevent the nations of Latin America from escaping from their orbit around the United States. “We have to do everything possible to not allow that to happen, to not allow that break to occur,” he commented.<sup>23</sup>

Two years later, Shannon then provided additional confirmation of the administration's strategy. In June 2008, Shannon explained that the administration had applied “a diplomacy of integration and union” to the hemisphere to maintain a system of hemispheric order. “We have to be there all the time,” he added. “We cannot afford to take a time out. We cannot afford to step aside for a moment.”<sup>24</sup>

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22 Roger F. Noriega, “Remarks at the Miami Herald Americas Conference,” September 30, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/36711.htm>.

23 Thomas A. Shannon, “Why The Americas Matter,” September 14, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2006/72860.htm>.

24 Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., “U.S. Diplomacy in the Americas,” June 10, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2008/q2/106022.htm>.

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials only applied the same basic principles to the region. Although they continued to refrain from publicly citing the Monroe Doctrine to justify their actions, they continually projected their power into the region to hold together the American system. It remains “the simple truth that the United States has vital interests in the Western Hemisphere and needs to engage,” the State Department official Arturo Valenzuela explained.<sup>25</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States committed themselves to fulfilling one basic goal in the hemisphere. Following the formative vision of Henry Clay and the imperial interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, U.S. officials worked to keep a peripheral Latin America bound to a dominant United States in an integrated American system. In other words, U.S. officials worked to uphold a hemispheric structure of imperialism.

#### Actively Pursuing Partners

As the leaders of the United States worked to uphold their system of hemispheric order, they also added another dimension to their strategy. Rather than relying solely on the power of the United States to hold together the American system, U.S. officials partnered with Latin American countries to gain additional leverage over the hemisphere. By working closely with a few key Latin American partners, U.S. officials found that they could more effectively enforce their hemispheric structure of imperialism.

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<sup>25</sup> Arturo Valenzuela, “U.S. Foreign Policy in the Obama Era,” October 9, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2010/149345.htm>. For more discussion, see *Latin American Perspectives* 178, no. 4 (July 2011).

During the late 1960s, officials in the Nixon administration outlined the basic approach. In one of their internal papers, administration officials explained that they looked for partners to help them maintain their dominance over Latin America. “In recent years our policy has been a mixture of tendencies toward hegemony and partnership, with emphasis varying depending upon the circumstances and setting of each particular decision,” administration officials explained.<sup>26</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration took a similar approach. As they worked to keep Latin America in its orbit around the United States, administration officials built close relationships with a number of Latin American governments. “I think the United States has a policy in the region that is pretty aggressive in terms of building coalitions, of building alliances,” the State Department official Thomas Shannon remarked in May 2006. Certainly, “we are looking for willing partners,” he added. “And we think there are a lot of them in the region.”<sup>27</sup>

During the remainder of the Bush administration’s time in office, Shannon also provided additional details about the administration’s approach. In the first place, Shannon explained that administration officials would willingly partner with any government in the hemisphere. Basically, “what we’re going focus on is our willingness to work with anybody who wants to work with us,” Shannon explained. At the same time, Shannon specified that administration officials hoped to work with a few key “strategic partners.” The administration “has worked very very hard to identify key countries in the

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26 “Analytical Summary Prepared by the NSC Interdepartmental Group for Latin America, Washington,” undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Documents on American Republics, 1969-1972*, vol. E-10 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), Document 5.

27 Thomas A. Shannon, “Transformational Diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere,” May 3, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2006/q2/69285.htm>.

region that are prepared to work with us,” he explained. “Countries like Brazil, countries like Mexico, Chile, Canada, Colombia, Peru, Argentina to the extent possible.” In short, Shannon made it clear that the Bush administration sought strategic allies.<sup>28</sup>

Under the subsequent Obama administration, U.S. officials maintained the same approach. Hoping to strengthen their hold over the area, administration officials aggressively courted a few key strategic partners. The administration will work through its “successful partnerships – such as those with Colombia and Mexico,” the State Department official Arturo Valenzuela confirmed.<sup>29</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States found it beneficial to form close partnerships with a number of Latin American governments. Since they could gain additional advantages in the region by partnering with some of the region's most influential countries, U.S. officials sought to form coalitions and alliances with a few key Latin American allies. As a result, U.S. officials began their approach to Latin America by displaying a mixture of tendencies toward hegemony and partnership.

#### Colombia: A Well-Placed Country

As they searched for strategic partners, the leaders of the United States also came to focus their attention on one particular country. Among the many countries that they favored in Latin America, U.S. officials often turned to Colombia. Since the Colombian

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28 Thomas Shannon, “Remarks at the Council of Americas,” December 12, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2006/q4/77870.htm>; Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., “U.S. Diplomacy in the Americas,” June 10, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2008/q2/106022.htm>.

29 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Policy Toward the Americas in 2010 and Beyond*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., March 10, 2010, 21.

government regularly displayed a special willingness to follow the lead of the United States in hemispheric affairs, U.S. officials found that the Colombian government provided them with some of the greatest advantages in the hemisphere. Consequently, U.S. officials attributed special importance to Colombia.<sup>30</sup>

Of course, U.S. officials have not always maintained the best relations with the Colombian government. During the opening decade of the twentieth century, for example, the administration of Theodore Roosevelt significantly strained relations with the Colombian government by breaking the Isthmus of Panama away from Colombia and creating the new country of Panama to build a new canal through the region. "I took the Isthmus," Roosevelt later acknowledged, brushing off the debate over "whether or not I acted properly in taking the canal."<sup>31</sup>

Through their actions, the leaders of the United States also caused a major rupture in their relations with the Colombian government. The general feeling in the country has grown "very bitter" and has turned "against us as a nation," the U.S. diplomat Elliott Northcott observed a few years after the episode.<sup>32</sup>

For decades, relations remained tense. Only after U.S. officials agreed to pay the Colombian government a \$25 million indemnity in 1921 did they finally begin to move past the episode.<sup>33</sup>

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30 For the background, see Stephen J. Randall, *Colombia and the United States: Hegemony and Interdependence* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1992).

31 Theodore Roosevelt, "Charter Day Address," *University of California Chronicle* 13, no. 2 (April 1911): 139.

32 "Minister Northcott to the Secretary of State," October 1, 1909, in U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress, December 6, 1910* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1915), 400.

33 "Treaty between the United States and Colombia, Signed at Bogotá April 6, 1914, as Amended, and Protocol of Exchange of Ratifications, March 1, 1922," in U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1922* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing

After the end of World War II, a number of U.S. officials observed that they had finally begun to recover from the incident. For example, officials at the State Department pointed to an improvement in bilateral relations. “There is still some resentment over the part the US played in the events leading up to the separation of Panama from Colombia, but the feeling has almost ceased to be a factor of concern in US-Colombian relations,” the officials reported. In addition, U.S. intelligence analysts recognized the same development. “In the first two decades of the twentieth century, relations between Colombia and the United States were strained because Colombia attributed the loss of Panama to US intervention, but ties have been cemented in the past generation,” the analysts observed. In short, U.S. officials entered the postwar period with a much better relationship with the Colombian government.<sup>34</sup>

In the following decades, U.S. officials also found that relations improved in many ways. Although they could not always get their way with the Colombian government, they typically found that they could rely on their Colombian counterparts to act on their behalf in the hemisphere. “More than most LA countries, Colombia has approached the whole question of a relationship with US with understanding and moderation,” the U.S. diplomats in Colombia reported in March 1975. “Thus while Colombia shares the Latin American fear of the interventionist tendencies of our power, it

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Office, 1938), 1:976-979.

34 “Department of State Policy Statement,” May 8, 1950, in U.S. Department of State, *The United Nations; The Western Hemisphere*, vol. 2 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 818; “National Intelligence Estimate,” NIE 88-56, April 10, 1956, in U.S. Department of State, *American Republics: Central and South America*, vol. 7 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 912.



has also been more disposed than most to appreciate the benefit side, to be cooperative and to 'help US out.'”<sup>35</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials even began to describe the Colombian government as their closest partner in the hemisphere. For example, the State Department official R. Nicholas Burns stated in July 2005 that “the United States has no closer partner in Latin America than Colombia.” Indeed, Burns identified Colombia as the closest U.S. ally in the hemisphere. “We have an excellent relationship,” he insisted.<sup>36</sup>

Two years later, the State Department official Anne W. Patterson made a similar point. Speaking before a congressional committee, Patterson identified the Colombian government as one of the closest partners of the United States in the world. The Colombian government has become “one of our closest partners in either Hemisphere,” Patterson explained.<sup>37</sup>

During the Bush administration's final year in office, a number of officials also outlined some of the specific reasons why they attributed so much importance to the country. In March 2008, the U.S. military official James G. Stavridis explained that the location of the country provided the United States with many strategic advantages. “Colombia has access to the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans,” Stavridis explained. It also “shares a border with Panama that forms a natural land bridge to the United States.”<sup>38</sup>

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35 “Telegram 2128 From the Embassy in Colombia to the Department of State,” March 5, 1975, in U.S. Department of State, *Documents on South America, 1973-1976*, vol. E-11, Part 2 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2015), 710, 710-711.

36 R. Nicholas Burns, “Remarks to the Press at U.S. Embassy Bogota,” July 27, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/us/rm/2005/50452.htm>.

37 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S.-Colombia Relations*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., April 24, 2007, 33.

38 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2009*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., Part 1, February 6, 26, 28; March 4, 5, 6, 11, 2008, 515.

A few months later, the Director of Policy Planning David Gordon similarly highlighted the importance of the country's location. Colombia is “well-placed to exploit many global and regional trends,” Gordon explained. After all, it is one of “the best positioned countries in South America to take advantage of developments in the world economy.” Ultimately, Colombia could function as one of the strongest “political and economic anchors in the region.”<sup>39</sup>

In fact, the leaders of the United States hoped to transform Colombia into one of the most powerful anchors in the region. As the U.S. diplomats in Colombia explained in one of their internal reports, they intended to “maintain U.S. influence needed to lock the GOC in as a strategic partner supporting U.S. interests in Latin America.”<sup>40</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, the diplomats continued to pursue the same goal. “In the long-term, we will focus on building a strategic partnership with Colombia, and develop key Colombian military capabilities that can support U.S. national security objectives worldwide,” the diplomats explained.<sup>41</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States believed that Colombia could provide them with many strategic advantages. Even after they had stripped the strategically located Isthmus of Panama away from Colombia at the start of the twentieth century, U.S. officials remained convinced that Colombia could still help them acquire additional

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39 Embassy Bogotá, “U.S.-COLOMBIA LAUNCHES STRATEGIC POLICY DIALOGUE ON REGIONAL, GLOBAL ISSUES,” 08BOGOTA2855, August 4, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08BOGOTA2855.html>; Embassy Bogotá, “S/P DIRECTOR GORDON DISCUSSES COLOMBIA'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND CHALLENGES,” 08BOGOTA2892, August 6, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08BOGOTA2892.html>.

40 Embassy Bogotá, “PLAN COLOMBIA: NATIONALIZATION OF FMF/DOD FUNDING,” 08BOGOTA1167, March 28, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/03/08BOGOTA1167.html>.

41 Embassy Bogotá, “SCENESETTER FOR FEBRUARY 16-18 VISIT OF CHAIRWOMAN NITA M. LOWEY TO CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA,” 09BOGOTA413, February 9, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09BOGOTA413.html>.

leverage over the broader region and perhaps even provide them with additional influence throughout the rest of the world. As a result, U.S. officials viewed the country as one of the keys to their plans for Latin America.

## Plan Colombia

In recent years, the leaders of the United States also played a powerful role in Colombia. As they worked to transform the country into one of their closest strategic partners, U.S. officials also worked closely with the Colombian government to implement a major military program in the country called Plan Colombia. In the time since they first implemented Plan Colombia during the final years of the twentieth century, U.S. officials played a direct role in shaping the fate of the country.<sup>42</sup>

When the Clinton administration began working with the Colombian government to create Plan Colombia during the late 1990s, U.S. officials outlined the basic reasons for the program. In November 1999, for example, the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Curtis Warren Kamman touched upon many of the key issues in a speech titled “Colombia: What are we Getting Into?” Starting with some basic context, Kamman explained that a major internal conflict had torn apart the country for decades. As he noted, leftist revolutionary groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) had spent decades struggling against the Colombian government. “The guerilla groups in effect are arguing that Colombia has

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<sup>42</sup> For more discussion, see Grace Livingstone, *Inside Colombia: Drugs, Democracy and War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

had an unjust society, has had insufficient economic development especially in rural areas,” Kamman explained. After making his point, Kamman then noted that both the Colombian government and right-wing paramilitary groups in the country wanted to defeat the country's leftist revolutionaries. “If guerrillas have a political agenda, and they say they do, and if paramilitaries are reaction against the tactics of guerrillas, then obviously what the Government would like to do is to bring this violence to an end either by defeating guerrillas militarily or through a negotiated agreement,” Kamman explained. In sum, Kamman described a major internal conflict in which the Colombian government and the country’s right-wing paramilitary groups constantly battled with the country’s leftist revolutionaries.<sup>43</sup>

After outlining the core features of the conflict, Kamman then called attention to another one of its main aspects. Turning to the issue of drugs, Kamman explained that the country's illicit drug trade fueled much of the fighting. “I think that narcotics is the key,” he remarked. Providing more details, Kamman specified that the country's leftist revolutionaries generated much of their income from the country's illicit drug trade. Although he made sure to distinguish the country's leftist revolutionaries from the country's drug traffickers, Kamman insisted that groups such as the FARC gained significant financial advantages by working with the country's drug traffickers.<sup>44</sup>

After making the connection between the internal conflict and the country's illicit drug trade, Kamman then pointed to the main idea behind Plan Colombia. Rather “than simply attack the guerrillas who are well dug in the isolated areas, you go after their

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43 Curtis Warren Kamman, “Colombia: What are we Getting Into?” November 1, 1999, <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwscwko.shtml>.

44 Ibid.

sources of income,” Kamman explained. Indeed, Kamman suggested that the Colombian government could significantly weaken the country's leftist revolutionaries by going after the country's drug traffickers. “So, the Colombian Government has now come to the realization that the root of all evil is drugs,” he remarked.<sup>45</sup>

Back in Washington, officials in the Clinton administration reached the same conclusion. Convinced that the leftist revolutionaries in Colombia raised much of their funds from the drug trade, administration officials wanted the Colombian government to wage a major military campaign against the country's drug traffickers. “What we are attempting to do here is to staunch the effects of high finance by guerillas in this area,” the State Department Peter Romero explained.<sup>46</sup>

With support from the U.S. Congress, the Clinton administration then formally implemented Plan Colombia. Providing the Colombian government with unprecedented new amounts of military funding and military assistance, the Clinton administration empowered the Colombian government to wage a major new military campaign against the country's drug traffickers. “This is not Vietnam; neither is it Yankee imperialism,” President Clinton insisted. Currently, “a majority of our assistance is for increasing the capacity of the Colombia people to fight the drug war.”<sup>47</sup>

At the time the Clinton administration initiated the program, U.S. officials also recognized the likely consequences. By helping the Colombian government wage a major

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45 Ibid.

46 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *United States Support for Counter-Narcotics Activities in the Andean Ridge and Neighboring Countries and the Impact of Narcotrafficking on the Stability of the Region*, 106th Cong., 2nd sess., April 4, 2000, 43.

47 William J. Clinton, “The President's News Conference With President Andres Pastrana of Colombia in Cartagena,” August 30, 2000, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 2000-2001*, Book II – June 27 to October 11, 2000 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 1732-1733, 1734.

internal war against the country's drug traffickers, they understood that violence in the country would very likely increase. "We have to acknowledge the potential for more terrorism and violence in the short term as drug traffickers, guerrillas and paramilitaries begin to feel the pressure from Plan Colombia," the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne Patterson acknowledged.<sup>48</sup>

In fact, Patterson accurately predicted the consequences of the program. Shortly after the Bush administration entered office, Patterson observed that the violence in the country had rapidly escalated. "An estimated 3,000 Colombians per month lose their lives from the violence," she explained. "A far greater number, perhaps as many as two million, have had to leave their homes, fleeing the violence."<sup>49</sup>

In spite of the consequences, the Bush administration decided to expand the military operations. No longer willing to limit the war to the country's drug traffickers, the Bush administration began helping the Colombian government wage "a unified campaign" that targeted both the country's drug traffickers and its leftist revolutionaries.<sup>50</sup>

As the Bush administration made its move, the State Department official Lino Gutierrez provided the basic justification for the change in strategy. "Although widely described as a counternarcotics program, 'Plan Colombia' was a comprehensive effort by

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48 Anne Patterson, "Remarks by Ambassador Anne Patterson at the Overseas Security Advisory Council's 15th annual briefing," November 1, 2000, <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwsa002.shtml>.

49 Anne Patterson, "Remarks by Ambassador Anne W. Patterson at the CSIS Conference," October 8, 2002, <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwsa034.shtml>. For the official estimate of the number of deaths due to the conflict, see Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, *¡Basta Ya! Colombia: Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad*, July 2013. Available online at <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/micrositios/informeGeneral/descargas.html>. According to the chart on page 32, the violence peaked around 2002 with more than 15,000 deaths for the year.

50 For the administration's formal request to Congress to expand the targets of Plan Colombia, see U.S. Congress, House, *Requests for Emergency FY 2002 Supplemental Appropriations*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., H. Doc. 107-195, April 9, 2002. For Congress's approval of the request, see *2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act for Further Recovery From and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States*, Public Law 107-206, 107th Cong., August 2, 2002.

Colombia to deal in a holistic way with the country's longstanding, mutually reinforcing problems," Gutierrez remarked. With his remarks, Gutierrez indicated that U.S. officials had always implemented Plan Colombia with the intention of helping the Colombian government confront the country's leftist revolutionaries.<sup>51</sup>

Taking the war directly to the country's leftist revolutionaries, the Bush administration also empowered the Colombian government to go after the most influential leftist group in the country. While the Bush administration certainly continued working with the Colombian government to target the country's drug traffickers, it began helping the Colombian government initiate a major new military campaign against the FARC. With U.S. assistance, the Colombian military has begun "to hit the FARC hard," the State Department official Roger F. Noriega explained in June 2004.<sup>52</sup>

Later in 2004, additional officials provided more details about the new military campaign. For example, the U.S. official John F. Maisto explained that the Colombian military had begun directly targeting the FARC in one the largest military campaigns in the country's history. The Colombian military has implemented "the country's largest ever offensive, in south-central Colombia, against FARC strongholds," Maisto explained.<sup>53</sup>

At the time, the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William B. Wood provided a similar explanation. Against the FARC, Colombian officials have begun "a maximum,

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51 Lino Gutierrez, "Peace and Security in Colombia," June 20, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/11297.htm>.

52 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Reform, *The War Against Drugs and Thugs: A Status Report on Plan Colombia Successes and Remaining Challenges*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., June 17, 2004, 97.

53 John F. Maisto, "Democracy, Security, and Human Rights: Colombia's Challenge," September 18, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/37102.htm>.

head-to-head effort,” Wood explained. Currently, “some 22,000 troops are engaged in fierce fighting to re-take areas that have been the fortress of the FARC for decades.”<sup>54</sup>

At the end of the year, the U.S. diplomats in Colombia made a comparable assessment. Colombian “security forces have initiated a nation-wide, multi-phased campaign to capture or kill key FARC leaders, moved against the FARC in its rural strongholds, and reestablished a presence in the country's 1,098 municipalities,” the diplomats explained. With the new campaign, the Colombian government intends to “re-establish control over national territory and cripple the FARC.”<sup>55</sup>

Not long after the Colombian government initiated its military offensive, U.S. officials also began working closely with their Colombian counterparts to open a major new phase of the campaign. Since the Colombian government had quickly succeeded in chasing the FARC out of its strongholds, U.S. officials began helping the Colombian government target members of the FARC in a war of attrition. “This year, the phase will focus on grinding down the FARC with a war of attrition,” the U.S. diplomats in Colombia reported. Indeed, U.S. officials began helping the Colombian military initiate a slow and brutal war of attrition against the FARC. The fighting in Colombia has quickly turned into “a war of attrition in which the most accessible camps and supplies caches already have been neutralized,” the diplomats explained.<sup>56</sup>

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54 William B. Wood, “U.S. Support for Colombia's National Strategy for Defense and Democratic Security,” September 20, 2004, <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwsw42.shtml>.

55 Embassy Bogotá, “ANDEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE COLOMBIA SCENESETTER,” 04BOGOTA11548, November 9, 2004, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2004/11/04BOGOTA11548.html>.

56 Embassy Bogotá, “SCENESETTER FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF GENERAL MYERS,” 05BOGOTA3217, April 7, 2005, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/04/05BOGOTA3217.html>; Embassy Bogotá, “PLAN PATRIOTA PHASE 2B UPDATE,” 05BOGOTA5207, May 31, 2005, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/05/05BOGOTA5207.html>.



Moreover, U.S. officials confirmed that U.S. military forces played a central role in the operations. When the Colombian military first began to implement its military offensive against the FARC, the U.S. General James T. Hill informed a congressional committee that hundreds of U.S. military forces provided training and guidance for the Colombian military. “Currently, U.S. military forces are conducting deployments in fourteen different locations in Colombia providing training to nine major Colombian military units,” Hill explained. “Additionally, Planning Assistance Teams are assisting the Colombian army's mobile brigades in operational planning.” Indeed, Hill indicated that the U.S. military played a direct role in running the war. While the Colombian military may have done the fighting, “we are out there with them, helping them in a very meaningful way with advice, logistics and operational sustainment,” Hill explained. “This is not an easy military problem, and we’re out there doing it.”<sup>57</sup>

Over the course of the fighting, U.S. officials also assured their Colombian allies that they intended to remain directly involved in the fight. For example, the State Department official Nicholas Burns privately assured the Colombian President Álvaro Uribe that the Bush administration remained “committed to providing Colombia with technological help to fight the FARC.” To emphasize his point, Burns noted that the administration wanted to strengthen “our security ties through joint exercises, doctrine, training and exchanges.”<sup>58</sup>

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57 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Reform, *The War Against Drugs and Thugs: A Status Report on Plan Colombia Successes and Remaining Challenges*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., June 17, 2004, 147, 164-165, 165.

58 Embassy Bogotá, “U/S BURNS' OCTOBER 25 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT URIBE,” 06BOGOTA10317, November 7, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06BOGOTA10317.html>.

To demonstrate their sincerity, U.S. officials also began providing the Colombian military with a major new form of military assistance. Starting in July 2006, U.S. officials began sending a number of surveillance drones into the country. The U.S. diplomats in Colombia, who confirmed the delivery of the “unmanned aerial vehicles” (UAVs) in one of their internal reports, noted that the drones provided the Colombian military with significant advantages. “Since their arrival in July, a test package of UAVs has provided valuable, real-time aerial video reconnaissance and surveillance to live COLMIL operations,” the U.S. diplomats reported. Providing more details, the diplomats specified that the drones enabled the Colombian military to quickly kill its targets. “When a UAV ‘pilot’ flew by chance over a truck unloading FARC fighters, and the COLAF happened to have a bomber available nearby, an aerial assault was launched within 30 minutes,” the diplomats explained. “Similarly, when a UAV caught two vehicles being loaded with coca, a helicopter gunship was quickly dispatched and destroyed them.”<sup>59</sup>

In early 2008, U.S. officials also played a direct role in one of the most dramatic operations of the war. During the early morning of March 1, 2008, officials from both the United States and Colombia worked together to assassinate the FARC leader Raúl Reyes. During the operation, the U.S. and Colombian officials killed Reyes by bombing a rebel camp in nearby Ecuador. A Colombian pilot “hit the camp using a U.S.-made bomb with a CIA-controlled brain,” the *Washington Post* confirmed. Despite the fact that the operation had violated international law by breaching the sovereignty of Ecuador, U.S. officials insisted that they had done the right thing. “Too many countries valued abstract

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<sup>59</sup> Embassy Bogotá, “UAVS -- ‘EYES IN THE SKY’ FOR COLMIL OPERATIONS,” 06BOGOTA11380, December 20, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/12/06BOGOTA11380.html>.

notions of sovereignty over Colombia's legitimate security needs,” the State Department official Christopher McMullen insisted.<sup>60</sup>

During the Bush administration's final months in office, many officials even began to celebrate their actions in Colombia. Although Plan Colombia had resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of Colombians, perhaps even surpassing one hundred thousand deaths since its implementation under the Clinton administration, a number of U.S. officials praised the program for delivering a major blow to the country's leftist revolutionaries. “Plan Colombia, in my humble opinion, has been a success by any criteria you wish to use and to measure,” the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William R. Brownfield reflected.<sup>61</sup>

Of course, some U.S. officials provided reasons to think otherwise. After the Obama administration entered office, the U.S. diplomats in Colombia reported that the extensive military operations had never actually brought peace to the country. “After rousing success against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2008, progress against the guerrilla organization has plateaued,” the diplomats reported. Currently, “there are few prospects for peace in the near term.” In addition, the diplomats found that ongoing military operations continued to follow many of the same patterns. Although they certainly praised the Colombian government for making “dazzling progress against the FARC in 2008,” the diplomats found that the Colombian military

60 Dana Priest, “Secret U.S. aid helps Colombia cripple rebels,” *Washington Post*, December 22, 2013; Embassy Bogotá, “U.S.-COLOMBIA LAUNCHES STRATEGIC POLICY DIALOGUE ON REGIONAL, GLOBAL ISSUES,” 08BOGOTA2855, August 4, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08BOGOTA2855.html>.

61 “U.S. Diplomacy in the Americas: A Conversation with the Diplomatic Corps,” December 5, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2008/q4/112956.htm>. For the official estimate of the number of deaths due to the conflict, see Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, *¡Basta Ya! Colombia: Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad*, July 2013. Available online at <http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/micrositios/informeGeneral/descargas.html>.

continued to wage the same kind of slow and brutal war of attrition. The Colombian military still “tries to grind them down in a slow war of attrition,” the diplomats explained.<sup>62</sup>

Back in Washington, administration officials shared the same basic understanding of the situation in Colombia. The war in Colombia “isn’t over,” the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explained in May 2010.<sup>63</sup>

Later in the year, Clinton also vowed to continue the fight. Ultimately, “the strong commitment to Colombia that Plan Colombia represented when my husband proposed and signed it, which was carried forward in the last administration, is embraced fully by President Obama and our Administration,” Clinton proclaimed.<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, officials in Washington decided to move ahead with the operations. Undeterred by the tremendous violence that Plan Colombia had unleashed in the country, they remained convinced that the Colombian government could defeat country's leftist revolutionaries and bring an end to the longstanding internal conflict. As a result, U.S. officials guaranteed that the country would remain at war.

## Human Rights Violations are Inevitable

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62 Embassy Bogotá, “SCENESETTER FOR ADMIRAL ROUGHEAD'S DEC 2-6 VISIT TO COLOMBIA,” 09BOGOTA3435, November 24, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09BOGOTA3435.html>.

63 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks At the 40th Washington Conference on the Americas,” May 12, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/05/141760.htm>.

64 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Joint Press Availability with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe,” June 9, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/06/142945.htm>.

With the implementation of Plan Colombia, U.S. officials also understood that their actions would have serious consequences for the people of Colombia. Since they knew perfectly well that the Colombian government had historically employed dirty tactics to battle the country's leftist revolutionaries, U.S. officials understood that their partners in the Colombian government would inflict many horrors on the people of Colombia. As much as they tried to portray the country's leftist revolutionaries as the main problem in the country, U.S. officials knew that the Colombian government would wage a dirty war.<sup>65</sup>

When the Clinton administration first began to make the case for Plan Colombia, the State Department official Thomas R. Pickering outlined the basic situation. Speaking to a congressional committee in October 1999, Pickering explained that Colombian security forces often worked with the country's right wing paramilitary groups to terrorize the country's domestic population. "Complicity by elements of Colombia's security forces with the right wing militia groups is and remains a serious problem," Pickering stated.<sup>66</sup>

The following month, the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Curtis Warren Kamman provided more details. When he delivered his speech in which he outlined the main reasons for Plan Colombia, Kamman explained that the country's right wing militia groups would often "rely on massacres" to prevent anyone in the country from sympathizing with the country's leftist revolutionaries. The right wing paramilitary groups "go into a small village sometimes with a list of people whom they believe have

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65 For more discussion, see John C. Dugas, "The Colombian Nightmare: Human Rights Abuses and the Contradictory Effects of U.S. Foreign Policy," in *When States Kill: Latin America, the U.S., and Technologies of Terror*, ed. Cecilia Menjívar and Néstor Rodríguez (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 227-251.

66 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Crisis in Colombia: U.S. Support for Peace Process and Anti-Drug Efforts*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., October 6, 1999, 35.

been sympathetic to the guerrillas, sometimes with no special list simply wanting to demonstrate to the villagers that they had been doing something that the paramilitaries consider to be supportive of the guerrillas,” Kamman explained. “And in these massacres, ten, twenty, forty, fifty people may be killed, all of them noncombatants, innocent civilians. A very ugly situation.” In short, Kamman explained that the right wing paramilitary groups waged a campaign of terror against the domestic population.<sup>67</sup>

In spite of their knowledge of the situation, including their familiarity with the direct link between the Colombian security forces and the paramilitary groups, U.S. officials still moved ahead with their plans. Although U.S. laws prohibited them from providing military funding to foreign military forces that violated human rights, officials in Washington decided to work their way around the laws and implement Plan Colombia. “I think we will waive human rights conditions indefinitely,” one U.S. diplomat commented.<sup>68</sup>

Through their actions, U.S. officials ensured that the Colombian government would continue to conduct a war that featured all of the same abuses. By waiving human rights conditions indefinitely and backing the Colombian government, U.S. officials effectively guaranteed that the abuses would continue. Many Colombians “continue to suffer abuses by state security forces or by terrorist groups acting in collusion with state security units,” the State Department official Marc Grossman confirmed in April 2002.<sup>69</sup>

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67 Curtis Warren Kamman, “Colombia: What are we Getting Into?” November 1, 1999, <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/wwwscwko.shtml>.

68 Human Rights Watch, *The “Sixth Division”: Military-paramilitary Ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia*, September 2001, 94. Available online at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2001/10/04/sixth-division/military-paramilitary-ties-and-us-policy-colombia>.

69 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Narcotics Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S.-Colombia Policy: What's Next?*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., April 24, 2002, 15.

In fact, U.S. officials knew perfectly well that Colombian officials sponsored the country's right wing terrorists. Although U.S. officials repeatedly insisted that the Colombian government intended to sever its ties to the country's paramilitary groups, they repeatedly watched Colombian officials extend their support to the country's paramilitary leaders. For example, U.S. officials saw Colombian officials openly celebrate the country's paramilitary leaders in the Congress of Colombia. "We have seen Salvatore Mancuso, Mr. Báez appear in the Congress of Colombia and receive applause," the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William B. Wood acknowledged in June 2005.<sup>70</sup>

During the final years of the Bush administration, the U.S. diplomats in Colombia reported that more direct evidence also linked Colombian officials to the country's paramilitary groups. In January 2007, the diplomats explained that many Colombian officials had signed a formal agreement to have the country's paramilitary groups police the country. "The politician signatories include members of several parties, some of whom are still in office," the diplomats reported. "At the time they signed, there were 4 Senators, 7 representatives, 2 governors, 4 mayors, and other elected or appointed local officials and Atlantic Coast political figures."<sup>71</sup>

In the following months, the diplomats also began receiving reports about one of the more horrific aspects of the collusion. As they met with some of their contacts in Colombia, the diplomats kept receiving warnings that the Colombian military was working with the country's paramilitary forces to murder innocent civilians. For example,

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70 William B. Wood, untitled speech, June 14, 2005. Available online at [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.item&news\\_id=132797](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.item&news_id=132797).

71 Embassy Bogotá, "POLITICIANS NAMED FOR ALLEGED TIES TO PARAMILITARIES; INDICTMENTS EXPECTED," 07BOGOTA408, January 19, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/01/07BOGOTA408.html>.

the diplomats heard from officials from the United Nations that the Colombian military kept using paramilitary groups “to offer jobs to young men with little or no family connections.” The young men are then killed and “presented by the military as enemies killed in combat.” During another meeting, the diplomats received a similar warning from a human rights lawyer in Colombia. The murders of innocent civilians “reflect a disturbing pattern in which soldiers kill civilians, usually poorly educated peasants, to inflate their 'kills' to earn leave, promotions, or other benefits,” the lawyer explained.<sup>72</sup>

In September 2008, the diplomats then provided their own direct confirmation of the same disturbing pattern. Investigators in Colombia are looking into “the deaths of 19 young men who disappeared from Soacha earlier this year and were later declared killed in combat by the military in northeast Colombia,” the diplomats explained. “The case is similar to an incident in Sucre last year in which a military unit used a demobilized paramilitary to recruit 11 unemployed youth to work on farms, only to later murder them and report their deaths as combat kills.”<sup>73</sup>

In another one of their reports, the diplomats provided some evidence to support their claims. In October 2008, the diplomats reported that an ex-soldier from the Colombian military had confessed to the military's involvement in the murders. The former soldier confessed that “he was paid by 14th Brigade officers to recruit (and

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72 Embassy Bogotá, “MAPP/OAS CONCERNED OVER ALLEGED EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS IN SUCRE,” 07BOGOTA7623, October 22, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/10/07BOGOTA7623.html>; Embassy Bogotá, “FISCALIA SPECIAL COMMISSION INVESTIGATING EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS,” 07BOGOTA8080, November 15, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/11/07BOGOTA8080.html>.

73 Embassy Bogotá, “UNHCHR INTERNAL REPORT ON EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS SHOWS RECENT DECLINE, BUT SERIOUS PROBLEMS REMAIN,” 08BOGOTA3625, September 29, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/09/08BOGOTA3625.html>.



murder) at least three individuals whom the Brigade later claimed were killed in combat,” the diplomats explained.<sup>74</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, the diplomats continued to report on the same trends in the country. For example, the diplomats reported in February 2009 that “some elements of the security forces continue to violate human rights, and the military has been accused of numerous extrajudicial killings of innocents.”<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, the diplomats soon received direction confirmation that the entire Colombian military engaged in the practice. As they explained in another one of their internal reports, a Colombian official had informed them that in recent years “the extrajudicial execution problem was widespread.” The practice “originated in the 4th Brigade in Medellin” and “later spread to other brigades and commands in the region.”<sup>76</sup>

With direct confirmation from Colombian officials, the diplomats then reached one basic conclusion about their experience with Plan Colombia. In a major review of the program, the diplomats concluded that it was only logical to expect that the Colombian government would commit human rights abuses. Rather than reconsidering their commitment to Plan Colombia, the diplomats found that they could only accept the consequences. “Human rights violations from the bad guys and Government are inevitable,” they reported.<sup>77</sup>

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74 Embassy Bogotá, “SPECIAL PROSECUTOR’S TEAM TO INVESTIGATE SOACHA DEATHS,” 08BOGOTA3686, October 7, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08BOGOTA3686.html>.

75 Embassy Bogotá, “SCENESETTER FOR FEBRUARY 18-22 CAPSTONE VISIT TO COLOMBIA,” 09BOGOTA435, February 11, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09BOGOTA435.html>.

76 Embassy Bogotá, “MILITARY’S HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVES MEET RESISTANCE,” 09BOGOTA542, February 20, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09BOGOTA542.html>.

77 Embassy Bogotá, “LESSONS LEARNED FROM PLAN COLOMBIA,” 09BOGOTA1832, June 8, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/06/09BOGOTA1832.html>.

In fact, the leaders of the United States knew all along that the Colombian government would wage a dirty war. Although they repeatedly claimed to support human rights in Colombia, U.S. officials recognized that the Colombian government played a central role in perpetuating some of the worst human rights violations imaginable. Consequently, U.S. officials knowingly empowered one of the worst violators of human rights in the world.

#### Mexico: A Uniquely Important Neighbor

At the same time, U.S. officials did not focus all of their attention on Colombia. Since they often encountered complications to their plans for the country, U.S. officials sought other partners in the region.

Turning their attention elsewhere, U.S. officials sought assistance from Mexico. While they certainly continued to maintain much of their focus on Colombia, U.S. officials found that they could gain additional leverage over the region by working with the Mexican government. Indeed, U.S. officials viewed Mexico as another one of the keys to keeping the United States positioned at the head of the American system.<sup>78</sup>

Of course, U.S. officials have not always maintained the best relations with the Mexican government. Since the people of Mexico first obtained their independence from Spain in 1821, U.S. officials have largely treated the country as an appendage of the United States. During the late 1840s, for instance, the administration of James K. Polk

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<sup>78</sup> For the background, see the following sources: Josefina Zoraida Vázquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985); W. Dirk Raat, *Mexico and the United States: Ambivalent Vistas* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1992).

simply seized control of the northern half of the country in the Mexican-American War. In the end, “it is of the greatest importance to the United States to extend their boundaries over Lower California, as well as New Mexico and Upper California,” administration officials explained.<sup>79</sup>

In the following century, U.S. officials continued to play an imperial role in Mexico. From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, U.S. officials worked closely with the Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz to gain a powerful hold over the Mexican economy. During the early twentieth century, U.S. officials even intervened in the Mexican Revolution to shape the outcome of the revolution. Through their actions, they played a direct role in guiding the fate of the country.

As they projected their power into Mexico, U.S. officials also expected to maintain good relations with the Mexican government. Just as they had done throughout the broader region, U.S. officials displayed a mixture of tendencies toward hegemony and partnership toward Mexico. Quite simply, “we must have in our near neighbor stable political and economic conditions and a sense of common purpose and direction between the two countries,” U.S. officials explained. After all, the country's “large population, natural resources and strategic location make it vital to the defense of the hemisphere that our political relations be friendly at all times.”<sup>80</sup>

Moreover, U.S. officials found they had mostly succeeded in their efforts. Although they understood that “Mexicans have not forgotten that one hundred years ago

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79 U.S. Congress, Senate, *The Treaty Between the United States and Mexico*, 30th Cong., 1st sess., Executive, No. 52, 1848, 82.

80 “Policy Statement Prepared in the Department of State,” October 1, 1951, in U.S. Department of State, *The United Nations; The Western Hemisphere*, vol. 2 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), 1489.

their country lost almost half of its territory to the US,” U.S. officials found that they could typically rely on the Mexican government to follow the lead of the United States in the hemisphere. “Mexico has been for many years a strong adherent of the inter-American system and has in general been meticulous in carrying out her duties in this regard,” U.S. officials explained. “She has developed an outstanding position among the other American republics, and has been helpful to the US in our relations with them.”<sup>81</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration even began to identify the Mexican government as one of their closest partners in the world. While they certainly continued to privilege their alliances with their allies in Europe and the Asia Pacific region, administration officials began to insist that they had formed a uniquely important partnership with the Mexican government. Today, “the United States has no more important relationship in the world than the one we have with Mexico,” President Bush announced. “We’re building a relationship that is unique in the world, a relationship of unprecedented closeness and cooperation.”<sup>82</sup>

Following Bush’s lead, additional officials similarly highlighted the special importance of the partnership. “I think we all appreciate that the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship is unequalled in sheer breadth, complexity and importance,” the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Antonio O. Garza, Jr. remarked.<sup>83</sup>

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81 Ibid., 1490, 1497.

82 George W. Bush, “Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President Vicente Fox of Mexico,” September 5, 2001, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2001*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2001 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 1074.

83 Antonio O. Garza, Jr., “Remarks by Ambassador Garza To the 'Mexico in the Eyes of Wall Street' Conference,” May 28, 2003, <http://usembassy-mexico.gov/eng/Ambassador/eA030528WallStreet.html>.

In February 2007, the U.S. diplomats in Mexico provided additional emphasis. In an internal report, the diplomats explained that the United States and Mexico had formed a truly unique relationship. “No two countries on earth share a more profound bilateral relationship than the United States and Mexico,” the diplomats explained. “We are tied together by history, geography, economics and personal relationships.” To emphasize their point, the diplomats specified that the two countries formed one of the closest economic relationships in the world. “We form the second largest trading partnership in the world, doing close to half a trillion dollars in business in 2006,” they explained. In addition, the diplomats noted that people from both countries shared the direct ties of family. “We are bound by family ties as a result of vast migration flows north,” they explained. As a result, the diplomats concluded that the two countries shared one of the closest relationships in the world.<sup>84</sup>

Of course, the diplomats also remained well aware of the fact that they faced significant challenges in the country. Although they typically remained optimistic about the strength of the many different ties that bound the two countries together, the diplomats periodically acknowledged that many Mexicans harbored serious reservations about the role of the United States in Mexico. Many Mexicans remain “uncomfortable with the U.S.’s large cultural footprint here, fear the potential for domination and believe that we treat their countrymen in the United States poorly,” the diplomats acknowledged.<sup>85</sup>

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84 Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR UNDER SECRETARY KAREN HUGHES TRIP TO MEXICO, FEBRUARY 12-15, 2007,” 07MEXICO571, February 7, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/02/07MEXICO571.html>.

85 Ibid.

When the diplomats welcomed the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to the country in early 2008, they also conceded that many Mexicans did not trust the leaders of the United States. “This country's extensive experience with foreign interventions and the loss of over half of its territory to the U.S. following the Mexican-American War created permanent scars on the Mexican psyche, generating a sense of national insecurity and suspicion about American motives,” the diplomats explained.<sup>86</sup>

In spite of the challenges, the leaders of the United States remained determined to maintain close relations with the Mexican government. No matter what the Mexican people felt about the matter, U.S. officials felt that they had to keep working with the Mexican government to achieve their plans for the hemisphere. Ultimately, “our U.S.-Mexico partnership is indispensable,” the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice explained in December 2008.<sup>87</sup>

In fact, U.S. officials largely succeeded in maintaining close relations with the Mexican government. As the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explained at the start of the Obama administration's time in office, the leaders of both countries maintained one of the closest partnerships in the world. “This is one of the most important relationships that exists between any two countries in the world,” Clinton asserted. “We have an ongoing, absolutely important, unbreakable bond.”<sup>88</sup>

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86 Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GATES TO MEXICO CITY -- APRIL 29-30, 2008,” 08MEXICO1082, April 10, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08MEXICO1082.html>.

87 Condoleezza Rice, “Joint Press Conference On the Merida Initiative High-Level Consultative Group,” December 19, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/12/113401.htm>.

88 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks With Mexican Foreign Secretary Patricia Espinosa After Their Meeting,” March 25, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/03/120905.htm>.

In short, the leaders of the United States attributed special importance to Mexico. Despite the fact that they faced significant resistance from the Mexican people, they found that they could still work closely with the Mexican government to advance their agenda in the hemisphere. As a result, U.S. officials identified the Mexican government as one of their key allies in the hemisphere and one of their most important partners in the world.

### Applying the Colombia Model

At the start of the twenty-first century, the leaders of the United States also began to play a powerful new role in Mexico. As they worked to maintain close ties with the Mexican government, U.S. officials began partnering with the Mexican government to wage a major military operation against the country's drug cartels. Through their efforts, U.S. officials began to play a central new role in a major military campaign that had serious implications for the fate of the country.

At the start of the Bush administration's second term in office, the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Antonio O. Garza, Jr. outlined the basic reasons why U.S. officials wanted to go to war against Mexican drug cartels. In a public speech, Garza explained that drug-related violence threatened to undermine the growing economic ties between Mexico and the United States. "If that violence – whether prison riots in Matamoros or gangland-style shootings right here in Monterrey – is not controlled, it will badly undermine both investment and tourism, particularly in the border area," Garza

explained. “The bottom line is that we simply can’t allow drug traffickers to jeopardize all that we have accomplished.”<sup>89</sup>

In mid-2006, U.S. officials then received word that the incoming Mexican President Felipe Calderón intended to move directly against the country's drug cartels. As the U.S. diplomats explained in one of their internal reports, “Calderón was extremely concerned about the damage the cartels were doing to Mexico, and wanted to take strong measures against them.”<sup>90</sup>

In subsequent reports, the diplomats also described how Calderón quickly launched a major war against the nation's drug cartels. Since he first entered office in December 2006, “President Calderón has initiated 'surge operations' involving the mass deployment of federal police and troops in anti-drug operations in a total of 8 of Mexico's 32 states,” the diplomats explained. He has sent “a total of about 27,000 troops and paramilitary police” into numerous states throughout the country. Indeed, the diplomats reported that the new Mexican president rapidly implemented military surge operations throughout the country to attack the country’s drug cartels. President Calderón “has

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89 Antonio O. Garza, Jr., “Remarks by Ambassador Garza at “Hemispheria 2005” Conference,” May 13, 2005, <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/eng/Ambassador/eA050513hemispheria.html>. For additional confirmation of the economic factors at play, see Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR PRESIDENT’S TRIP TO MEXICO, MARCH 12-14, 2007,” 07MEXICO1102, March 5, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/03/07MEXICO1102.html>. According to the U.S. diplomats in Mexico, the Mexican President Felipe Calderón’s “security efforts are designed to reassure foreign investors and Mexicans worried about drug-related crime and lawlessness that organized criminals will no longer act with impunity.” Also see Thomas Shannon, “The Mexico/Central America Security Cooperation Package,” October 22, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/07/q4/93955.htm>. According to Shannon, Mexican officials “understand that given the kinds of social and economic development challenges they face and the very real advances that Mexico has made under President Fox and now under President Calderón in terms of economic reform, that in order to keep this progress flowing they have to address the threat presented by organized crime.”

90 Embassy Mexico, “AMBASSADOR’S MEETING WITH PRESUMED PRESIDENT ELECT CALDERON,” 06MEXICO4310, August 4, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/08/06MEXICO4310.html>.



launched major military-backed surge operations against drug traffickers in nine of the most conflictive states,” they explained.<sup>91</sup>

With surge operations underway, U.S. officials then began adding a major new component to the campaign. Since they were already working closely with Colombian officials to fight drug traffickers as part of Plan Colombia, they decided to bring together the leaders of Colombia and Mexico to create a more unified military campaign against drugs in the hemisphere. After all, “Colombian and Mexican counterparts recognized their 'symbiotic relationship' in developing and sharing best practices,” the U.S. diplomats in Colombia explained.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, officials in Washington took the very same model that they had applied to Colombia and began applying many of its key components to Mexico. Starting with the initial version of Plan Colombia that the Clinton administration had used to target drug traffickers in Colombia, U.S. officials began putting together a comparable version of the program for the Mexican government called “the Mérida Initiative.”<sup>93</sup>

When they introduced the new program, a number of officials directly connected Plan Colombia to the Mérida Initiative. For example, the State Department official David T. Johnson informed a congressional committee in November 2007 that the Bush administration intended to take the lessons that it had learned with Plan Colombia and apply them to Mexico. The Mérida Initiative has “a slightly different focus, but I think

91 Embassy Mexico, “ANTI-DRUG OPS EXTENDED TO EIGHT STATES,” 07MEXICO1068, March 2, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/03/07MEXICO1068.html>; Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR CODEL THOMPSON, 10-11 APRIL 2007,” 07MEXICO1688, April 3, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/04/07MEXICO1688.html>.

92 Embassy Bogotá, “UNITED STATES, COLOMBIA AND MEXICO MEETING REINFORCES COUNTER-NARCOTICS COOPERATION,” 07BOGOTA7470, October 18, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/10/07BOGOTA7470.html>.

93 Thomas Shannon, “The Mexico/Central America Security Cooperation Package,” October 22, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/07/q4/93955.htm>.

that we will, insofar as the programs are comparable with things such as the use of aircraft, the types of aircraft we are bringing in, the oversight that we will be able to provide, we fully intend to apply the lessons that we, indeed, have learned in Colombia,” Johnson explained.<sup>94</sup>

Likewise, the State Department official Thomas Shannon made a direct connection between the two programs. Speaking before another congressional committee in November 2007, Shannon explained that the Bush administration wanted to take the war against drugs in Colombia and extend it to the war against drug cartels in Mexico. “Combined with the push we have made against drug trafficking and the flow of other illicit goods elsewhere in the region, the Mérida Initiative represents an effort to integrate security programs from the Andes, through the isthmus of Central America and into Mexico, up to the Southwest border of the United States,” Shannon explained. Ultimately, the Mérida Initiative forms part of “a hemispheric assault to cripple drug trafficking and criminal organizations, disrupt and dismantle their networks, and help fortify state institutions to ensure these groups can no longer operate effectively.”<sup>95</sup>

To extend the hemispheric assault to Mexico, the Bush administration then formally approved the Mérida Initiative. On June 30, 2008, President Bush “signed the Mérida Initiative, a 450 million USD package that provides funding for technical

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94 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Merida Initiative: Assessing Plans to Step Up our Security Cooperation with Mexico and Central America*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., November 14, 2007, 46.

95 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Antidrug Package for Mexico and Central America: An Evaluation*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., November 15, 2007, 9.

assistance and equipment for Mexico to use in their fight against narco-trafficking,” the U.S. diplomats in Mexico explained.<sup>96</sup>

After Bush approved the program, U.S. officials then sent a powerful signal of what the new program would mean for Mexico. At the same time that they began sending drones into Colombia as part of Plan Colombia, U.S. officials began sending drones into Mexico to help the Mexican government fight the drug war. Drones “provide high quality, real-time video tracking threat activities right through to the end game,” the Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff informed Mexican officials.<sup>97</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials continued to move forward with the program. For example, U.S. officials kept working to forge new ties between the Mexican and Colombian governments. “Colombia Raising Its Regional Profile, Starting With Mexico,” the U.S. diplomats in Colombia titled one of their reports. “Mexico Looks To Colombia As Security, Regional Partner,” the U.S. diplomats in Mexico titled their response.<sup>98</sup>

In one report, the U.S. diplomats in Colombia also confirmed that the Colombian government provided the Mexican government with some of the lessons that it had

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96 George W. Bush, “Remarks on Signing the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008,” June 30, 2008, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2008-2009*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2008 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012), 891-892; Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR UNDERSECRETARY JEFFERY’S VISIT TO MEXICO JULY 9-11,” 08MEXICO2037, July 3, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/07/08MEXICO2037.html>.

97 Embassy Mexico, “SECRETARY CHERTOFF AND GOM OFFICIALS DISCUSS SECURITY COOPERATION AND SHARED CHALLENGES,” 08MEXICO2276, July 24, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/07/08MEXICO2276.html>. For more discussion, see Dana Priest, “Mexico’s changes in anti-drug fight imperil U.S. role,” *Washington Post*, April 28, 2013.

98 Embassy Bogotá, “COLOMBIA RAISING ITS REGIONAL PROFILE, STARTING WITH MEXICO,” 09BOGOTA335, February 3, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09BOGOTA335.html>; Embassy Mexico, “MEXICO LOOKS TO COLOMBIA AS SECURITY, REGIONAL PARTNER,” 09MEXICO509, February 23, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09MEXICO509.html>.

learned from Plan Colombia. “Colombia is deepening its cooperation with Mexico and sharing the hard-won lessons it learned combating narcotraffickers under Plan Colombia,” the diplomats explained. Indeed, the diplomats found that the Colombian government helped to bring various aspects of Plan Colombia to Mexico.<sup>99</sup>

As they continued with their report, the diplomats also cited many examples of the collaboration. For example, the diplomats noted that Mexico's President Felipe Calderón had recently traveled to Colombia to finalize plans for a new police training program. “Under the Colombia-Mexico Police Cooperation Program, Colombia would increase ongoing GOC-GOM programs as part of an international effort – including the United States – to train up to 10,000 police,” the diplomats noted. In addition, the diplomats reported that Colombian officials hoped to “share its lessons learned from air mobility” by bringing a number of Mexican helicopter pilots into Colombia for military training. “Training 24-30 pilots annually would require additional investments in training aircraft and infrastructure, which DOD is studying,” the diplomats explained. Altogether, the diplomats expected the leaders of both countries to work closely together on the various projects.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. officials played their own role in applying the many hard-won lessons of Plan Colombia to Mexico. In a report titled “Lessons Learned From Plan Colombia,” the U.S. diplomats in Colombia informed the U.S. diplomats in Mexico about the many lessons that they had learned from Plan Colombia. “Some of the hard lessons learned in Colombia by more than forty U.S. Departments and Agencies over ten years

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99 Embassy Bogotá, “GOC SHARES LESSONS WITH MEXICO, BUT CHALLENGES LOOM,” 09BOGOTA2714, August 25, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09BOGOTA2714.html>.

100 Ibid.

and \$6.5 billion could be instructive,” the diplomats explained. More specifically, they described their experience in overseeing numerous operations, such as training, vetting, jointness, sequencing, governance, extradition, reintegration, intelligence sharing, and the embedding of U.S. personnel in the country. “We stand ready to consult and/or assist as you move forward,” they added.<sup>101</sup>

Back in Washington, additional officials also indicated that they intended to apply many of the same aspects of Plan Colombia to the drug war in Mexico. In September 2010, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made the point by arguing that many aspects of Plan Colombia could work quite well in Mexico. “I was just in Colombia, and there were problems and there were mistakes, but it worked,” Clinton insisted. As a result, “we need to figure out what are the equivalents for Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.”<sup>102</sup>

In fact, U.S. officials had already begun to apply the equivalent of Plan Colombia to Mexico. By implementing the Mérida Initiative, they took the very same model that they had pioneered in Colombia and brought it to Mexico. In the process, U.S. officials helped the Mexican government rapidly escalate its military campaign against the country's drug cartels.

## The Violence Continues Unabated

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101 Embassy Bogotá, “LESSONS LEARNED FROM PLAN COLOMBIA,” 09BOGOTA1832, June 8, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/06/09BOGOTA1832.html>.

102 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks on United States Foreign Policy,” September 8, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/09/146917.htm>.

By applying the Colombia model to Mexico, the leaders of the United States also brought a familiar result to the country. Rather than helping the Mexican government reduce drug-related violence, U.S. officials applied a model of warfare to Mexico that rapidly increased drug-related violence. Consequently, U.S. officials helped the Mexican government quickly transform Mexico into one of the most deadly countries in the world.

Before they implemented the Mérida Initiative, U.S. officials fully understood the likely consequences of the program. Not only had they already overseen a major spike in violence in Colombia with the implementation of Plan Colombia, but U.S. officials had also seen the Mexican government spark an increase in drug-related violence with its initial surge in military operations. Shortly after President Calderón had initiated his military surge, for example, the U.S. diplomats in Mexico noted that the surge had fueled the violence. “Violence Continues Unabated,” the diplomats titled one of their reports. The surge brought “soaring Cartel-related bloodshed.”<sup>103</sup>

A year after the Mexican government had implemented the surge, the diplomats provided more direct confirmation of the growing violence. In December 2007, the diplomats explained in a report titled “Narco-Killings Continue” that the number of drug-related deaths had increased since the start of the surge. “Although estimates of the total number of organized crime-related killings in the first 11 months of 2007 vary between GOM sources and newspaper tallies – ranging between approximately 2,200 to 3,200 – Mexico has witnessed more of these types of killings this year, compared to an estimated

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103 Embassy Mexico, “VIOLENCE CONTINUES UNABATED,” 07MEXICO3302, June 25, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/06/07MEXICO3302.html>.

2120 for all of 2006,” the diplomats explained. In short, the diplomats found that more people had been killed.<sup>104</sup>

In the following months, the diplomats also saw the violence worsen. As the Bush administration moved closer to approving the Mérida Initiative, the diplomats observed that the total number of drug-related deaths kept increasing. “Organized crime killings in 2008 are up over record numbers last year,” the diplomats reported. In addition, the diplomats found that the violence had grown especially brutal. Drug-related violence keeps “ratcheting upwards in brutality,” featuring grisly murders that included decapitations and severed “heads rolling across dance floors,” the diplomats noted. Given the latest trends, the diplomats felt that the violence would only continue. “For now we have no reason to expect a major shift in terms of the violence,” the diplomats reported. “As long as the GOM keeps the pressure on the cartels, we can expect continued outbreaks of violence within and between the cartels.”<sup>105</sup>

Under the expectation that the violence would continue, the Bush administration then formally approved the Mérida Initiative. Although administration officials clearly recognized “the fact that the Mexican Government has been moving ahead aggressively” in its war against the country's drug cartels, administration officials decided to provide the Mexican government with the ability to escalate its military operations.<sup>106</sup>

Moreover, administration officials remained well aware of the growing violence. In the many reports they received from the U.S. diplomats in the country, administration

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104 Embassy Mexico, “SUBJECT: NARCO-KILLINGS CONTINUE,” 07MEXICO6228, December 19, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/12/07MEXICO6228.html>.

105 Embassy Mexico, “NARCO-VIOLENCE SPIKES, TOP COPS TARGETED,” 08MEXICO1433, May 13, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08MEXICO1433.html>.

106 “The Merida Initiative: Our Partnership Moves Forward,” July 1, 2008, <http://2002-2009-fpc.state.gov/106450.htm>.

officials learned that the Mexican government's military operations kept causing the drug-related violence to increase. "As drug-related violence spirals, a perception is growing that Mexico's already troubled security situation has deteriorated suddenly and disturbingly," the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice read in one report. Ultimately, the Mexican government's military operations "have come at a high human price for both civilians and officials at the federal, state, and municipal levels." Likewise, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Robert Mueller received a similar message. "Drug-related violence in Mexico continues unabated," Mueller read. "There have been over 5,000 drug-related killings nationwide this year, with 669 in October alone, including 71 military and law enforcement officers." In short, administration officials remained well aware of the effects of the military surge in Mexico.<sup>107</sup>

In spite of their knowledge, administration officials still decided to implement the Mérida Initiative. After finalizing the details of the Mérida Initiative with the Mexican government in early December 2008, the Bush administration started to provide the Mexican government with a massive injection of military assistance. "The U.S. is about to insert itself in a major way into this challenging environment with the impending rollout of the Mérida Initiative," the U.S. diplomats in Mexico confirmed.<sup>108</sup>

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107 Embassy Mexico, "SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT TO MEXICO BY SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE -- OCTOBER 22-23, 2008," 08MEXICO3088, October 17, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08MEXICO3088.html>; Embassy Mexico, "SCENESETTER FOR FBI DIRECTOR MUELLER," 08MEXICO3537, December 2, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/12/08MEXICO3537.html>.

108 Ibid. Also see Antonio O. Garza, Jr., "Remarks by United States Ambassador to Mexico Antonio O. Garza at the signing of the Letter of Agreement on the Merida Initiative," December 3, 2008, <http://mexico.usembassy.gov/eng/ambassador/ea081203jointdeclaration.html>. "Although our two countries have worked closely for decades in the fight against organized crime and narcotrafficking, today we are launching the most significant effort ever undertaken between our two countries to confront this menace that threatens both our nations," Garza stated.



By the time the Obama administration took over the program in January 2009, the situation had only worsened. As the diplomats explained in a report titled “The Battle Joined: Narco Violence Trends in 2008,” the rollout of the Mérida Initiative came at a time of unprecedented drug-related violence. “2008 set a new record for organized crime-related homicides with more than 6000 killings,” the diplomats explained. Clearly, “the death toll is already at disturbing levels.” In addition, the diplomats noted that the violence remained especially brutal. “Beheadings and the prominent placement of dismembered bodies in public places, relatively rare two years ago are now common throughout the country,” the diplomats reported. When they concluded their report, the diplomats even predicted that the violence would worsen. “Mexican authorities and law enforcement analysts predict that violence will likely get worse before it gets better,” they explained. “Recent truce rumors notwithstanding, there is currently no indication that the violence will soon abate.”<sup>109</sup>

Back in Washington, administration officials recognized the same possibility. Even as they expressed their support for the Mérida Initiative, administration officials understood that the escalation of the drug war kept leading to more violence. Undoubtedly, “violence has climbed markedly,” the State Department official David Johnson acknowledged before a congressional committee in March 2009. During the war, “drug-related assassinations and kidnappings have reached unprecedented levels.”<sup>110</sup>

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109 Embassy Mexico, “THE BATTLE JOINED: NARCO VIOLENCE TRENDS IN 2008,” 09MEXICO193, January 23, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/01/09MEXICO193.html>.

110 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Guns, Drugs and Violence: The Merida Initiative and the Challenge in Mexico*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 2009, 18, 20.

With full knowledge of the effects of the war, the Obama administration still decided to proceed with the Mérida Initiative. Rather than rethinking the logic of the drug war, administration officials remained determined to help the Mexican government escalate its military operations. “The U.S. is assisting Mexico this year with \$400 million in assistance programs earmarked for inspection equipment, communications technology, technical assistance, training, and helicopters and surveillance aircraft,” the U.S. diplomats in Mexico confirmed.<sup>111</sup>

Moreover, a number of U.S. officials personally reassured Mexico’s president that they remained dedicated to the program. Officials in Washington are looking for ways to see “what Mérida assistance could be accelerated,” the Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Howard Berman informed Calderón in March 2009.<sup>112</sup>

As the Obama administration helped the Mexican government intensify the war, the U.S. diplomats in Mexico also continued to report on the same predictable consequences. Just as they had made it clear for the Bush administration that the war kept fueling the violence, the U.S. diplomats reported that the new phase of the war only resulted in even more violence. “Levels of violence show no signs of decreasing, with organized crime-related homicides and casualties suffered by security forces in the counterdrug fight likely to surpass 2008's record figures,” the diplomats informed President Obama in July 2009.<sup>113</sup>

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111 Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO MEXICO, MARCH 25-26,” 09MEXICO803, March 19, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/03/09MEXICO803.html>.

112 Embassy Mexico, “THREE CONGRESSIONAL CHAIRMAN BRING MESSAGE OF SUPPORT TO PRESIDENT CALDERON,” 09MEXICO1020, April 8, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/03/09MEXICO1020.html>.

113 Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA'S VISIT TO GUADALAJARA, AUGUST 9-10,2009,” 09MEXICO2264, July 31, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/07/09MEXICO2264.html>.

Moreover, the diplomats found the the Mexican government added their own special dimension to the war. While they typically blamed the drug cartels for committing the most horrific acts of violence, the diplomats found that the Mexican military increasingly waged a dirty war. “Allegations of human rights abuses by soldiers deployed on counterdrug missions threaten to undermine continued public support,” the diplomats warned.<sup>114</sup>

In October 2009, the diplomats also suggested that both the Mexican President Felipe Calderón and the country's defense establishment (SEDENA) tolerated the human rights abuses. “On the human rights front, there are signs that Calderón and especially SEDENA consider violations a 'price to pay,'” the diplomats explained. Neither Calderón nor SEDENA will “push for the kind of judicial guarantees (e.g., effective oversight by civilian courts on allegations of violations by the military) and effective training (e.g. of senior level and operational units) that are critically needed to improve Mexico's record.” Indeed, the diplomats indicated that most powerful officials in the Mexican government were responsible for the abuses.<sup>115</sup>

In subsequent reports, the diplomats also noted that many human rights organizations made similar claims. For example, they explained in one report that the Mexican military has “taken a serious beating on human rights issues from international and domestic human rights organizations.” In a related report, they also specified that the human rights organization Amnesty International had charged the Mexican military with committing some of the worst crimes imaginable. According to Amnesty International,

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114 Ibid.

115 Embassy Mexico, “SCENESETTER FOR SEPARATE MERIDA-RELATED VISITS: MEXICAN SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC SECURITY GARCIA LUNA AND ATTORNEY GENERAL CHAVEZ,” 09MEXICO3093, October 27, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09MEXICO3093.html>.

“the Mexican army has murdered prisoners, tortured civilians and captured suspects illegally,” the diplomats explained.<sup>116</sup>

With the Mexican military increasingly turning to violence and terror, the diplomats then marked another major development in the military campaign. In another one of their internal reports, the diplomats explained that total of drug-related deaths “topped 7,700 in 2009.” In other words, the diplomats found that the number of deaths had set another new record for the total amount of drug-related killings in the country.<sup>117</sup>

The following year, U.S. officials even saw the violence grow worse. By mid-2010, U.S. officials recognized that the violence continued to escalate under the Mérida Initiative. There has been “unprecedented levels of violence in Mexico,” the State Department official Roberta Jacobson confirmed in May 2010.<sup>118</sup>

A few months later, the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Carlos Pascual provided more details. In a public speech, Pascual explained that violence related to transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) had increased every year in Mexico since the start of the twenty-first century. “The violence is escalating numerically, with each of the past 10 years showing a far higher number of TCO-related murders than the one before it,” he

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116 Embassy Mexico, “SSP TO REPLACE MILITARY AS PRIMARY SECURITY PLAYER IN CIUDAD JUAREZ,” 09MEXICO3468, December 10, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09MEXICO3468.html>; Embassy Mexico, “AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RELEASES REPORT CRITICAL OF MEXICO FOR MILITARY ABUSES,” 09MEXICO3641, December 28, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09MEXICO3641.html>. For the report, see Amnesty International, *Mexico: New Reports of Human Rights Violations by the Military*, December 8, 2009. Available online at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/058/2009/en>.

117 Embassy Mexico, “Scenesetter for the Opening of the Defense Bilateral Working Group, Washington, D.C., February 1,” 10MEXICO83, January 29, 2010, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/01/10MEXICO83.html>.

118 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Terrorism of the Committee on Homeland Security and Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: Next Steps for the Mérida Initiative*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., May 27, 2010, 15.

explained. After making his point, Pascual then traced the biggest spike in violence to the start of the Mexican government's surge operations. "Since December 2006 Mexico has had about 29,000 drug-related homicides," he noted. Furthermore, Pascual noted that the violence for 2010 would very likely conform to the latest trends. Given the latest numbers, "Mexico could exceed the 2009 record with 13,000 homicides in 2010," he explained. Finally, Pascual provided one more insight. Although he certainly traced the spike in violence to the military campaign that began with the Mexican government in December 2006, Pascual suggested that drug-related violence had grown far worse since the implementation of the Mérida Initiative. Indeed, Pascual indicated that the implementation of the Mérida Initiative had only brought more violence to Mexico. "Violence is unprecedented, people are afraid, mayors are being killed," he remarked.<sup>119</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States helped to create a killing zone in Mexico. By taking the very same model that they had applied to Colombia and replicating some of its key components in Mexico, they played a key role in transforming Mexico into one of the most violent countries in the world. As a result, U.S. officials helped to bring many of the same horrors they had overseen in Colombia to Mexico.

## Conclusion

Of course, the leaders of the United States implemented their military programs as part of their broader strategy for the hemisphere. In spite of the tremendous human cost

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<sup>119</sup> Carlos Pascual, "Mexico at a Crossroads," October 20, 2010, [http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/eng/Ambassador/A101020\\_Crossroads.html](http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/eng/Ambassador/A101020_Crossroads.html).

of their military programs, U.S. proceeded with their programs with the more general goal of upholding the hierarchical structure of the American system.

With Mexico, U.S. officials mainly found a willing partner that helped them implement their strategy. Although they certainly recognized that many of the Mexican people harbored serious reservations about the U.S. role in Mexico, U.S. officials found that they could typically rely on the Mexican government to follow their lead in hemispheric affairs.

Similarly, U.S. officials found another willing partner in the Colombian government. Despite that fact that many of the Colombian people had very different ideas about how to run the country, U.S. officials knew that they could rely on the Colombian government to act on their behalf in the hemisphere.

At the same time, U.S. officials worked to fulfill their broader goal of holding together the American system. By working with their strategic partners, U.S. officials found that they could more effectively enforce their hemispheric structure of imperialism.

As long as they succeeded with their efforts, U.S. officials believed that they could maintain a unique position in the world. Not only did they intend to remain the leaders of both an Atlantic and Pacific power, but U.S. officials also wanted to keep the United States positioned as the dominant power in the Americas. Indeed, U.S. officials sought to keep the United States positioned at the head of an integrated American system.

Through their efforts, the leaders of the United States implemented an imperial policy to maintain a sphere of influence in Latin America. Viewing the region as their special domain in the world, U.S. officials applied a number of tremendously violent

programs to Latin America with the goal of keeping the entire area under their influence on the periphery of their global structure of imperialism.

## Chapter 4

### The Middle East

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- Oil: The Strategic Commodity
- The Middle East: The Most Strategically Important Area in the World
- Saudi Arabia: A Stupendous Source of Strategic Power
  - Safeguarding Petroleum Infrastructure
  - Maintaining Absolute Control
  - The Epicenter of Terrorist Finance
- Iraq: It's All About Oil
  - A Serious Regime Change Policy
  - A Grinding Daily Repetition of Violent Death
  - The Black Gold Rush
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

To maintain their global system of imperial order, the leaders of the United States have also focused their efforts on another part of the periphery. While they have typically approached Latin America as their primary sphere of influence in the world, U.S. officials



have also extended their imperial ambitions to the Middle East. “Since the end of the Second World War, the United States has understood that a secure, prosperous and stable Middle East is an essential ingredient not only in defending vital American interests, but also the interests of the world economy,” the State Department official William J. Burns explained at the start of the twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, many historians have found that the United States played a powerful role in the Middle East. In the study *Crisis and Crossfire* (2005), the diplomatic historian Peter L. Hahn identified the United States as one of the dominant actors in the Middle East. “The story of American policy in the Middle East in the post-World War II era is one of enormous growth of involvement and power,” Hahn explained. By the start of the twenty-first century, the United States had emerged as “the dominant foreign power in the region.”<sup>2</sup>

A few years later, the historian Rashid Khalidi made a similar argument. In his study *Sowing Crisis* (2009), Khalidi argued that the United States had quickly emerged as “the major Middle Eastern power.” Although he suggested that competition for control over the Middle East often “seesawed back and forth” between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Khalidi concluded that “it was the United States that ultimately always had the upper hand strategically.”<sup>3</sup>

Other historians have even argued that the United States played an imperial role in the region. For example, the historian Lloyd C. Gardner argued in his book *Three Kings*

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1 William J. Burns, “Toward a Positive Agenda for the Middle East,” October 19, 2001, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/rm01/6934.htm>.

2 Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005), 133.

3 Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009), 9, 38.

(2009) that U.S. officials spent “billions of dollars in an effort to institutionalize a Pax Americana in the Middle East.” Indeed, Gardner found that U.S. officials intended to create “an American empire in the Middle East.”<sup>4</sup>

In fact, many historians have found that U.S. officials succeeded in their efforts to build an empire in the Middle East. When the historian Douglas J. Little reviewed the scholarly literature in his essay “Impatient Crusaders: The Making of America's Informal Empire in the Middle East” (2014), Little reported that “most observers agree” that the leaders of the United States constructed “an informal American empire in the Middle East.”<sup>5</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama continued to play an imperial role in the region. Building on the imperial achievements of their predecessors, they sought to uphold an American empire in the Middle East. Through their actions, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations began the twenty-first century by working to keep the Middle East under their control as another key peripheral region of their global structure of imperialism.

#### Oil: The Strategic Commodity

As U.S. officials worked to construct their empire in the Middle East, they also approached the region with one basic factor in mind. Since the time of World War II, U.S.

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4 Lloyd C. Gardner, *Three Kings: The Rise of an American Empire in the Middle East After World War II* (New York: The New Press, 2009), 2, 3.

5 Douglas J. Little, “Impatient Crusaders: The Making of America's Informal Empire in the Middle East,” in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1941*, 2nd ed., ed. Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 213.

officials have organized their approach to the region around their strategic objectives for oil. Although they certainly favored the Middle East for many other factors, such as its location at the intersection of Europe, Asia, and Africa, U.S. officials have primarily approached the region over their concerns about oil.<sup>6</sup>

At the time of World War II, U.S. officials first began to identify oil as a strategically important commodity. With the United States producing most of the world's oil during the war, U.S. officials recognized that they held a major strategic advantage over their adversaries. As long as they could keep producing oil for both the United States and its allies, U.S. officials believed they could keep fueling the wartime industries and the wartime technologies that they needed to prevail in the war.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, U.S. officials began to recognize that they would soon require access to alternative sources of oil. With the demand for oil in the United States set to surpass the available supply of oil in the United States during the postwar period, U.S. officials concluded that they needed to secure their access to foreign sources of oil to maintain their strategic edge.<sup>8</sup>

During the final months of World War II, the Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes outlined the basic issue. In his article “We're Running Out of Oil,” Ickes explained that the United States required access to international sources of oil so that it could prevail in the global wars of the future. “As we begin to take stock of our own petroleum

6 For more discussion, see the following sources: David S. Painter, *Oil and the American Century: The Political Economy of U.S. Foreign Oil Policy, 1941-1954* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Simon Bromley, *American Hegemony and World Oil: The Industry, the State System and the World Economy* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991); David S. Painter, “Oil and the American Century,” *The Journal of American History* 99, no. 1 (June 2012): 24-39.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

supplies, the first thing that arrests us is the indisputable fact that if there should be a World War III it would have to be fought with someone else's petroleum, because the United States wouldn't have it," Ickes explained. "Although we can finish this conflict, costly as it is proving to be, with our own oil, we cannot fight another major war on our own resources, especially if it is on a global scale."<sup>9</sup>

Throughout Washington, many officials shared similar concerns. As they began taking stock of the coming shift in the global oil market, U.S. officials started to devote more of their attention to the availability of international sources of oil. "For the first time, an over-all policy on oil began to take shape in the United States during the war," the Petroleum Administration for War reported. "The war had made the United States oil conscious as it had never been oil conscious before."<sup>10</sup>

After the war, U.S. officials only grew more oil conscious. For example, officials in the Truman administration determined that the United States and its allies required access to oil at all times. "Oil is vital to the United States and the rest of the free world both in peace and war," the officials explained. Determined to secure their access to international sources of oil, the officials insisted that the United States must play one of the leading roles in overseeing the global oil market. "The maintenance of, and avoiding harmful interference with, an activity so crucial to the well-being and security of the United States and the rest of the free world must be a major objective of United States Government policy," the officials concluded.<sup>11</sup>

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9 Harold L. Ickes, "We're Running Out of Oil," *American Magazine*, January 1944.

10 U.S. Petroleum Administration for War, *A History of the Petroleum Administration for War, 1941-1945* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), 275.

11 "Report to the National Security Council by the Departments of State, Defense, the Interior, and Justice," NSC 138/1, January 6, 1953, in U.S. Department of State, *General: Economic and Political Matters (in two parts), Part 2*, vol. 1 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*

For the rest of the twentieth century, U.S. officials continued to highlight oil's importance. At the end of the century, for example, the oil executive Dick Cheney identified oil as a strategically important commodity. "Oil is unique in that it is so strategic in nature," he explained. Providing more details, Cheney specified that oil played a central role in fueling the global economy. "Energy is truly fundamental to the world's economy," he noted. Indeed, Cheney insisted that oil played a key role in shaping the development of the global economy. "It is the basic, fundamental building block of the world's economy," he remarked.<sup>12</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administration of George W. Bush favored oil for many of the same reasons. For example, the Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman stated in June 2006 that most countries around the world needed oil to fuel their economic growth. Currently, "most national economies around the world, including the United States, are fundamentally hydrocarbon-based," Bodman explained. "And they will remain so in the near-term and likely for years into future."<sup>13</sup>

The following year, the Energy Department official Clay Sell also singled out oil for its special importance. In the first, place, Sell confirmed that many nations would continue to rely on oil. Undoubtedly, "coal, oil and natural gas will remain indispensable to meeting total projected energy demand growth, indispensable," Sell remarked. In addition, Sell urged his colleagues to take more advantage of the resource. "We need to expand our utilization of that great resource," he insisted. In the years ahead, U.S. officials must "produce more at home" and "produce more from a diversity of sources

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(Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 1319, 1321.

12 Dick Cheney, "Full text of Dick Cheney's speech at the IP Autumn lunch," November 15, 1999, <http://www.petroleum.co.uk/speeches.htm>.

13 Samuel Bodman, untitled speech, June 22, 2006, <http://www.energy.gov/news/3771.htm>.

around the world.” Altogether, Sell insisted that U.S. officials must maintain their focus on oil.<sup>14</sup>

Under the subsequent Obama administration, U.S. officials maintained the same intense focus on oil. The simple fact remains that “for some time to come we will still need to focus on the availability of oil and gas supplies to the U.S. and global market,” the State Department official David Goldwyn reported. After all, the effects of the global energy supply “have security, economic, and moral implications for U.S. policy.”<sup>15</sup>

In March 2010, the Energy Department official Daniel Poneman then confirmed that the Obama administration intended to keep the oil flowing. “Even if significant constraints are imposed on the use of carbon, the International Energy Agency has found that global demand for oil and gas will continue to grow over the coming decades,” Poneman explained. “So the United States will continue to seek to assure safe and reliable access to those resources.”<sup>16</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States devoted much of their attention to oil. No longer able to rely on domestic sources of oil to supply the U.S. economy and fuel their wars, they sought to secure their access to international sources of oil. As long as they could maintain some degree of control over the production and distribution of the commodity, they believed that they could fulfill their domestic objectives while they strengthened their ability to shape the development of the world. As a result, U.S.

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14 Clay Sell, “Remarks by Deputy Secretary Sell,” October 9, 2007, <http://www.energy.gov/news/5735.htm>.

15 Secretary of State, “INTRODUCING THE COORDINATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AFFAIRS,” 09STATE103636, October 5, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09STATE103636.html>.

16 Daniel Poneman, “Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy,” March 17, 2010, <http://www.energy.gov/articles/deputy-secretary-daniel-ponemans-remarks-washington-institute-near-east-policy>.

officials identified oil as a strategically important commodity that remained critically important to their plans for the world.

### The Middle East: The Most Strategically Important Area in the World

With the goal of asserting their control over the global supply of oil, U.S. officials then turned their attention to the Middle East. Since the region featured the largest known oil reserves in the world, U.S. officials have placed the energy-rich Middle East at the center of their plans for controlling the world's oil. Although they certainly pointed to many other reasons to justify their involvement in the area, often in the hope of concealing their materialist views, U.S. officials primarily favored the region for its oil.<sup>17</sup>

During the final years of World War II, the leaders of the United States first began to favor the Middle East for its oil. When the Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes warned that the United States would soon run out of oil, he proposed that the solution could be found in the Middle East. "The capital of the oil empire is on the move to the Middle East – to the Persian Gulf and the countries adjacent thereto, such as Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrein, and perhaps even Afghanistan," Ickes explained. By tracing the shift in the capital of the oil empire from the United States to the Middle East, Ickes urged his colleagues in Washington to start paying much closer attention to the region. "If

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17 For more discussion, see the following sources: Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Three Kings: The Rise of an American Empire in the Middle East After World War II* (New York: The New Press, 2009); Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2009); Salim Yaqub, "The Cold War and the Middle East," in *The Cold War in the Third World*, ed. Robert J. McMahon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11-26.

we are to maintain and extend our gasoline civilization we must be prepared to go where gasoline is to be had,” he insisted.<sup>18</sup>

After the end of the World War II, additional officials turned to the region for similar reasons. Once a technical mission led by the prominent geologist Everette Lee DeGolyer had confirmed the existence of extensive petroleum reserves in the area, many U.S. officials began to pay closer attention to the Middle East. “I cannot stress the importance of this part of the world too strongly,” the State Department official Charles Rayner stated in March 1947. “With oil reserves known to be in excess, and potentially greatly in excess, of the known reserves of the United States and with a rapidly increasing production it may well be that the Middle East will ultimately become, as De Golyer has predicted, the center of gravity of world oil production.”<sup>19</sup>

A few years later, the U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower attributed even more importance to the region. Speaking before a congressional committee in July 1951, Eisenhower identified the Middle East as the most strategically important area in the world. “Well, of course, so far as the sheer value of territory is concerned, there is no more strategically important area in the world than the Middle East, the so-called land bridge to Africa and Asia,” Eisenhower remarked. Indeed, Eisenhower insisted that no region of the world held more importance for the global strategy of the United States.

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18 Harold L. Ickes, “We’re Running Out of Oil,” *American Magazine*, January 1944.

19 E. DeGolyer, “Preliminary Report of the Technical Oil Mission to the Middle East,” *Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists* 28, no. 7 (July 1944): 919-923. “The center of gravity of world oil production is shifting from the Gulf-Caribbean area to the Middle East – to the Persian Gulf area – and is likely to continue to shift until it is firmly established in that area,” DeGolyer reported (919); Charles Rayner, “The International Oil Picture,” *Department of State Bulletin* 16, no. 403 (March 23, 1947): 555.



“This area is tremendously important in terms of what it could contribute for our whole effort,” he noted.<sup>20</sup>

At other times, U.S. officials also specified why they attributed so much importance to the Middle East. In November 1999, the oil executive and future Vice President Dick Cheney provided the basic reason. “While many regions of the world offer great oil opportunities, the Middle East with two thirds of the world’s oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies,” Cheney explained. Indeed, Cheney confirmed that U.S. officials favored the region for its oil.<sup>21</sup>

Not long after Cheney entered the White House, an energy policy group under his direction then cited the same factor. “By 2020, Gulf oil producers are projected to supply between 54 and 67 percent of the world’s oil,” the energy group reported. As a result, the Gulf region “will remain vital to U.S. interests.”<sup>22</sup>

In the following years, other observers also provided additional insights into the reasons why U.S. officials favored the region. In late 2003, the former U.S. official Zbigniew Brzezinski provided one of the most important insights into the thinking of U.S. officials when he explained that the region's energy resources remained critically important to the imperial grand strategy of the United States. “America has major strategic and economic interests in the Middle East that are dictated by the region's vast energy supplies,” Brzezinski explained. “Not only does America benefit economically from the relatively low costs of Middle Eastern oil, but America's security role in the

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20 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *United States Foreign-Aid Programs in Europe*, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., July 7 to July 23, 1951, 277.

21 Dick Cheney, “Full text of Dick Cheney's speech at the IP Autumn lunch,” November 15, 1999, <http://www.petroleum.co.uk/speeches.htm>.

22 National Energy Policy Development Group, *National Energy Policy*, May 2001, 8-4.

region gives it indirect but politically critical leverage on the European and Asian economies.” Indeed, Brzezinski indicated that the region provided the leaders of the United States with the ability to exert powerful leverage over the core regions of the world. “Since reliable access to reasonably priced energy is vitally important to the world’s three economically most dynamic regions – North America, Europe and East Asia – strategic domination over the area, even if cloaked by cooperative arrangements, would be a globally decisive hegemonic asset,” Brzezinski asserted.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout Washington, administration officials shared the same views of the region. While they typically refrained from using the same kind of imperial language, they repeatedly confirmed that they favored the region for the role it played in their global strategy. Undoubtedly, “the Middle East is and will remain a strategically vital region with respect to national and global energy security,” the Energy Department official George L. Person, Jr. explained in October 2005.<sup>24</sup>

In October 2007, the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice then put the matter in more direct terms. Returning to the point that Eisenhower had made about the region over a half-century earlier, Rice identified the Middle East as one of the most strategically important areas of the world. “The Middle East is now and will remain one of the most strategically important parts of the world for our national interests and for international security,” Rice explained. Indeed, Rice confirmed that U.S. officials still viewed the

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23 Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Hegemonic Quicksand,” *National Interest*, Winter 2003/2004, 8, 13.

24 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *U.S. Foreign Policy, Petroleum, and the Middle East*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., October 20, 2005, 11.

Middle East as one of the most important regions for their global strategy. “We are there to stay,” she added. “Our interests there are enduring.”<sup>25</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials maintained the same mindset about the region. For example, the State Department official Jeffrey D. Feltman agreed that U.S. officials maintained critical interests in the region. “Our friends in the region remain critical to our energy and our defense interests,” Feltman explained. In addition, Feltman insisted that the United States must remain actively involved in the area. “Air and sea lanes must be protected and lines of communication to and from the region kept open,” he noted.<sup>26</sup>

The following year, the Energy Department official Daniel Poneman made many of the same points. In a public speech, Poneman explained that U.S. officials had special interests in the region. “Our interests in the region are fundamental to America's national, energy and economic security,” Poneman explained. “We recognize the continuing importance of the oil and gas resources of the Middle East to the U.S. and the world.” After making his point, Poneman then insisted that the United States must play the lead role in the area. “Given the scope and gravity of our interests in the region, it's more important than ever that the United States show leadership in the region and strengthen our partnerships,” he explained. After all, the events unfolding in the Middle East “are enormously consequential to the United States, and to the world.”<sup>27</sup>

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25 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *U.S. Policy in the Middle East*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., October 24, 2007, 3.

26 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A Regional Overview on the Middle East*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., October 28, 2009, 18, 22.

27 Daniel Poneman, “Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy,” Marcy 17, 2010, <http://www.energy.gov/articles/deputy-secretary-daniel-ponemans-remarks-washington-institute-near-east-policy>.

Clearly, the leaders of the United States viewed the Middle East as a tremendously important part of the globe. Not only did they view the region as a tremendous prize, but they also viewed the Middle East as one of the most strategically important areas of the world. Given the extensive amounts of oil in the region, they believed that they could run the region as a globally decisive hegemonic asset. As a result, U.S. officials remained determined to play the dominant role in the Middle East.

#### Saudi Arabia: A Stupendous Source of Strategic Power

As they pursued their plans for the Middle East, the leaders of the United States also organized their efforts around one particular country. With the goal of maximizing their control over the region's oil, U.S. officials focused their efforts on Saudi Arabia. Since the country featured the largest known oil reserves in the area, they viewed Saudi Arabia as the most important country in the region. While they certainly favored many different countries in the Middle East for their oil, U.S. officials recognized that none of the countries in the area could match the extensive oil reserves of Saudi Arabia. Consequently, U.S. officials placed Saudi Arabia at the heart of their strategy for the Middle East.<sup>28</sup>

During World War II, the leaders of the United States first began to focus their attention on Saudi Arabia. Although U.S. oil companies had already begun operating in the country during the 1930s, a number of officials began to believe during the war that

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<sup>28</sup> For the background, see Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1949* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

Saudi Arabia could eventually emerge as one of the world's greatest sources of oil. “This Department believes that there should be a full realization of the fact that the oil of Saudi Arabia constitutes one of the world's greatest prizes,” the Secretary of State Cordell Hull reported in November 1943.<sup>29</sup>

At the State Department, many officials shared the same belief about Saudi Arabia. For example, the State Department official Gordon Merriam informed President Truman in August 1945 that the oil resources of Saudi Arabia featured tremendous potential. The country's oil resources constitute “a stupendous source of strategic power” and should be considered “one of the greatest material prizes in world history,” Merriam explained.<sup>30</sup>

For the remainder of the twentieth century, U.S. officials continued to attribute special importance to Saudi Arabia. For example, the State Department reported in September 1998 that “Saudi Arabia's unique role in the Arab and Islamic worlds, its possession of the world's largest reserves of oil, and its strategic location make its friendship important to the United States.” In addition, the State Department specified that Saudi oil remained critically important to the global strategy of the United States. Ultimately, the “continued availability of reliable sources of oil, particularly from Saudi Arabia, remains important to the prosperity of the United States as well as to Europe and Japan,” the State Department reported.<sup>31</sup>

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29 “The Secretary of State to the Secretary of the Interior (Ickes),” November 13, 1943, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East and Africa*, vol. 4 of *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1943* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964), 942.

30 “Draft Memorandum to President Truman,” undated, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East and Africa*, vol. 8 of *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 45.

31 U.S. Department of State, “Saudi Arabia,” *Background Notes*, September 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/saudi\\_0998\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/saudi_0998_bgn.html).

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration also identified Saudi Arabia as a critically important country. In April 2005, the National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley provided some of the reasons. The Saudi government can “help stabilize the market at a price level which both the United States and Saudi Arabia agree needs to be one that provides adequate return for investment, but is also something that isn't so high that it damages markets and damages the world economy,” Hadley explained. Indeed, Hadley indicated that U.S. officials could rely on the Saudi government to guide the price of oil in the global oil market.<sup>32</sup>

The following month, the Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman similarly identified the country as the key to managing the global oil market. “It is no secret that most of the world’s spare oil capacity is concentrated in one country – Saudi Arabia,” Bodman explained. “We recognize the Kingdom’s leadership in maintaining this spare capacity, which can be used to offset unexpected disruptions elsewhere.”<sup>33</sup>

Even when they did not highlight the specific advantages that they gained from the Saudi government, U.S. officials still made it clear that they favored Saudi Arabia for one general reason. In May 2005, the State Department official Philip Zelikow explained that U.S. officials favored the country for its oil. “As the holder of approximately one-quarter of the world’s oil reserves, the Kingdom is obviously important to the United States, and the rest of the world,” Zelikow remarked.<sup>34</sup>

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32 Stephen Hadley, “Press Briefing With National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley on the President's Visit With the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia,” April 25, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/45131.htm>.

33 Samuel Bodman, “Remarks Prepared for Energy Secretary Bodman,” May 17, 2005, <http://www.energy.gov/news/1925.htm>.

34 Philip Zelikow, “Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Political Reform in the Arab World,” May 24, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/c/rls/rm/46720.htm>.

About two years later, the U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia made the same basic point. “Saudi Arabia has the largest proven oil reserves in the world; hence its importance to the global economy which shapes its external relations,” the diplomats reported.<sup>35</sup>

During the Bush administration’s final year in office, some observers began to attribute even more importance to the country. For example, the analyst Christopher M. Blanchard at the Congressional Research Service reported that the latest trends in the global oil market made the country increasingly important to both the United States and the rest of the world. “Growing demand for oil in developing countries, declining oil reserves outside of the Persian Gulf region, and expanding Saudi oil revenues are likely to further raise Saudi Arabia’s international profile and influence over time,” Blanchard reported.<sup>36</sup>

Under the subsequent Obama administration, U.S. officials maintained similar views of Saudi Arabia. In April 2009, the State Department official William J. Burns explained that Saudi Arabia remained critically important to the United States. Undoubtedly, “few countries in the world today matter more to American interests than Saudi Arabia,” Burnes explained. “And few are more consequential for the kind of international order we seek.”<sup>37</sup>

A few months later, the U.S. diplomat Richard Erdman then provided some of the reasons. During a private meeting with the Saudi Oil Minister Ali Al-Naimi, Erdman

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35 Embassy Riyadh, “SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES MRS. LAURA BUSH,” 07RIYADH2100, October 16, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/10/07RIYADH2100.html>.

36 Christopher M. Blanchard, “Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations,” Congressional Research Service, May 22, 2008, CRS-20.

37 William J. Burns, “U.S.-Saudi Relations in a World Without Equilibrium,” April 27, 2009, [http://newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/u\\_s\\_saudi\\_relations\\_world\\_without\\_equilibrium\\_honorable\\_william\\_j\\_burns](http://newamerica.net/publications/resources/2009/u_s_saudi_relations_world_without_equilibrium_honorable_william_j_burns).

explained that U.S. officials valued the role that the Saudi government played in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the international oil cartel that exerted powerful influence over the price of oil. U.S. officials appreciate “the moderating role Saudi Arabia played within OPEC, and more generally for the stabilizing role it played in international energy markets,” Erdman explained. Indeed, Erdman indicated that U.S. officials appreciated the way in which the Saudi government influenced the price of oil. “We had a mutual interest in stable oil prices that were high enough to sustain investment but not so high as to kill demand,” Erdman remarked.<sup>38</sup>

In short, U.S. officials assigned tremendous importance to Saudi Arabia. At the most basic level, they viewed the country as the key to keeping oil flowing to both the United States and its allies. At the same time, they saw the Saudi government as the key to controlling the price of oil in the global oil market. As a result, U.S. officials identified Saudi Arabia as the most strategically important country in the Middle East, placing the country at the core of their strategy for the region.

### Safeguarding Petroleum Infrastructure

As the leaders of the United States pursue their objectives for Saudi Arabia, they also played their own consequential role in the country. Concerned that any disruption of the country's oil industry would negatively affect their ability to shape the global oil market, U.S. officials worked closely with the Saudi government to secure the country's

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<sup>38</sup> Embassy Riyadh, “SAUDI OIL MINISTER REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO OIL PRICE/PRODUCTION STABILITY, NO EASY WAY TO ELIMINATE SPECULATION,” 09RIYADH1068, August 17, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09RIYADH1068.html>.



oil facilities. Through their efforts, U.S. officials played a direct role in safeguarding the country's oil industry.

To some extent, U.S. officials felt a special responsibility to protect the country's oil industry. Despite the fact that the Saudi government had nationalized the Arabian-American Oil Company (Aramco) in the 1970s, taking control of a company that had received its start with the direct involvement of U.S. oil companies, U.S. officials believed that they still maintained a direct stake in the company's fate. After all, "Americans built the Saudi oil industry," the U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia noted in December 2005.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, officials from both countries created an extensive system of safeguards to secure the country's most important facilities. After a small group of suicide bombers had attempted to sabotage the country's Abqaiq oil facility in February 2006, the *New York Times* described how an extensive system of safeguards had deterred the attackers. "The attackers at Abqaiq were turned back at the first of three electrified security fences that surround the plant, which is also patrolled around the clock by helicopters and F-15 warplanes, in addition to thousands of state security personnel and guards from Aramco, the Saudi state oil company," the *New York Times* reported.<sup>40</sup>

In spite of the successful performance of the security system, officials in both countries decided to take additional precautions. Following the foiled attack, officials in the Bush administration began working with their Saudi counterparts to strengthen the existing safeguards. After all, "the attack on Abqaiq had been much closer to succeeding

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39 Embassy Riyadh, "A PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGY FOR SAUDI ARABIA," 05RIYADH9116, December 12, 2005, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/12/05RIYADH9116.html>.

40 Hassan M. Fattah, "Suicide Bombers Fail to Enter Saudi Oil Plant," *New York Times*, February 25, 2006.

than generally acknowledged,” the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James C. Oberwetter observed.<sup>41</sup>

When the State Department official Michael Coulter met with Saudi officials in June 2006 for a preliminary discussion, he outlined the Bush administration's basic intentions. The Bush administration “is committed to utilizing all of its assets to help strengthen the security of oil and other critical infrastructure facilities in Saudi Arabia,” Coulter explained. To emphasize his point, Coulter specified that the administration intended to provide the Saudi government with many forms of assistance. In “addition to helicopters, the USG proposal will focus on Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) to watch the pipelines and facilities at all times and to help harden the facilities,” he noted. In short, Coulter explained that the Bush administration wanted to play a more direct role in securing the country’s oil industry.<sup>42</sup>

In the following months, U.S. officials made it clear that they were serious. For example, the U.S. Vice Admiral Patrick M. Walsh offered the Saudi government direct assistance from the military forces under his command. Meeting with Saudi officials in October 2006, Walsh emphasized “the U.S. Navy's willingness to be of assistance in protecting critical Saudi petroleum maritime infrastructure.” During the meeting, members of Walsh's staff briefed the Saudi officials on the military capabilities of the U.S. naval forces in the region. The staff members “delivered a briefing on the Fifth

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41 Embassy Riyadh, “POST-ABQAIQ MINISTER OF INTERIOR FORMALLY REQUESTS HELICOPTER SUPPORT AND SECURITY CONSULTATION FOR OIL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION,” 06RIYADH1542, March 12, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/03/06RIYADH1542.html>.

42 Embassy Riyadh, “USD EDELMAN'S MEETING WITH ASSISTANT MOI PRINCE MUHAMMAD BIN NAIF,” 06RIYADH5079, June 25, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/06/06RIYADH5079.html>.

Fleet's maritime and aerial reconnaissance capabilities for the Saudi interlocutors,” the U.S. diplomats who recorded the meeting reported. Whether or not Saudi officials accepted the offer, the diplomats believed that Walsh and his staff members had made it clear that they intended to help the Saudi government strengthen the security of the country's oil industry. “We anticipate the meeting will prove to have appropriately set the stage to move forward with action items and a significant U.S. contribution to safeguarding critical Saudi Arabian petroleum infrastructure in the coming months,” the diplomats reported.<sup>43</sup>

As officials from both countries considered the possibilities, they then decided to begin formally coordinating their plans. As the U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia documented in another one of their internal reports, officials from both countries agreed in December 2006 to “create a Joint Working Group on critical infrastructure protection.” The new Joint Working Group will provide “an ongoing framework to jointly develop, manage, and implement a total systems solution to improve security at Saudi Arabian petroleum facilities,” the diplomats explained.<sup>44</sup>

After they created their Joint Working Group, officials from both countries then began to implement a number of new security measures. When the group met in March 2007 to review their efforts, the Energy Department official Alex de Alvarez explained that a number of new security measures had already been implemented. “Saudi Aramco guards have been armed and trained in bearing weapons,” de Alvarez explained. In

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43 Embassy Riyadh, “UNPRECEDENTED MEETING BETWEEN USG AND SAG ON PETROLEUM INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION,” 06RIYADH8811, November 12, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06RIYADH8811.html>.

44 Embassy Riyadh, “SCENESETTER FOR APHST TOWNSEND VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, 5-8 FEBRUARY 2007,” 07RIYADH212, February 1, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/02/07RIYADH212.html>.

addition, “Saudi Aramco has implemented a quick reaction force, and provided them with anti-terrorism training.”<sup>45</sup>

Once U.S. and Saudi officials began to implement the new measures, the Bush administration then decided to take a more comprehensive approach. During its last year in office, the administration decided to provide the Saudi oil industry with some of the strongest safeguards in the world. “We are now moving to apply in Saudi Arabia the same model we use to protect nuclear facilities internationally – a highly-rigorous, mathematical, and engineering-based model,” the U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia explained. Indeed, the Bush administration decided to apply to the Saudi oil industry the same security model that it applied to some of the most critically important facilities around the world.<sup>46</sup>

The U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia, who described the plans in one of their internal reports, noted that the Saudi government also intended to make its own significant contribution to the effort. In their report, the diplomats explained that the Saudi government would complement the new approach by creating a new security force of thirty-five thousand members. The new security force will “be organized and trained for defensive and offensive missions in the protection of oil, gas, national power, and other sites,” the diplomats explained.<sup>47</sup>

Clearly, the leaders of both countries remained determined to secure the country's oil industry. With U.S. officials treating the country's oil facilities as nuclear facilities and

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45 Embassy Riyadh, “CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETS MARCH 4-5, ADOPTS ACTION PLAN FOR PHYSICAL SECURITY UPGRADES,” 07RIYADH475, March 7, 2007, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/03/07RIYADH475.html>.

46 Embassy Riyadh, “CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION IN SAUDI: NEXT STEPS,” 08RIYADH1230, August 11, 2008, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08RIYADH1230.html>.

47 Ibid.

Saudi officials creating a major new security force to conduct offensive missions against potential threats, officials from both countries committed themselves to providing the Saudi oil industry with some of the strongest safeguards possible. “From the world's largest oil exporter and most significant swing producer, we want increased and more physically secure oil production,” the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ford M. Fraker explained.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, officials in the subsequent Obama administration shared the same objectives. Right from the start of their time in office, administration officials continued to work closely with the Saudi Ministry of the Interior (MOI) to implement the new security programs. Defense Department officials are “contributing expertise in training and is equipping a new 35,000-man MOI security force that will protect critical infrastructure sites,” the U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia confirmed. Energy Department officials are “assisting MOI by conducting critical infrastructure vulnerability assessments and by providing technical assistance,” they added.<sup>49</sup>

In a separate report, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) provided additional confirmation. Officials in Washington are still “assisting the Saudi government in identifying critical infrastructure vulnerabilities; developing security strategies to protect critical infrastructure; and recruiting and training a new MOI force, the Facilities Security Force, to protect its critical infrastructure,” the GAO reported. Providing more details, the GAO specified that Energy Department officials are “contributing expertise in

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48 Embassy Riyadh, “TRANSITION OVERVIEW PAPER FOR SAUDI ARABIA,” 09RIYADH211, February 1, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09RIYADH211.html>.

49 Embassy Riyadh, “SCENESETTER FOR UNDER SECRETARY KENNEDY'S JULY 25-27 VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA,” 09RIYADH949, July 20, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/07/09RIYADH949.html>.

conducting facility assessments and developing security strategies for Saudi energy production facilities.” In addition, the GAO confirmed that Defense Department officials “will contribute expertise in training and equipping the Facilities Security Force, which is intended to have more than 35,000 personnel when fully developed.” Altogether, the GAO confirmed that the Obama administration was moving forward with the plans.<sup>50</sup>

In fact, the Obama administration accelerated the ongoing efforts. In October 2010, announced their plans to provide the Saudi government with \$60 billion worth of military hardware. “This proposed sale has tremendous significance from a strategic regional perspective,” the State Department official Andrew J. Shapiro explained. The new weaponry “will enhance Saudi Arabia's ability to deter and defend against threats to its borders and to its oil infrastructure, which is critical to our economic interests.”<sup>51</sup>

At the time the administration announced its plans, the Defense Department official Alexander Vershbow made a similar point about the new arms deal. Speaking alongside Shapiro, Vershbow explained that the administration intended for the Saudi government to use the military hardware to better secure the country's oil facilities. The military helicopters included in the deal will be “providing area security for Saudi military forces, protecting the borders, and defending critical energy infrastructure sites and installations,” Vershbow explained.<sup>52</sup>

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50 U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Combating Terrorism: U.S. Agencies Report Progress Countering Terrorism and Its Financing in Saudi Arabia, but Continued Focus on Counter Terrorism Financing Efforts Needed,” GAO-09-883, September 2009, 20.

51 Andrew J. Shapiro and Alexander Vershbow, “Briefing on Pending Major Arms Sale,” October 20, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rm/149749.htm>. For more discussion, see Matthew Lee, “US to sell \$60 billion in advanced arms to Saudi,” *Associated Press*, October 20, 2010.

52 *Ibid.*

In short, the leaders of the United States played a direct role in hardening the security of the Saudi oil industry. By providing the Saudi government with everything from direct advice on how to model the security of the country's oil industry to direct assistance in the form of helicopters and other weaponry, U.S. officials enabled the Saudi government to more effectively secure the country's oil industry. In the process, U.S. officials employed the full resources and military power of the United States to secure the Saudi oil industry.

### Maintaining Absolute Control

As they inserted themselves directly into Saudi affairs, U.S. officials also acted in ways that had significant political consequences for the people of Saudi Arabia. While they certainly claimed to support freedom and democracy in the world, U.S. officials empowered a tyrannical Saudi government that maintained absolute control over the country. Indeed, U.S. officials began their approach to the Middle East by empowering one of the most tyrannical regimes in the world.

When they first began to develop their relations with the ruling Saudi monarchy, U.S. officials clearly understood that their Saudi counterparts cared little for democracy. As the White House official Harry L. Hopkins commented in June 1941, “just how we could call that outfit a 'democracy' I don't know.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Harry L. Hopkins to Jesse Jones, June 14, 1941, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, *Investigation of the National Defense Program*, 80<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., Part 40, July 28, 29, 30, 31; August 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11, 1947, 25415.

Throughout the rest of the twentieth century, U.S. officials pointed to the same basic issue with the country. Although they quickly forged close relations with the ruling Saudi monarchy, U.S. officials recognized that their allies in the Saudi government had not created a democratic state. “There are no democratic institutions as we know them,” State Department officials observed during the late 1970s.<sup>54</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials identified the same basic reality in the country. For example, the U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia explained in one of their internal reports in June 2001 that the ruling Saudi monarchy had never displayed any interest in democracy. In recent years, “regime critics have been exiled or marginalized abroad and co-opted or muzzled at home,” the diplomats reported. In addition, the diplomats noted that the ruling Saudi monarchy had acquired a powerful hold over the country. “To a large extent, the Al Saud are masters of their own ruling destiny,” the diplomats explained. As long as the members of the ruling family avoided internal disagreements, the diplomats believed that the ruling Saudi monarchy would maintain a powerful hold on power. “All but a dwindling number of elderly Saudis have known nothing but Al Saud rule, and it is probably difficult for most Saudis to imagine life without an Al Saud family member on the throne,” they added. “Barring fallout over succession surprises or a catastrophic regional political upheaval, the royal family should be able to maintain absolute control of the kingdom for the foreseeable future.”<sup>55</sup>

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54 “Briefing Paper Prepared in the Department of State,” undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula*, vol. 18 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2015), 460.

55 Embassy Riyadh, “THE AL SAUD AND CHALLENGES TO STABILITY,” 01RIYADH1771, June 27, 2001, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2001/06/01RIYADH1771.html>.



In the following years, the diplomats continued to describe the ruling Saudi monarchy as the masters of the country. In November 2006, for example, the diplomats made their point by comparing the country to a family-run corporation. “Saudi Arabia is like the Ford Motor Company,” the diplomats explained. “The family name is on the door.” To reinforce their point, the diplomats specified that the ruling Saudi family dominated national life in Saudi Arabia. The Al Saud family has “built up the Al Saud alone into a sort of super tribe and the nation's only truly national institution,” the diplomats explained. Consequently, “the kingdom's political leadership will likely remain within the Al Saud family for the foreseeable future.”<sup>56</sup>

Continuing with their analysis, the diplomats then pointed to a major new development that boded well for the Saudi monarchy. In their report, they noted that the ruling Al Saud family had recently strengthened its grip on power by creating a new succession process. “The new system is clearly designed to ease the passage of power from the sons of King Abdulaziz to his most talented grandsons, not to the general public,” the diplomats explained. Impressed by the new system, the diplomats even described its implementation as a major achievement. “It is a remarkable achievement that has probably extended Al Saud rule well into this century,” the diplomats commented.<sup>57</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials only continued to reaffirm the basic nature of the Saudi regime. In February 2009, for example, the U.S.

Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ford M. Fraker informed the Secretary of State Hillary

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<sup>56</sup> Embassy Riyadh, “THE NEW SUCCESSION LAW PRESERVES THE MONARCHY WHILE REDUCING THE KING'S PREROGATIVES,” 06RIYADH8921, November 22, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06RIYADH8921.html>.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Clinton that he dealt with a family-run dictatorship in Saudi Arabia. “Most Embassies deal with the governments of long-established nation states,” Fraker explained. “In Riyadh we deal with a family, who within living memory created a new state and then named it for themselves.” Moreover, Fraker confirmed that the ruling Saudi family intended to maintain absolute control over the country. “Preserving the unity of their diverse state and their prerogatives as the ruling family are the Al Saud's overriding priorities,” Fraker explained.<sup>58</sup>

When the U.S. diplomats in Saudi Arabia welcomed the Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner to the country in July 2009, they even made light of the fact that they worked so closely with the Saudi dictatorship. “Embassy Riyadh warmly welcomes you to the Kingdom,” the diplomats explained. “While it's not exactly magical, it is unique and it is important.” In other words, the diplomats jokingly compared the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Magic Kingdom in Walt Disney World.<sup>59</sup>

Still, the diplomats acknowledged that the Saudi Kingdom remained quite different from the Magic Kingdom. The Saudi Kingdom remains “the only country in the world that is named after the ruling family and where almost all the senior government positions are filled by either brothers or half-brothers of the founder of 'modern' Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz,” the diplomats reported. In other words, the diplomats described the Saudi Kingdom as a family-run dictatorship.<sup>60</sup>

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58 Embassy Riyadh, “TRANSITION OVERVIEW PAPER FOR SAUDI ARABIA,” 09RIYADH211, February 1, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09RIYADH211.html>.

59 Embassy Riyadh, “SCENESETTER FOR TREASURY SECRETARY GEITHNER'S JULY 14 VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA,” 09RIYADH910, July 12, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/07/09RIYADH910.html>.

60 Ibid.

Clearly, U.S. officials knew perfectly well that the Saudi government exerted absolute control over Saudi Arabia. No matter how many times they claimed to support freedom and democracy in the Middle East, U.S. officials began their approach to the Middle East by forming a close alliance with the brutally repressive Saudi dictatorship. Indeed, U.S. officials knowingly empowered one of the world's most repressive tyrannies.

#### The Epicenter of Terrorist Finance

As they worked closely with the Saudi tyranny, the leaders of the United States also accepted another significant consequence to their actions. While they certainly claimed to oppose governments that supported terrorism, U.S. officials knew fully well that the ruling Saudi monarchy provided safe haven for some of the world's main funders of Islamic terrorist organizations. Indeed, U.S. officials knowingly supported a brutal dictatorship that played a central role in exporting terrorism around the world.<sup>61</sup>

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, which were primarily conducted by Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia, U.S. officials acknowledged that Islamic terrorists received much of their funding from Saudi donors. Although officials in the Bush administration refuted the speculation about a possible connection between the Saudi government, the Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, and the terrorist attacks on 9/11, many U.S. officials

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61 For more discussion, see the various reports published by the Congressional Research Service titled "Saudi Arabia: Terrorist Financing Issues."

confirmed that Islamic terrorists raised a significant amount of their money from Saudi sources.<sup>62</sup>

In the years following 9/11, a number of officials also made the connection between Saudi Arabia and Islamic terrorism. Speaking before a congressional committee in June 2003, the Treasury Department official David Aufhauser explained that Saudi Arabia was one of the main sources of terrorist finance in the world. “In many cases it is the epicenter,” Aufhauser stated. During his testimony, he specified that numerous Islamic terrorist organizations received their funding directly from Saudi sources. “Is the money from Saudi Arabia a significant source of funding for terrorism generally?” a senator asked. “Yes,” Aufhauser answered. “Principally al Qaeda but many other recipients as well.”<sup>63</sup>

Likewise, the former State Department official Jonathan M. Winer pointed to the same relationship. Speaking before another congressional committee in July 2003, Winer explained that Saudi donors provided al Qaeda with most of its funding. Certainly, “one core fact should by now no longer be in dispute,” Winer explained. “Saudi Arabia has been the most significant source of terrorist funds for Al Qaeda.” After making his point, Winer then insisted that a growing body of evidence confirmed the connection. The evidence “is voluminous in that most of the major elements of Al Qaeda have reported Saudi funding ties, and Saudi funds permeate the world of Islamic charities, supporting

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62 For more discussion, see the following sources: James Risen and David Johnston, “Report on 9/11 Suggests a Role By Saudi Spies,” *New York Times*, August 2, 2003; Carl Hulse, “New Light Cast on Secret Pages in Sept. 11 Report,” *New York Times*, February 5, 2015.

63 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security of the Committee on the Judiciary, *Terrorism: Growing Wahhabi Influence in the United States*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., June 26, 2003, 12.

entities in the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe and North America tied to terrorism,” Winer explained.<sup>64</sup>

The following year, the U.S. government commission that investigated the terrorist attacks on 9/11 also indicated that al Qaeda received much of its funding from Saudi donors. Although the 9/11 Commission “found no evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or senior Saudi officials individually funded the organization,” it left open the possibility that non-senior Saudi officials played some role in the attacks while acknowledging that Saudi donors provided al Qaeda with much of its funding. Undoubtedly, “al Qaeda found fertile fund-raising ground in Saudi Arabia, where extreme religious views are common and charitable giving was both essential to the culture and subject to very limited oversight,” the 9/11 Commission reported.<sup>65</sup>

In the years after the 9/11 Commission released its report, many officials provided additional confirmation of the connection. For example, the Treasury Department official Stuart Levey informed a congressional committee in July 2005 that wealthy Saudi donors played a central role in funding terrorist organizations. “Wealthy Saudi financiers and charities have funded terrorist organizations and causes that support terrorism and the ideology that fuels the terrorists' agenda,” Levey explained. “Even today, we believe that Saudi donors may still be a significant source of terrorist financing.”<sup>66</sup>

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64 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Governmental Affairs, *Terrorism Financing: Origination, Organization, and Prevention*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., July 31, 2003, 112, 119. For more of Winer's perspective, see U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, *The Treasury Department and Terrorism Financing*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., May 19, 2004.

65 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), 171. In addition, the 9/11 Commission reported that “Saudi Arabia’s society was a place where al Qaeda raised money directly from individuals and through charities” (371).

66 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, *Money Laundering and Terror Financing Issues in the Middle East*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., July 13, 2005, 43.

A year later, the U.S. diplomats who worked in Saudi Arabia also confirmed that Islamic terrorist organizations raised their funds from Saudi donors. “Saudi Arabia remains a key source of terrorism finance,” the diplomats reported. To support their point, the diplomats cited secret evidence. “A variety of non-public information suggests that terrorism financiers and facilitators have quickly adapted to new Saudi regulations on charities, banks, and financial reporting requirements and choose to move money through informal means (e.g., couriers, mail, hawalas, and personal travel).” In addition, the diplomats noted that Saudi donors probably used other methods to support terrorist organizations. “Saudi financiers of external terrorist/extremist groups may personally carry cash outside of Saudi Arabia into banking or hawala centers such as Manama and Dubai, where they can easily make money transfers to Iraq, Syria, and even Iran without encountering scrutiny,” the diplomats reported. Altogether, the diplomats confirmed that Saudi donors continued to fund terrorists.<sup>67</sup>

At times, some observers even suggested that U.S. officials played a key role in the process. In April 2007, for example, the former Director of Central Intelligence R. James Woolsey argued that the United States bore some responsibility for the growth of Islamic terrorist organizations. “The oil revenues that go to Saudi Arabia and other parts of the gulf are used, directly and indirectly, to spread Wahhabi – the Wahhabi version of Islam around the world,” Woolsey explained. “It is essentially the same ideology as that of al Qaeda.” With his remarks, Woolsey suggested that the economic ties between the United States and Saudi Arabia indirectly helped to support the very kinds of Islamic

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<sup>67</sup> Embassy Riyadh, “USG ASSESSMENTS OF TERRORIST/INSURGENT FINANCE OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS IN COUNTRIES NEIGHBORING IRAQ: SAUDI ARABIA,” 06RIYADH7838, October 5, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/10/06RIYADH7838.html>.

extremist groups that U.S. officials claimed to oppose. As long as “we fund the dissemination of this ideology around the world,” the United States will fight a war against terrorism “in which we pay for both sides,” Woolsey stated.<sup>68</sup>

Even when U.S. officials did not make the connection between Saudi oil and terrorism, they still conceded that the Saudi government played a role in empowering Islamic extremists. For instance, members of Congress acknowledged in August 2007 that the Saudi government effectively permitted Saudi donors to raise funds for Islamic terrorist organizations. “Saudi Arabia has an uneven record in the fight against terrorism, especially with respect to terrorist financing, support for radical madrassas, a lack of political outlets for its citizens, and restrictions on religious pluralism,” members of Congress reported.<sup>69</sup>

The following year, the Treasury Department official Stuart Levey then provided some important clarification. Speaking before a congressional committee in April 2008, Levey clarified that the Saudi government had actually made some efforts to subdue certain terrorist groups in their country. Saudi officials “are serious about fighting Al Qaeda in their kingdom, and they do,” Levey explained. “They capture them, they kill them, they wrap them up.” At the same time, Levey conceded that Saudi officials still did not make the same kinds of efforts against the organizations that exported terrorism to other parts of the world. “The seriousness of purpose with respect to the money going out of the kingdom is not as high,” Levey explained. As a result, “Saudi Arabia, today,

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68 U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, *Geopolitical Implications of Rising Oil Dependence and Global Warming*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., April 18, 2007, 100, 100-101, 101.

69 *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007*, Public Law 110-53, 110th Cong., August 3, 2007, Section 2043.

remains the location from which more money is going to Sunni terror groups and the Taliban than from any other place in the world.”<sup>70</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, many officials pointed to the same overall trends in the country. In December 2009, the State Department highlighted the same uneven record of the Saudi government. “While the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) takes seriously the threat of terrorism within Saudi Arabia, it has been an ongoing challenge to persuade Saudi officials to treat terrorist financing emanating from Saudi Arabia as a strategic priority,” the State Department reported. Providing more details, the State Department specified that Saudi donors played a central role in funding some of the world’s most notorious Islamic terrorist organizations. Currently, “donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide,” the State Department reported. The country “remains a critical financial support base for al-Qa’ida, the Taliban, LeT, and other terrorist groups.”<sup>71</sup>

A year later, the State Department could only point to the same basic issue. “Saudi Arabia has yet to fully implement its UN obligations, and individuals and entities within the borders of Saudi Arabia continue to be a significant source for terrorist financing,” the State Department confirmed.<sup>72</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States remained fully aware that the Saudi government provided safe haven for some of the primary backers of Islamic terrorist

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70 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, *Anti-Terrorism Financing: Progress Made and Challenges Ahead*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., April 1, 2008, 17.

71 Secretary of State, “TERRORIST FINANCE: ACTION REQUEST FOR SENIOR LEVEL ENGAGEMENT ON TERRORISM FINANCE,” 09STATE131801, December 30, 2009, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09STATE131801.html>.

72 U.S. Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Country Database*, May 2010, 364. Available online at <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2010/database/index.htm>.



organizations. Although they certainly condemned terrorism as one of the plagues of the modern world, even employing their tremendous military power with the stated intention of waging a war against terrorism, U.S. officials recognized that their partners in the Saudi government enabled some of the world's most notorious Islamic terrorist organizations to raise their funds from sources inside Saudi Arabia. Indeed, U.S. officials based their strategy for the Middle East on their alliance with a repressive dictatorship that played a key role in exporting terrorism around the world.

### Iraq: It's All About Oil

Facing significant complications to their plans for Saudi Arabia, the leaders of the United States also decided to hedge their approach by focusing on other countries in the area. Although they certainly made it their primary goal to maintain a Saudi Arabia-centered system, U.S. officials decided that they needed to work through other countries in the Middle East.

Among the other countries in the Middle East, U.S. officials often turned to Iraq. Since Iraq featured its own extensive quantities of oil, U.S. officials viewed the country as another critically important element of their plans to control the region's oil. As a result, U.S. officials sought to use Iraq to gain more leverage over the area.<sup>73</sup>

After World War II, U.S. officials first began focusing their attention on Iraq. As State Department officials explained in their policy statement on Iraq, the energy-rich

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<sup>73</sup> For more discussion, see the following sources: Steven Hurst, *The United States and Iraq Since 1979: Hegemony, Oil, and War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Peter L. Hahn, *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

country could provide them with many benefits. “Iraq is important to the United States and the western democracies because of its strategic location, its vast petroleum reserves, its control of the potentially fertile Tigris-Euphrates valley, and its control of Basra, the largest seaport on the Persian Gulf,” the State Department officials reported. After making their point, the State Department officials then specified that they wanted to see the country increase its production of oil. Considering “the world significance of oil and the role it plays internally in Iraq, the US discreetly should continue to encourage increased development of Iraq oil resources,” the State Department officials advised. In sum, the State Department officials made it clear that they favored Iraq for its oil.<sup>74</sup>

In fact, U.S. officials often turned to the country to influence the regional oil market. During the 1980s, for example, the administration of Ronald Reagan helped the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein wage a vicious war against Iran to weaken the influence of the Iranian government over the region’s oil market. “The stakes involved for Western interests are too vital to permit complacency,” the U.S. diplomats in Iraq explained. “Even a victorious Iran with lesser ambitions at minimum could expect to dominate oil policy in the region and force a choice among Gulf rulers between distancing themselves from the U.S. or embracing us as never before.” Concerned about the possible effects of an Iranian victory, the Reagan administration ultimately decided to provide the Iraqi government with various forms of assistance, even helping Hussein target Iranians with

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74 “Policy Statement Prepared in the Department of State,” November 9, 1950, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, vol. 5 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 651, 653.

chemical weapons. Indeed, the Reagan administration helped the brutal Iraqi dictator prevail in a horrific war that claimed the lives of more than a million people.<sup>75</sup>

Following the war, U.S. officials then applied a similar logic to Iraq. Just as they did not want to see Iran dominate oil policy in the region, they did not want to see a newly empowered Iraqi government make any effort to displace Saudi Arabia as the focal point of the regional oil market.

After Hussein attacked and occupied the neighboring country of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, officials in Washington clearly articulated their concerns. The day after Hussein launched his invasion, officials in the administration of George H. W. Bush held a meeting in which they all outlined their basic thinking on the matter. “On the oil issue, he would dominate OPEC over time,” the State Department official Lawrence Eagleburger warned. “As to his intentions, Saudi Arabia looks like the next target. Over time he would control OPEC and oil prices.” During the meeting, the Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney issued a similar warning. “He has clearly done what he has to do to dominate OPEC, the Gulf and the Arab world,” Cheney stated. “He is 40 kilometers from Saudi Arabia, and its oil production is only a couple of hundred kilometers away. If he doesn't take it physically, with his new wealth he will still have an impact.” After Cheney made his point, the White House official John Sununu then provided additional emphasis. If Hussein “moves into Saudi Arabia, he would control 70 percent of Gulf oil,” Sununu

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75 Embassy Baghdad, “The Gulf War: Prospects for Peace or Expansion,” 85BAGHDAD3988, November 24, 1985, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/1985/11/85BAGHDAD3988.html>; Shane Harris and Matthew M. Aid, “Exclusive: CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as He Gassed Iran,” *Foreign Policy*, August 26, 2013, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/08/25/secret\\_cia\\_files\\_prove\\_america\\_helped\\_saddam\\_as\\_he\\_gassed\\_iran](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/08/25/secret_cia_files_prove_america_helped_saddam_as_he_gassed_iran). For more discussion, see Peter L. Hahn, “From Tension to Rapprochement: U.S.-Iraqi Relations in a Turbulent Decade, 1979-1989,” in *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 67-86.

warned. If Hussein “moves into UAE, then he would have 90-95 percent of the oil in the Gulf or 70 percent of all of OPEC. It would be very easy for him to control the world's oil.” In brief, administration officials made it clear that they did not want to see Hussein follow his invasion of Kuwait by attempting to create a new Iraq-centered system for the regional oil market.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, President Bush shared the same concerns. As his administration began moving to conduct a massive military intervention in the region to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait, Bush insisted that the United States must employ its military power to prevent Hussein from gaining control of the region's oil. “Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom, and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of that one man, Saddam Hussein,” Bush warned.<sup>77</sup>

In the following years, officials in Washington only continued to harbor the same concerns about Hussein. Although the Bush administration had succeeded in pushing Iraqi forces out of Kuwait with its military intervention and its successors in the Clinton administration had successfully contained Hussein to Iraqi borders, U.S. officials continued to believe that Hussein still wielded too much influence over the world's oil.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the administration of George W. Bush clearly revealed its concerns. With the goal of eliminating Hussein’s remaining influence over the global oil market, the Bush administration decided to wage a war of aggression

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76 U.S. National Security Council, “NSC Meeting on the Persian Gulf,” August 3, 1990. Available online at <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/us-bush.asp>.

77 George Bush, “Remarks to Department of Defense Employees,” August 15, 1990, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 1990 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 1139.

against Iraq to remove Hussein from power. As the Bush administration explained in a National Security Presidential Directive titled “Iraq: Goals, Objectives and Strategy,” it intended to remove Hussein from power “to minimize disruption in international oil markets.”<sup>78</sup>

At the time, additional officials pointed to the administration’s motives. As the Bush administration began preparing its invasion, State Department planners began planning to restructure the country’s oil industry. The country requires “a radical restructuring of its oil policy” and “a radically different oil policy,” the State Department planners insisted. Hoping to diminish the control of the Iraqi government over the country’s oil industry, the planners put together a major new program to bring more international oil companies into the country. Ultimately, “we have an obligation” to “define the terms, conditions and ramifications of alternative industry structures that will urgently induce substantial direct investment into Iraq’s oil industry,” the planners insisted. Indeed, the planners saw the war as an opportunity to restructure the Iraqi oil industry.<sup>79</sup>

After the Bush administration followed through on its plans to overthrow Hussein and install a new government in Iraq, the longtime Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan then acknowledged what everyone in Washington had always known about the war. In his memoirs, Greenspan confirmed that the Bush administration had gone to

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78 National Security Presidential Directive, “Iraq: Goals, Objectives and Strategy” (draft), quoted in Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 155.

79 Oil and Energy Working Group, Oil Policy Subgroup, “Considerations Relevant to an Oil Policy for a Liberated Iraq,” January 27, 2003, in U.S. Department of State, *Oil and Energy*, vol. 13 of *The Future of Iraq Project*, 2003. Available online at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB198/index.htm>.

war for oil. “I am saddened that it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge what everyone knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil,” Greenspan remarked.<sup>80</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States remained intensely focused on Iraq's oil. Whether they worked closely with the Iraqi government to gain additional leverage over the regional oil market or they worked against the Iraqi government to prevent it from displacing Saudi Arabia as the focal point in the regional oil market, U.S. officials viewed Iraq as another critical element of their plans to control the production and distribution of the world's oil. As a result, U.S. officials organized their actions in the country around their concerns about oil.

#### A Serious Regime Change Policy

For many years, U.S. officials also focused their efforts in Iraq on one key mission. Starting in the late twentieth century and continuing into the early twenty-first century, U.S. officials persistently worked to overthrow the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. From the time the administration of George H. W. Bush intervened in the region in 1990 to the time the administration of George W. Bush attacked Iraq in 2003, officials in three different administrations spent over a decade trying to remove the Iraqi dictator from power.<sup>81</sup>

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80 Alan Greenspan, *The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2007), 463. For more discussion, see Bob Woodward, “Greenspan: Ouster of Hussein Crucial for Oil Security,” *Washington Post*, September 17, 2007.

81 For more discussion, see Kenneth Katzman, “Iraq: U.S. Efforts to Change the Regime,” Congressional Research Service, October 3, 2002.

Of course, U.S. officials initially hoped to work with Hussein. After siding with the Iraqi dictator during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, U.S. officials believed that they could turn Hussein into one of their main partners in the region.<sup>82</sup>

Following the Iran-Iraq War, the administration of George H. W. Bush actively courted the Iraqi dictator. When the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie met with Hussein in July 1990, she informed the tyrant that President Bush “wants friendship.” To emphasize her point, Glaspie explained that President Bush had personally instructed her “to broaden and deepen our relations with Iraq.” After making her point, Glaspie sought to reassure the Iraqi dictator of her honest intentions by insisting that critical press coverage of Hussein was “cheap and unfair” and assuring Hussein that U.S. politicians endured similar treatment. “What is important is that the President has very recently reaffirmed his desire for a better relationship,” Glaspie stated. Indeed, Glaspie insisted that the Bush administration wanted to develop friendly relations.<sup>83</sup>

Administration officials only changed their mind about the tyrant after he invaded and occupied Kuwait just a few days after his meeting with Glaspie. Since Hussein refused to immediately withdraw his forces from Kuwait, administration officials became convinced that they could not trust the dictator.

When the administration intervened in the region, it also began moving toward the goal of ousting Hussein. Although the administration primarily sought to get Iraqi forces

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82 For more discussion, see Peter L. Hahn, “From Tension to Rapprochement: U.S.-Iraqi Relations in a Turbulent Decade, 1979-1989,” in *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 67-86.

83 Embassy Baghdad, “SADDAM'S MESSAGE OF FRIENDSHIP TO PRESIDENT BUSH,” 90BAGHDAD4237, July 25, 1990, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/1990/07/90BAGHDAD4237.html>. For more discussion, see Peter L. Hahn, “Reversing Iraqi Conquest: The Gulf War of 1990-1991,” in *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 87-112.

out of Kuwait, President Bush began openly calling on the people of Iraq to overthrow Hussein. The people of Iraq should “take matters into their own hands” and “force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside,” President Bush declared. Even after Hussein slaughtered tens of thousands of people during mass rebellions in March 1991, Bush called for the rebellions to continue. “I did suggest – and it’s well documented – what I thought would be good is if the Iraqi people would take matters into their own hands and kick Saddam Hussein out,” Bush explained. “I still feel that way, and I still hope they do.”<sup>84</sup>

At the time, Bush also began moving to oust Hussein. In May 1991, Bush ordered the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) to begin working to overthrow the Iraqi dictator. First, Bush instructed the agency to establish contacts with Kurdish rebels who could trigger a “rolling coup” that began in the northern part of Iraq and spread south to Baghdad. Second, he directed the C.I.A. to work with Hussein's opponents in the Iraqi military in the hopes that a disgruntled Iraqi military official would initiate a “palace coup” against Hussein. Third, Bush implemented a number of economic sanctions against Iraq with the goal of making life so miserable for the Iraqi people that some discontented Iraqi would provide U.S. officials with a “silver bullet” by assassinating Hussein.

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84 George Bush, “Remarks to the American Association for the Advancement of Science,” February 15, 1991, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 1991 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 145; George Bush, “Remarks on Assistance for Iraqi Refugees and a News Conference,” April 16, 1991, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 1991 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 380. For more discussion of the uprising and the aftermath, see Human Rights Watch, *Endless Torment: The 1991 Uprising in Iraq and Its Aftermath*, June 1992, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1992/06/01/endless-torment>.



Altogether, Bush initiated a major new program to create the conditions in which Hussein could be overthrown. “I’d like to see him out of there,” Bush acknowledged.<sup>85</sup>

In the following years, U.S. officials maintained many of the same operations. After the Bush administration left office, officials in the subsequent administration of Bill Clinton employed similar tactics with the goal of ousting the dictator. “In northern Iraq we ran a political program that was to eventually reduce Saddam’s control over Iraq and make him nothing more than the mayor of Baghdad,” the C.I.A. operative Warren Marik explained in 1997. There was “pressure from the top for the quick kill – for a coup on deadline,” he added.<sup>86</sup>

In fact, the Clinton administration made regime change into the official policy of the United States. On October 31, 1998, Clinton signed into law the Iraq Liberation Act, which made it “the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power.” After approving the new legislation, Clinton confirmed the basic idea behind the new legislation by declaring that he wanted to see “a new government” in Iraq.<sup>87</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administration of George W. Bush maintained the same intense focus on regime change. For example, the

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85 R. Jeffrey Smith and David B. Ottaway, “Anti-Saddam Operation Cost CIA \$100 Million,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 1996; George Bush, “The President’s News Conference With President Turgut Özal of Turkey in Ankara,” July 20, 1991, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 1991 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 937.

86 Jim Hoagland, “How CIA’s Secret War On Saddam Collapsed,” *Washington Post*, June 26, 1997.

87 *Iraq Liberation Act of 1998*, Public Law 105-338, 105th Cong., October 31, 1998, Section 3; William J. Clinton, “Remarks on the Situation in Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters,” November 15, 1998, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1998*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 1998 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 2036. For more discussion, see Peter L. Hahn, “The Enduring Menace of Saddam Hussein: U.S. Containment of Iraq in the 1990s,” in *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 113-135.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld turned his attention to the possibility of implementing “a serious regime-change policy” shortly after the Bush administration entered office. To make a full assessment of the situation, Rumsfeld first took into consideration some of the alternative options. One possibility “is to take a crack at initiating contact with Saddam Hussein,” Rumsfeld noted. Recalling his meeting with Hussein during the 1980s, when the Reagan administration had supported the tyrant, Rumsfeld wondered whether the same thing might work again. “Opening a dialogue with Saddam would be an astonishing departure for the USG, although I did it for President Reagan in the mid-1980s,” Rumsfeld noted. At the same time, Rumsfeld doubted that the approach would succeed. Although he did not make any definitive conclusions at the time, Rumsfeld returned to the idea of implementing a serious regime-change policy. “If Saddam's regime were ousted, we would have a much-improved position in the region and elsewhere,” he noted.<sup>88</sup>

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Rumsfeld then became completely determined to oust Hussein. Although Hussein had played no role in 9/11, Rumsfeld viewed the attacks as an opportunity to take the nation to war and overthrow the Iraqi dictator. “Hit S.H. @ same time – Not only UBL,” one of his staff members recorded him proposing just hours after the attacks.<sup>89</sup>

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88 Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, “Iraq,” July 27, 2001, Document 6, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 326, National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, DC. Available online at <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB326/>.

89 Joel Roberts, “Plans for Iraq Attack Began On 9/11,” *CBS News*, September 4, 2002, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/plans-for-iraq-attack-began-on-9-11/>. For the actual notes of Rumsfeld's comments on 9/11, see “DoD Staffer's Notes from 9/11 Obtained Under FOIA,” February 16, 2006, <http://www.outragedmoderates.org/2006/02/dod-staffers-notes-from-911-obtained.html>.

In the days after the attacks, Rumsfeld repeatedly raised the same basic idea. During a meeting with the members of the National Security Council, Rumsfeld suggested that the administration should give more consideration to the idea of attacking Iraq. “Why shouldn't we go against Iraq, not just al Qaeda?” Rumsfeld asked. When he met with administration officials during another meeting, Rumsfeld asked the same question. “Is this the time to attack Iraq?” he asked. In spite of the fact that Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11, Rumsfeld persistently encouraged his colleagues to consider the terrorist attacks as an opportunity to attack Iraq.<sup>90</sup>

Over the next several weeks, President Bush began to consider the same option. Although Bush had initially decided to respond to the terrorist attacks by attacking Afghanistan, the country that bin Laden had used for his base of operations, Bush eventually began to give more serious consideration to the idea of attacking Iraq. “What kind of war plan do you have for Iraq?” Bush asked Rumsfeld in late November 2001. “How do you feel about the war plan for Iraq?” After Rumsfeld explained that the current war plans required revisions, Bush then made one of his first major moves to take the nation to war against Iraq. “Let's get started on this,” Bush stated. The United States must have better plans for “removing Saddam Hussein if we have to.” Indeed, Bush began to consider the possibility of attacking Iraq to remove Hussein from power.<sup>91</sup>

In the following months, Bush then began making more direct efforts to oust Hussein. In February 2002, Bush issued an intelligence order in which he instructed the C.I.A. to revive its covert operations to overthrow Hussein. “Support opposition groups

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90 Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 49, 84.

91 Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 1, 2.

and individuals that want Saddam out,” Bush instructed. With his order, Bush authorized the C.I.A. to take direct action in the country. “Conduct sabotage operations inside Iraq,” he instructed.<sup>92</sup>

Shortly after he issued his intelligence order, Bush then publicly confirmed that he had settled on a policy of regime change. On April 4, 2002, Bush informed a journalist that “I made up my mind that Saddam needs to go.” To emphasize his point, Bush confirmed that his administration had formally settled on a policy of regime change. “The policy of my Government is that he goes,” Bush stated.<sup>93</sup>

A few months later, the U.S. Congress extended its support to the president. On October 10, 2002, the House of Representatives voted 296 to 133 to give the Bush administration the power to wage war against Iraq. The next day, the Senate gave the Bush administration the same power with a vote of 77 to 23. “The President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate,” the U.S. Congress declared.<sup>94</sup>

With the backing of Congress, the Bush administration then intervened in Iraq. Taking advantage of the massive military power of the United States, the Bush administration attacked Iraq in March 2003 and immediately overthrew the Iraqi

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92 Ibid., 108.

93 George W. Bush, “Interview With the United Kingdom's ITV Television Network,” April 4, 2002, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2002*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2002 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), 556.

94 *Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002*, Public Law 107-243, 107th Cong., October 16, 2002, Section 3. For more discussion, see Alison Mitchell and Carl Hulse, “A Lopsided Victory: G.O.P Backing Is Solid – Democrats’ Votes Are Sharply Split,” *New York Times*, October 11, 2002.

government. “MISSION ACCOMPLISHED,” the administration declared on May 1, 2003.<sup>95</sup>

Later in the year, the administration then provided additional confirmation that it had accomplished its mission. On December 14, 2003, the U.S. official Paul Bremer announced that U.S. military forces in Iraq had captured Saddam Hussein. “Ladies and gentlemen,” Bremer announced. “We got him!”<sup>96</sup>

With the capture of Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration also succeeded in fulfilling one of the longstanding goals of the U.S. government. More than ten years after a previous Bush administration had first begun working to overthrow Hussein, the administration of George W. Bush went directly into Iraq to fulfill the mission. As a result, administration officials confidently declared that they had achieved a tremendous victory.

#### A Grinding Daily Repetition of Violent Death

Of course, the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq also had serious consequences for the people of Iraq. By waging a massive military assault against Iraq, the Bush administration brought a tremendous amount of violence to the country. Although the Iraqi people had certainly suffered many horrors under the brutal rule of

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95 Tom Shales, “Aboard the Lincoln, A White House Spectacular,” *Washington Post*, May 2, 2003. For more discussion, see Peter L. Hahn, “The Downfall of Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the March to War in Iraq, 2001-2003,” in *Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 136-163.

96 L. Paul Bremer III, “Ambassador Bremer Briefing from Baghdad,” December 14, 2003, <http://www.dod.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20031214-1021.html>.

Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration conducted an extremely violent war that transformed Iraq into one of the most violent countries in the world.

Right from the start of the military operation, which administration officials dubbed “shock and awe,” the Bush administration brought a tremendous amount of violence to Iraq. Just weeks into the military campaign, military officials estimated that they had killed tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers. “There are 30,000 Iraqi casualties estimated,” the U.S. General Tommy Franks informed President Bush on April 9, 2003.<sup>97</sup>

In fact, some military officials made higher estimates. As they reviewed the initial military assault, they suggested that they had killed as many as 60,000 Iraqi military forces. “In other words, we had just been mowing them down as we're coming in,” President Bush later explained.<sup>98</sup>

After the U.S. military delivered its massive death blow, the Bush administration then acted in ways that perpetuated the violence. For example, President Bush periodically taunted the various groups in Iraq that resisted the invasion. “There are some who feel like that the conditions are such that they can attack us there,” Bush commented in July 2003. “My answer is: Bring them on.”<sup>99</sup>

On the ground in Iraq, U.S. military officials gave very real meaning to Bush's words. In the months after Bush made his comments, the U.S. military in Iraq continued killing large numbers of Iraqis. “Mr. President, we've killed scuds of them here,” the U.S.

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97 Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 407-408.

98 Ibid.

99 George W. Bush, “Remarks Announcing the Nomination of Randall Tobias To Be Global AIDS Coordinator and an Exchange With Reporters,” July 2, 2003, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2003*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2006 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), 816.

General John Abizaid informed Bush during the summer of 2004. “We've killed well over 5,000 of them and there's a whole bunch still out there.”<sup>100</sup>

In addition, the Bush administration created the conditions for further violence. After failing to create a new government under the leadership of the C.I.A. asset Ayad Allawi, administration officials created a new system of electoral politics that enabled the formerly marginalized Shiite and Kurdish groups in the country to obtain political power at the expense of an increasingly alienated Sunni population. With the new system, the administration significantly inflamed sectarian tensions in the country. The new approach “would not reduce violence and would likely make things worse,” the C.I.A. warned. “The Sunnis would be excluded and violence would go up.”<sup>101</sup>

Just as the C.I.A. predicted, the new electoral process made things much worse in Iraq. By the time Iraqi voters had approved a new constitution that the minority Sunni population largely opposed, sectarian violence had rapidly escalated. Increasingly powerful Shiite officials, who had benefited the most from the elections, quickly began using their newfound political power to violently suppress their political opponents in the minority Sunni population.<sup>102</sup>

Making matters worse, Shiite officials felt justified in their approach. When the Shiite official Hadi al-Amiri met with the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad in January 2006, Al-Amiri acknowledged that “there are human rights abuses,” but he

100 Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 319.

101 *Ibid.*, 312-313, 376, 381.

102 For more discussion, see the following sources: Solomon Moore, “Killings Linked to Shiite Squads in Iraqi Police Force,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 2005, <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/nov/29/world/fg-death29>; Dexter Filkins, “Sunnis Accuse Iraqi Military of Executions,” *New York Times*, November 29, 2005; Editorial, “Iraq's Death Squads,” *Washington Post*, December 4, 2005; Ned Parker, “Why Washington ignored torture by Iraqi militias,” *Reuters*, December 14, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-iraqi-militias-specialr-idUSKBN0TX1DG20151214>.

insisted that “the abuses are committed by people who were themselves abused by the Sunnis under Saddam Hussein (and therefore understandable).” The police forces “should not be held back by human rights concerns; it needs to act,” he insisted. In addition, both Al-Amiri and the future Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki defended the violence. “When pushed, Shia Islamists like Jawad [Nouri] al-Maliki and Hadi al-Amari will acknowledge human rights problems, but they justify excesses in the name of preserving security more broadly,” the U.S. diplomats in Iraq reported. Al-Maliki “advocates a hard fist against the Sunni Arab-dominated insurgency even at the expense of human rights violations.” Indeed, Iraq’s new Shiite officials defended the violence.<sup>103</sup>

By the time a powerful bomb had destroyed the al-Askari Mosque on February 22, 2006, sectarian tensions had grown even worse. The “sectarian tensions have grown substantially in recent months; the reaction to this mosque attack is only the latest manifestation,” the diplomats reported. After making their point, the diplomats then warned that the escalation in sectarian violence could soon tear the country apart. “Most notably, in public and private our contacts are speaking with genuine concern about the possibility of civil war, something we did not hear much about two years ago,” the diplomats warned.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. officials understood that Shiite death squads remained the source of much of the sectarian violence. When the U.S. General George Casey met with

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103 Embassy Baghdad, “SHIA ALLIANCE LEADERS BLAME MNF-I AND SUNNIS FOR CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION,” 06BAGHDAD52, January 7, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/01/06BAGHDAD52.html>; Embassy Baghdad, “(U) SENIOR DAWA MEMBER ON THE SECURITY SITUATION: IT'S MNF-I'S FAULT,” 06BAGHDAD53, January 8, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/01/06BAGHDAD53.html>; Embassy Baghdad, “SHIA ISLAMIST PM CONTENDERS: NO PERFECT CANDIDATE,” 06BAGHDAD402, February 10, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/02/06BAGHDAD402.html>.

104 Embassy Baghdad, “SECTARIAN NERVES ON EDGE AFTER SAMARRA SHRINE EXPLOSION,” 06BAGHDAD563, February 22, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/02/06BAGHDAD563.html>.



Iraqi officials one month after the bombing, he acknowledged that the “recent spikes in murders and executions are the work of militia death squads.” In addition, Casey noted that the security forces in the country had never seriously attempted to stop the Shiite death squads. Security operations primarily targeted Sunni “terrorists,” conducting on a daily basis “between 30 to 50 small, focused, intelligence-based operations,” Casey explained. “By stark contrast, there are currently zero operations being conducted against militia death squads who are killing more people in Baghdad every day than are the terrorists in the rest of the country.” Indeed, Casey found that the country's Shiite death squads inflicted some of the greatest violence on the people of Iraq.<sup>105</sup>

A few months later, Casey also attributed some of the responsibility to the country's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Speaking with President Bush in July 2006, Casey made the point by describing al-Maliki as a “sectarian” leader who had much to gain from the death squads. “Are we convinced that Shia leaders in Baghdad are serious about reining in the JAM and Shia death squads?” administration officials asked Casey. “No,” Casey answered, writing his answer in big capital letters to emphasize his point.<sup>106</sup>

In the following months, additional officials pointed to the responsibility of Iraqi officials for the violence. When the C.I.A. station chief in Baghdad met with the U.S. diplomats in the country in September 2006, the station chief explained that the Iraqi police forces oversaw many of the most violent operations in the country. “The Ministry

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105 Embassy Baghdad, “MCNS DISCUSSES MILITIA DEATH SQUADS, RECENT MILITARY OPERATIONS,” 06BAGHDAD981, March 25, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/03/06BAGHDAD981.html>.

106 Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History, 2006-2008* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 68, 76-77.

of Interior is uniformed death squads, overseers of jails and torture facilities,” the C.I.A. station chief explained.<sup>107</sup>

Later in the year, the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made the same point. Meeting with President Bush, Rice explained that “the Ministry of Interior was still practically overseeing death squads and a hundred bodies a day were still showing up in Baghdad.”<sup>108</sup>

In early 2007, the U.S. General David Petraeus had the opportunity to observe the aftereffects of the operations. Touring Baghdad in February 2007, Petraeus found that many parts of the city no longer contained their former residents. Many of Baghdad's neighborhoods had become “ghost towns,” Petraeus observed.<sup>109</sup>

In a series of reports to the State Department, the U.S. diplomats in Iraq provided additional details. In July 2007, the diplomats indicated that a massive campaign of ethnic cleansing had dramatically altered the city's demographics. “Before February 2006, few areas in Baghdad comprised a clear Sunni or Shia majority; more than half of Baghdad neighborhoods still contained a mixed population,” the diplomats explained. “As of July 2007, only about 20 percent of Baghdad neighborhoods remain mixed.” Providing more details, the diplomats specified that the city's Shiite population had largely displaced the city's Sunni population. “More than half of all Baghdad neighborhoods now contain a clear Shia majority,” they explained. “The concentration of Sunnis into limited enclaves surrounded by Shia areas makes it easier for Shia militias to push toward a final 'cleansing' of the city's Sunnis.” Indeed, the diplomats indicated that

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107 Ibid., 115.

108 Ibid., 292.

109 Ibid., 330.

Shia death squads had waged a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the city's Sunni population.<sup>110</sup>

Later in the year, the diplomats provided additional confirmation of the transformation. In an internal report, the diplomats described what they called a new “political truth” in Baghdad. Now, “the Shia religious political parties and their associated militias form the 'political core' of Baghdad,” they explained.<sup>111</sup>

Continuing with their report, the diplomats also made another key point. When they took into consideration some of the reasons for the transformation, the diplomats traced the new political truth in Baghdad to the new political structure that the Bush administration had imposed on Iraq. “Winning control of most government institutions in January 2005 – in elections that were boycotted by most Sunnis – gave those Shia parties access to the lion's share of the resources of the state, and the right to fight over the distribution of those resources amongst themselves,” the diplomats explained. Indeed, the diplomats suggested that the elections had enabled the city's Shia leaders to seize power and impose their will on the city. “Through legitimate elections, the Shia religious parties and their associated militias thus cemented their hold over provincial government and many of the services provided at the provincial and district levels,” the diplomats concluded.<sup>112</sup>

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110 Embassy Baghdad, “PART 1 OF 2: SECTARIAN VIOLENCE FORCES MAJOR SHIFT IN BAGHDAD DEMOGRAPHICS,” 07BAGHDAD2317, July 12, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/07/07BAGHDAD2317.html>; Embassy Baghdad, “PART 2 OF 2: SECTARIAN VIOLENCE FORCES MAJOR SHIFT IN BAGHDAD DEMOGRAPHICS,” 07BAGHDAD2318, July 12, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/07/07BAGHDAD2318.html>.

111 Embassy Baghdad, “BAGHDAD: SURGE IMPROVES SECURITY BUT CITY REMAINS DIVIDED,” 07BAGHDAD3531, October 25, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/10/07BAGHDAD3531.html>.

112 Ibid.

As the diplomats relayed their findings to the State Department, they also continued to report on another political truth in Baghdad. In many of their reports, the diplomats noted that the city remained plagued by violence. “Sectarian and politically-motivated displacements, murders, and kidnapping still plague the citizens of Baghdad,” the diplomats observed in January 2008.<sup>113</sup>

A month later, the diplomats relayed the same basic message. Although the Bush administration kept insisting that its “surge” of additional U.S. soldiers to Iraq had reduced the violence, the diplomats recognized that much of the violence continued unabated. “The troop surge in Baghdad has decreased the number of high-profile, high-casualty attacks over the past six months, but it has failed to halt a steady stream of small-scale assaults that cause approximately 30 civilian casualties per day,” the diplomats reported.<sup>114</sup>

Indeed, the diplomats recognized that the troop surge had not ended the violence in Iraq. The country remains in the grip of a “grinding daily repetition of violent death,” the diplomats reported. Over the course of the troop surge, “insurgent, sectarian, and political violence has not stopped, claiming between 700 and 2,500 Iraqis per month for the same period.”<sup>115</sup>

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113 Embassy Baghdad, “BATTLE FOR BAGHDAD PART 1: MAKING PROGRESS,” 08BAGHDAD264, January 29, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08BAGHDAD264.html>; Embassy Baghdad, “BATTLE FOR BAGHDAD PART 2: IT'S NOT OVER,” 08BAGHDAD265, January 29, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08BAGHDAD265.html>; Embassy Baghdad, “BATTLE FOR BAGHDAD PART 3: KEEPING MOMENTUM,” 08BAGHDAD266, January 29, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08BAGHDAD266.html>.

114 Embassy Baghdad, “GOI ASSASSINATIONS ON THE RISE,” 08BAGHDAD511, February 22, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/02/08BAGHDAD511.html>.

115 Embassy Baghdad, “SCENESETTER FOR OPIC PRESIDENT AND CEO MOSBACHER'S VISIT TO IRAQ,” 08BAGHDAD1389, May 4, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08BAGHDAD1389.html>.

During the surge, U.S. military forces also continued to deliver their own death blow to the country. Under the direction of the U.S. General Stanley McChrystal, the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) killed countless Iraqis. “JSOC was a killing machine,” the U.S. Major General William Mayville explained. “McChrystal oversaw the development of a precision-killing machine unprecedented in the history of modern warfare,” the retired U.S. Army Major General Robert Scales agreed.<sup>116</sup>

In fact, McChrystal himself shared the same belief. When he was later asked to comment on his role in the war, McChrystal explained that he had overseen a major effort to capture and kill countless Iraqis. “We did an awful lot of capturing and killing in Iraq for several years before it started to have a real effect,” McChrystal explained.<sup>117</sup>

As a result of their efforts, U.S. officials also made Iraq into one of the most deadly places in the world. Not only did the war cost the lives of thousands of U.S. soldiers, but it also resulted in the deaths of far more Iraqis. In October 2009, the Iraqi government estimated that the war had caused the deaths of more than 85,000 Iraqis between 2004 and 2008. Similarly, the secret records of the U.S. government indicated that the war had resulted in the deaths of more than 100,000 Iraqis between 2004 and 2009. A number of additional organizations, including Iraq Body Count and the Brookings Institution, arrived at comparable figures, concluding that about 100,000 Iraqis had died during the war during the Bush years. While many researchers suggested that

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116 Michael Hastings, “The Runaway General,” *Rolling Stone*, July 8, 2010; Robert H. Scales, “The Quality of Command: The Wrong Way and the Right Way to Make Better Generals,” *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 6 (November/December 2012): 139.

117 “Generation Kill: A Conversation With Stanley McChrystal,” *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 2 (March/April 2013): 7.

the total number of deaths went far higher, the numerous estimates all indicated that the war had brought widespread death and destruction to Iraq.<sup>118</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, things remained the same. In September 2010, the career diplomat Joe Wilson informed the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that pervasive violence remained a fact of life in Baghdad. “My trip to Baghdad (September 6-11) has left me slack jawed,” Wilson commented. “I have struggled to find the correct historical analogy to describe a vibrant, historically important Middle Eastern city being slowly bled to death.” After considering the issue, Wilson then suggested that the people of Baghdad had suffered one of the worst horrors of modern warfare. “Berlin and Dresden in World War II were devastated but they and their populations were not subjected to seven years of occupation that included ethnic cleansing, segregation of people by religious identity, and untold violence perpetrated upon them by both military and private security services,” Wilson remarked. Finally, Wilson provided one additional insight. Turning his attention to the role played by the U.S. military forces in the country, Wilson reported that the U.S. military forces continued to play a central role in perpetuating the violence. “The service people don't see themselves there to bring peace, light, joy or even democracy to Iraq,” Wilson reported. “They are there to kill the 'camel jockeys.’” Indeed, Wilson found that the U.S. military played a direct role in bringing some of the worst horrors of the modern world to Iraq.<sup>119</sup>

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118 For the estimates, see the following sources: Rebecca Santana, “85,000 Iraqis killed in almost 5 years of war,” *Associated Press*, October 14, 2009; Sabrina Tavernise and Andrew W. Lehren, “Buffeted by Fury and Chaos, Civilians Paid Heaviest Toll,” *New York Times*, October 23, 2010; Hannah Fischer, “Iraq Casualties: U.S. Military Forces and Iraqi Civilians, Police, and Security Forces,” Congressional Research Service, October 7, 2010.

119 Joe Wilson to Hillary Clinton, September 13, 2010, Freedom of Information Act, Case No. F-2014-20439, Doc. No. C05772428, [https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/HRCEmail\\_Feb29thWeb/O-2015-08627FEB29/DOC\\_0C05772428/C05772428.pdf](https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/HRCEmail_Feb29thWeb/O-2015-08627FEB29/DOC_0C05772428/C05772428.pdf).

Clearly, the leaders of the United States brought a tremendous amount of violence to Iraq. Rather than liberating the people of Iraq from the horrors of terror and brutality, they made life far worse for Iraqis. In the first place, U.S. officials empowered a sectarian Shiite regime that secured its hold on political power by waging a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the country's minority Sunni population. At the same time, U.S. officials added to the horrors by waging a tremendously violent war against anyone who resisted the U.S. military occupation. Through their efforts, U.S. officials transformed Iraq into one of the most deadly places in the world.

#### The Black Gold Rush

In spite of the horrors, the leaders of the United States remained determined to fulfill their strategic objectives for Iraq. As the sectarian Iraqi government asserted its control over the country, U.S. officials worked closely with the new Iraqi government to impose a new structure on the country's oil industry. Following the approach that the planners at the State Department had devised at the start of the war, U.S. officials worked to persuade the new Iraqi government to open the country's oil industry to international oil companies.

During the Bush administration's final year in office, U.S. officials began to make some of their first real progress in their efforts. As the U.S. diplomats in Iraq explained in one of their internal reports, Iraqi officials made the fateful decision to begin opening the country's oil industry to international oil companies (IOCs). New technical service agreements "would mark the first significant engagement between Iraq and western IOCs

since Iraq completed the nationalization of its oil sector in 1972,” the diplomats reported.<sup>120</sup>

At the time, the diplomats also explained that the new agreements featured a significant benefit. They could “help socialize the notion of international involvement in the development of Iraq's oil industry, long subject to ultra-nationalist hype about foreign exploitation,” they explained. Indeed, the diplomats believed that the new technical service agreements could provide the Iraqi government with the political cover that it needed to reopen the country's oil industry to international oil companies. The “agreements could help build political acceptability of an IOC role in the Iraqi oil sector,” the diplomats reported.<sup>121</sup>

Moreover, the diplomats saw another potential advantage. As they considered the implications of the new approach, the diplomats explained that the technical service agreements presented a major opportunity for companies based in the United States to gain access to Iraqi oil. Not only would “the IOCs benefit from managing these agreements,” but the agreements would “provide a considerable commercial opportunity for oil and gas equipment firms domiciled in the United States,” the diplomats explained. In short, the diplomats portrayed the new agreements as a potential boon for U.S. oil companies.<sup>122</sup>

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120 Embassy Baghdad, “FINE TUNING OUR POSITION ON OIL,” 08BAGHDAD471, February 19, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/02/08BAGHDAD471.html>.

121 Ibid; Embassy Baghdad, “WHAT IS THE U.S. VIEW OF THE PROPOSED IN-KIND ELEMENTS OF IRAQI OIL TECHNICAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS WITH OIL MAJORS,” 08BAGHDAD1021, April 3, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08BAGHDAD1021.html>.

122 Embassy Baghdad, “WHAT IS THE U.S. VIEW OF THE PROPOSED IN-KIND ELEMENTS OF IRAQI OIL TECHNICAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS WITH OIL MAJORS,” 08BAGHDAD1021, April 3, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08BAGHDAD1021.html>.



Trying to take advantage of the opening, State Department officials began working to move some of the most powerful oil companies back into Iraq. Very quickly, a team of officials persuaded their Iraqi counterparts to grant non-competitive no-bid contracts to a number of the world's most powerful oil companies, including Exxon Mobil, Shell, Total, and BP. "While the current contracts are unrelated to the companies' previous work in Iraq, in a twist of corporate history for some of the world's largest companies, all four oil majors that had lost their concessions in Iraq are now back," the *New York Times* reported.<sup>123</sup>

Of course, the deal also created considerable controversy. After the press disclosed the nature of the deal, Iraqi officials faced significant pressure to back away from the non-competitive no-bid contracts. "Oil Contracts Lose Steam," the U.S. diplomats in Iraq confirmed in one of their internal reports.<sup>124</sup>

Despite the setback, the leaders of the United States remained optimistic. Since Iraqi officials responded to the controversy by deciding to try an alternative approach rather than abandoning the plans altogether, U.S. officials believed that they could still open the country's oil industry to the international oil companies. "Iraq Ministry of Oil Prepares to Invite in Foreign Oil Companies," the U.S. diplomats in Iraq titled one of their reports. In their report, the diplomats specified that the Iraqi government had decided to create a new bidding process that would grant long-term technical service contracts (TSCs) to international oil companies. With the right strategy, "we can speculatively handicap this race," the diplomats noted. "The major IOCs (including

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123 Andrew E. Kramer, "Deals With Iraq Are Set to Bring Oil Giants Back," *New York Times*, June 19, 2008; Andrew E. Kramer, "U.S. Advised Iraqi Ministry on Oil Deals," *New York Times*, June 30, 2008.

124 Embassy Baghdad, "OIL CONTRACTS LOSE STEAM," 08BAGHDAD2354, July 28, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/07/08BAGHDAD2354.html>.

Exxon, Shell, Total, BP, and Chevron), which had been in negotiations that were cancelled originally for two-year TSCs, have the technical capability and financial resources to deliver on their commitment to increase production.”<sup>125</sup>

Moreover, the diplomats believed that the new process came with an additional benefit. As they considered the differences between the former approach that ended in controversy and the new bidding process, the diplomats found that the new approach would provide the international oil companies with stronger political cover. “The TSC licenses are an avenue to build political acceptability of an IOC role in the Iraqi oil sector,” the diplomats explained.<sup>126</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, the diplomats grew even more excited about the situation. As the Iraqi government began the new bidding process in June 2009, the diplomats explained that they were witnessing history in the making. “First Oil Bid Round: The Greatest Show On Earth,” the diplomats titled one of their reports. Providing more details, the diplomats specified that the new bidding process would make a significant amount of Iraqi oil available to the international oil companies. “Iraq will award bids on more barrels of oil in a single bid round than at any other time or place in history,” the diplomats noted. In short, the diplomats characterized the new bidding process as one of the most momentous events in world history.<sup>127</sup>

Following the initial round of bidding, the diplomats remained equally excited.

Although the Iraqi Ministry of Oil (MoO) had only awarded a single contract to a

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125 Embassy Baghdad, “IRAQ MINISTRY OF OIL PREPARES TO INVITE IN FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES,” 08BAGHDAD3241, October 7, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08BAGHDAD3241.html>.

126 Ibid.

127 Embassy Baghdad, “FIRST OIL BID ROUND: THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH.,” 09BAGHDAD1648, June 22, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/06/09BAGHDAD1648.html>.

consortium organized by the British company BP and the Chinese company CNPC, the diplomats viewed the outcome as a strategic success. “On the strategic level the MoO pulled off its first bid round since the 1972 nationalization of the oil industry – and did so with relatively little political outcry,” the diplomats reported.<sup>128</sup>

In a subsequent report, the diplomats made a comparable analysis. “While the results of Iraq's June 30 oil and gas bid round may at first seem disappointing, the bid round could be considered a modest success,” the diplomats explained. To support their point, the diplomats noted that the Iraqi government managed to avoid controversy. “If all or most of the offered fields had been awarded, the resulting political backlash and administrative turmoil could have led to paralysis,” the diplomats explained. Since Iraqi officials had completed the bidding in a way that mitigated the “widespread Iraqi concern that the bid round would be a wholesale selloff of Iraq's oil patrimony,” the diplomats viewed the outcome as an important step forward.<sup>129</sup>

Later in the year, the diplomats then called attention to another major development. In a report titled “Big Oil's About-Face on Iraq,” the diplomats explained that two additional consortiums of oil companies had reached similar agreements with the Iraqi government. As they explained in their report, the U.S. oil company Occidental had joined a consortium to service one of the country's largest oil fields and the U.S. oil company Exxon Mobil had led another consortium to service another one of the country's

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128 Embassy Baghdad, “IRAQ'S FIRST OIL BID ROUND: TOO HARD A BARGAIN?”

09BAGHDAD1805, July 6, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/07/09BAGHDAD1805.html>.

129 Embassy Baghdad, “RECONSIDERING IRAQ'S FIRST OIL BID ROUND AND LOOKING AHEAD TO THE DECEMBER BID ROUND,” 09BAGHDAD2661, October 3, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09BAGHDAD2661.html>.

largest oil fields. “If it was ever correct to refer to the first bid round as a failure, that characterization is demonstrably false now,” the diplomats reported.<sup>130</sup>

At the same time, the diplomats looked to the future with even greater expectations. With interest in the new agreements gaining momentum, the diplomats speculated that the additional agreements would prompt additional oil companies to pay more serious attention to Iraqi oil. “With three Iraqi super-giant oil fields locked up already, other companies could view bid round two as their last chance to participate in the black gold-rush,” the diplomats reported.<sup>131</sup>

In fact, the diplomats correctly predicted the effects of big oil's about-face on Iraq. In a report titled “Oil Stampede,” the diplomats informed that State Department that the second round of bidding drew enormous interest from the international oil companies. “The bidding started as a rush and quickly became a stampede as a broad range of international oil companies bid unheard of low prices for seven of the ten oil fields (or oil field groups) being offered,” they reported.<sup>132</sup>

Following the stampede, the diplomats then summarized the results of the two rounds of bidding. “Taken together, in the two rounds, 15 companies from 13 countries were awarded contracts,” the diplomats explained. Indeed, the diplomats confirmed that the Iraqi government had opened its oil industry to a wide array of international oil companies.<sup>133</sup>

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130 Embassy Baghdad, “BIG OIL'S ABOUT-FACE ON IRAQ: THREE WORLD CLASS OIL CONTRACTS IN ONE WEEK,” 09BAGHDAD3003, November 15, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09BAGHDAD3003.html>.

131 Ibid.

132 Embassy Baghdad, “OIL STAMPEDE: IRAQ'S 2ND BID ROUND RESULTS,” 09BAGHDAD3196, December 14, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09BAGHDAD3196.html>.

133 Embassy Baghdad, “THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IRAQ'S OIL BID ROUNDS,” 09BAGHDAD3245, December 16, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09BAGHDAD3245.html>.

Furthermore, the diplomats speculated that the results of the bidding process could lead to some significant changes for Iraq. “While much can easily go astray (on contracts, timetables, onshore construction, or export infrastructure), Iraq could conceivably be the world's largest exporter of oil within ten years,” the diplomats reported. “The impact should be largely positive, and U.S. firms will participate in nearly one third of Iraq's new, future oil production.” In short, the diplomats viewed the outcome as a major success.<sup>134</sup>

With the conclusion of the second round of bidding, the leaders of the United States also made another significant contribution to Iraq. By working closely with Iraqi officials, they opened the door to a potential new age for the oil industry in Iraq. Despite that fact that much of the country lay in ruins, they helped trigger a black gold rush in which many powerful international oil companies gained access to Iraq's oil industry. Consequently, U.S. officials believed that they had achieved another tremendous victory in the country.

## Conclusion

Of course, the leaders of the United States helped international oil companies return to Iraq as part of their much greater ambitions for the region. While they certainly began the twenty-first century by devoting an immense amount of their time and efforts to Iraq, U.S. officials pursued their objectives with the more general goal of strengthening their hold over the entire Middle East.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

With Iraq, U.S. officials mainly saw an opportunity to reshape the region to their advantage. As long as they could keep Iraq under their control, they believed that they could use the country to gain additional leverage over the global oil market.

At the same time, U.S. officials maintained their focus on Saudi Arabia. Since the country featured the largest known quantities of oil in the region, U.S. officials placed Saudi Arabia at the center of their efforts in the area.

Moreover, U.S. officials gained significant advantages from Saudi Arabia. By working closely with their Saudi allies, U.S. officials played a key role in determining the rate at which many nations around the world acquired their oil.

In fact, U.S. officials organized their entire strategy for the Middle East around their plans to control the global oil market. As long as they could maintain their control over the Middle East, U.S. officials believed they could more effectively shape the development of the international system.

Consequently, the leaders of the United States made it their goal to maintain an informal American empire in the Middle East. Indeed, they worked to keep much of the Middle East under their control as another one of the main elements of their global structure of imperialism.

## Chapter 5

### South Asia

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- South Asia: An Overwhelming Opportunity
  - A Vast and Nearly Unprecedented Peril
- India: Exploding the Boundaries of South Asia
  - Harsh On-the-Ground Realities
- Pakistan: An Important and Pivotal Nation
  - Democrats and Dictators
  - Spewing Out Terrorists
- Afghanistan: Let's Hit Them Hard
  - A Lot of Money and Force
  - A Criminal Syndicate
  - A Land Bridge
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

As the leaders of the United States have implemented their imperial grand strategy in the periphery, they have also focused their efforts on another peripheral region of the

world. Hoping to build on their imperial achievements in both Latin America and the Middle East, U.S. officials have worked to gain additional advantages from South Asia. After all, South Asia features “perhaps the highest level of untapped human and economic potential anywhere – potential that, if fully exploited, could change the international economic and social landscape in fundamental ways,” the U.S. diplomat Nancy J. Powell observed at the start of the twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, diplomatic historians have found that the United States played a powerful role in South Asia. For example, the diplomatic historian Robert J. McMahon showed in his study *The Cold War on the Periphery* (1994) that the United States “thrust itself fully into regional affairs” during the early 1950s to acquire a dominant position in the region. The United States “stood unquestionably as the principal external power in the subcontinent,” McMahon asserted.<sup>2</sup>

A few years later, the diplomatic historian Paul M. McGarr made a comparable assessment. In his study *The Cold War in South Asia* (2013), McGarr argued that the United States played a powerful role in shaping the region's development during the early part of the Cold War. The leaders of the United States “came to view South Asia, and India in particular, as a strategic Cold War prize deserving of American patronage,” McGarr explained.<sup>3</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama played a comparable role in the region. While the Cold War

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1 Nancy J. Powell, “Remarks by Ambassador Nancy J. Powell,” November 13, 2003, <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/wwwhamb03111301.html>.

2 Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 189.

3 Paul M. McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 346.



may have ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, officials in both administrations continued to pursue the strategic prize of South Asia. In the process, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations began the twenty-first century by making a major new push to transform South Asia into another key region on the periphery of their global structure of imperialism.

### South Asia: An Overwhelming Opportunity

During their involvement in South Asia, U.S. officials began their approach with one basic factor in mind. Since the region lay at the crossroads of the Asian continent, U.S. officials remained focused on the region's location. While they certainly cited many different reasons to justify their involvement in the area, U.S. officials primarily viewed South Asia as one of the keys to shaping the development of the Asian continent.

In the years after World War II, the leaders of the United States first began to identify South Asia as strategically located part of the world. In one major report on the area, a broad array of officials explained that South Asia could exert a powerful influence over the many surrounding areas. "The geographical position of South Asia is such that, if the economic and military potentials of the area were more fully developed, it could dominate the region of the Indian Ocean and exert a strong influence also on the Middle East, Central Asia and the Far East," the officials explained.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "Report by the SANACC Subcommittee for the Near and Middle East," SANACC 360/14, April 19, 1949, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, vol. 6 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 17.

In the following years, many U.S. officials expressed the same basic view of the region. For example, the staff members of the National Security Council identified South Asia as a critically important node of the Asian continent. “South Asia forms a great land bridge between the countries of Southeast Asia and the Middle East,” the staff members reported. Providing more details, the staff members specified that South Asia featured many important physical assets. The region “has seaports and naval bases from which control could be exercised over shipping passing through the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean,” the staff members noted. It also features “bases and communications facilities for insuring uninterrupted communications between Europe and Southeast Asia.” In all, the staff members identified South Asia as a strategically important region that could provide the United States with numerous advantages in the area.<sup>5</sup>

In more recent years, the leaders of the United States have maintained similar views of South Asia. Since entering office at the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration identified South Asia as a strategically located part of the Asian continent. “You have a region that, if you see it from India through Afghanistan, is going to be critical both in the world's future demographically and economically,” officials at the State Department explained in March 2005. The region features “China on one side, Iran and the Middle East on the other, and as we can see a somewhat turbulent Central Asian region to the north.”<sup>6</sup>

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5 “Study Prepared by the Staff of the National Security Council,” NSC 5409, undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Africa and South Asia (in two Parts), Part 2*, vol. 11 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 1096, 1096-1097, 1097.

6 U.S. Department of State, “Background Briefing by Administration Officials on U.S.-South Asia Relations,” March 25, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/43853.htm>.

When the State Department official John Gastright discussed the region during a press briefing in April 2005, he made a comparable assessment. Attributing special importance to the region's location, Gastright portrayed South Asia as a strategically important hub. South Asia functions as "a burgeoning economic dynamo and high tech hub, with the potential to serve as an economic bridge linking together China, Central Asia, and the Middle East," Gastright explained.<sup>7</sup>

A little over a year later, the State Department official Richard Boucher provided more details. During a press conference in July 2006, Boucher explained that South Asia and the surrounding areas featured tremendous potential. To make his point, Boucher mused about "the potential of South and Central Asia, the energy potential of Central Asia, the markets of South Asia, Pakistan and India, the sources of supply and goods from the south, the sources of financing and investment from the north." After making his point, Boucher then imagined that the many different parts of the region might operate together. The entire situation presented an "overwhelming opportunity" for the United States to create a powerful new force "between the Middle East and South Asia, between Russia and China, a region that can stand on its own and move forward in the world," he explained. Indeed, Boucher suggested that U.S. officials could transform the region into a powerful hub at the center of the hemisphere. "And so a lot of what we've been doing is trying to make these ideas become a reality and indeed putting the region together in this way makes sense," he remarked.<sup>8</sup>

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7 U.S. Department of State, "Talking Points on New South Asia Strategy," April 18, 2005, Freedom of Information Act, Case No. F-2006-00476, Doc. No. C18598601, [https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/NEA/F-2006-00476SCA/DOC\\_0C18598601/C18598601.pdf](https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/NEA/F-2006-00476SCA/DOC_0C18598601/C18598601.pdf).

8 Richard A. Boucher, "South and Central Asia Update," July 17, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rm/2006/69193.htm>.

The following year, Boucher then provided some more insights. Speaking before a congressional committee in March 2007, Boucher explained that the Bush administration intended to tie the surrounding regions together to create a new regional system. “We are working in close cooperation with our friends and partners to achieve important economic and trade linkages within the region,” Boucher explained. “Our strategy includes collaboration with other donors, the private sector, and appropriate regional organizations in meeting our common regional integration goals.”<sup>9</sup>

A few months later, the State Department official R. Nicholas Burns provided further clarification. In a written statement to a congressional committee, Burns explained that the Bush administration wanted to transform South and Central Asia into a unified hub at the center of the hemisphere. Administration officials view “the creation of new economic and technological links between South and Central Asia as a major American priority,” Burns explained. Providing more details, Burns specified that the Bush administration intended to make the region into a key energy corridor that ran through the center of Asia. “Through infrastructure projects such as roads and hydroelectric power in Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, we envision helping to tie these countries closer together so they can provide a long-term and oil and gas bridge from the Central Asian north down to South Asia,” Burns explained. Indeed, Burns confirmed that the Bush administration wanted to create a powerful new hub that “knit the countries of this broader region into new areas of interdependence.”<sup>10</sup>

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9 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *A Regional Overview of South Asia*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., March 7, 2007, 12, 15.

10 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Pakistan's Future: Building Democracy or Fueling Extremism?* 110th Cong., 1st sess., July 25, 2007, 17, 17-18.

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials continued pursuing the same plans for the region. Placing special focus on South and Central Asia, U.S. officials believed they could tie the two regions together to create a powerful new regional system. “We continue to see potential for expanded economic relations and the prospect of building a trade and energy corridor that can link Central Asia through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the rich markets of South Asia,” the U.S. diplomats in the region confirmed.<sup>11</sup>

Back in Washington, the State Department official Robert Blake provided additional confirmation of the administration’s plans. Speaking before a congressional committee in June 2009, Blake explained that the Obama administration intended to bring the countries of the region together to create a new regional system. “As we implement the President’s strategy on Afghanistan and Pakistan, we are working more closely to knit these two countries with their surrounding neighbors and with their region, and to open up foreign markets to their products,” Blake explained.<sup>12</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States shared a common objective for South Asia. Favoring the region for its location, U.S. officials hoped to transform the area into a strategic hub at the heart of Asia. By integrating South Asia with its surrounding areas, U.S. officials believed they could gain powerful leverage over the development of the rest of the hemisphere.

### A Vast and Nearly Unprecedented Peril

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11 Embassy Islamabad, “SCENESETTER FOR SPECIAL ENVOY HOLBROOKE,” 09ISLAMABAD236, February 4, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09ISLAMABAD236.html>.

12 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *A Regional Overview of South Asia*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., June 25, 2009, 7.

Of course, the leaders of the United States faced significant challenges to their plans for the region. As they worked to create their regional system, U.S. officials found themselves at the center of a bitter rivalry between the leaders of India and Pakistan. While they certainly hoped to manage the rivalry in a way that enabled them to create their strategic hub, U.S. officials found that they could never fully overcome the divisions between the Indian and Pakistani governments.

Right from the start of their involvement in South Asia, U.S. officials recognized that they could not easily unify the region. For starters, they saw that the decision of the British government to partition its former colony of India into the two independent countries of India and Pakistan in 1947 created tremendous hostility among the many different groups of people who lived in the area. “Force will undoubtedly have to be employed to control rebellious elements in Bengal and Punjab no matter who receives power,” the U.S. diplomat George R. Merrell observed.<sup>13</sup>

After the partition of India, U.S. officials found that the pre-partition divisions only hardened. Since the partition of India had unleashed a wave of violence that left as many as a million people dead, U.S. officials realized that they would struggle to overcome the resultant trauma. “The schism which led to the break-up of the old India was very deep, and this was further deepened by the slaughter of 1947-48,” officials at

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<sup>13</sup> “The Chargé in India (Merrell) to the Secretary of State,” May 2, 1947, in U.S. Department of State, *The British Commonwealth; Europe*, vol. 3 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), 155.

the State Department reported. “Therefore the development of a Pakistan-India *entente cordiale* appears remote.”<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. officials found that another outcome of the partition caused significant animosity. In numerous reports, U.S. officials explained that the leaders of both India and Pakistan developed a bitter disagreement over the unsettled fate of the border state of Jammu and Kashmir. “Their most important dispute has been over the disposition of Kashmir, where actual fighting between the two sides took place until halted by a UN cease-fire at the beginning of 1949,” U.S. intelligence analysts reported. Of all the disagreements between the leaders of India and Pakistan, the “most important is the Kashmir issue, which continues to cause great tension,” the staff members of the National Security Council agreed.<sup>15</sup>

During the final years of the twentieth century, U.S. officials also saw how far the leaders of both India and Pakistan would take their dispute. During a major conflict in the border state in 1999, officials in the administration of Bill Clinton watched Pakistani officials begin making preparations to deploy nuclear weapons. Administration officials kept receiving “disturbing information about Pakistan preparing its nuclear arsenal for possible use,” the administration official Bruce Riedel later recalled.<sup>16</sup>

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14 “Department of State Policy Statement,” April 3, 1950, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, vol. 5 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 1499.

15 “National Intelligence Estimate,” NIE-79, June 30, 1953, in *Africa and South Asia (in two parts), Part 2*, vol. 11 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 1083; “Study Prepared by the Staff of the National Security Council,” NSC 5409, undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Africa and South Asia (in two Parts), Part 2*, vol. 11 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 1109.

16 Bruce Riedel, “American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House,” Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania, 2002, 9. Available online at <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/casi/policypapers.html>.

In the years following the crisis, additional officials recalled the same possibility. Throughout the crisis, administration officials shared “a sense of vast and nearly unprecedented peril,” the U.S. official Strobe Talbott explained. Providing an example, Talbott noted that President Clinton feared that “the world was closer even than during the Cuban missile crisis to a nuclear war.”<sup>17</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, additional observers maintained the same fears. For example, the career diplomat Dennis Kux warned in 2001 that ongoing tensions in the region could still result in a nuclear war. Any “renewed conflict with India – over Kashmir again – could trigger the first use of atomic weapons since 1945 and cause a South Asian nuclear holocaust with incalculable consequences,” Kux warned.<sup>18</sup>

During the final years of the Bush administration, U.S. officials only continued to fear the same possibility. For example, the U.S. intelligence official Peter Lavoy warned NATO officials in November 2008 that both Indian and Pakistani officials kept making the kinds of moves that could precipitate a nuclear conflict. “Pakistan is producing nuclear weapons at a faster rate than any other country in the world,” Lavoy noted. At the same time, Lavoy warned that Indian officials often raised the stakes by conducting military exercises in the region. “The Indian military continues 'cold start' exercises on the Kashmir border, confirming the Pakistanis' worst suspicions,” Lavoy noted. Altogether, Lavoy indicated that the leaders of both India and Pakistan continued to engage in the type of behavior that could trigger a nuclear confrontation.<sup>19</sup>

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17 Strobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2004), 161, 167.

18 Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 367.

19 Mission USNATO, “ALLIES FIND BRIEFING ON AFGHANISTAN NIE "GLOOMY," BUT FOCUS ON RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE SITUATION,” 08USNATO453, December 5, 2008,



Just before the Obama administration entered office, the U.S. diplomats in Pakistan voiced similar concerns. In one of their internal reports, the diplomats warned that the leaders of both countries continued to make hostiles moves in the region. “Both sides have moved some conventional and strategic forces to the Kashmir and Punjab border areas, and Pakistan is convinced that India has the capability to execute its 'Cold Start' doctrine without warning,” the diplomats reported. In addition, the diplomats warned that the Pakistani government would very likely retaliate if the Indian government executed its doctrine. “General Kayani and President Zardari have stated flatly to Ambassador that the GOP would have no choice but to retaliate if attacked, and post has no doubt they are sincere,” the diplomats noted. Indeed, the diplomats suggested that a war remained a very real possibility.<sup>20</sup>

A little over a year later, the U.S. diplomats in India then gave serious consideration to the idea that the Indian government might attack Pakistan. The Indian government's Cold Start doctrine “calls for a rapid, time- and distance-limited penetration into Pakistani territory with the goal of quickly punishing Pakistan,” the diplomats explained. Although the diplomats ultimately questioned “the willingness of the GOI to implement Cold Start in any form and thus roll the nuclear dice,” they could only conclude that the intentions of Indian officials remained “an open question.”<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, the leaders of the United States faced significant challenges to their plans for the region. With the leaders of India and Pakistan engaged in a bitter rivalry, U.S.

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<https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/12/08USNATO453.html>.

20 Embassy Islamabad, “SCENESETTER FOR CENTCOM GENERAL PETRAEUS,” 09ISLAMABAD106, January 17, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/01/09ISLAMABAD106.html>.

21 Embassy New Delhi, “COLD START - A MIXTURE OF MYTH AND REALITY,” 10NEWDELHI295, February 16, 2010, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10NEWDELHI295.html>.

officials faced a significant impediment to their goal of creating an integrated regional system. Once the Indian and Pakistani government had acquired nuclear weapons, U.S. officials even faced the possibility that the slightest misstep could trigger a nuclear war. As a result, U.S. officials found it tremendously challenging to transform South Asia into a strategic hub.

### India: Exploding the Boundaries of South Asia

In spite of the challenges, the leaders of the United States still pushed forward with their plans. At the risk of instigating a nuclear conflict, U.S. officials inserted themselves directly into the region with the goal of creating their strategic hub.

To begin their approach, U.S. officials focused their attention on India. Given the country's tremendous size, its large population, and its power potential, U.S. viewed India as the key to their plans for the region. Although they certainly viewed Pakistan as another important country in the area, U.S. officials saw India as the country that would play the central role in their strategic hub.<sup>22</sup>

Following the partition of India, U.S. officials quickly identified India as the key country in the region. In South Asia, India is “the pivotal state,” officials at the State Department determined. The country features “relative power, stability and influence.”<sup>23</sup>

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22 For the background, see the following sources: Dennis Kux, *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies, 1941-1991* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1992); Rudra Chaudhuri, *Forged in Crisis: India and the United States since 1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

23 “Department of State Policy Statement,” December 1, 1950, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa*, vol. 5 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 1478.

In the following years, additional officials made similar arguments. For example, the U.S. Ambassador to India Chester Bowles informed a congressional committee in January 1952 that India played the key role in the region. “Certainly it will be a great triumph all through South Asia and all through the Middle East if India becomes a going concern,” Bowles remarked.<sup>24</sup>

For the remainder of the twentieth century, U.S. officials continued to identify India as the main center of power in the region. No matter how the balance of power may have shifted between India and Pakistan, U.S. officials typically identified India as the key to creating their strategic hub. “India, with its nearly 900 million people and 25 or so officially recognized languages, constitutes the regional core,” analysts at the Congressional Research Service reported in 1993.<sup>25</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Bush administration placed India at the center of its plans for the region. The administration has reached “a conviction that U.S. interests require a strong relationship with India,” the administration reported in its National Security Strategy. Providing some of the reasoning for its decision, the administration explained that the governments of both India and the United States shared “a common interest in the free flow of commerce, including through the vital sea lanes of the Indian Ocean.” Both governments are interested “in creating a strategically stable Asia,” the administration explained. In brief, the Bush administration identified India as one of the keys to its plans for Asia.<sup>26</sup>

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24 U.S. Congress, *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 4:75-76.

25 Richard P. Cronin and Barbara Leitch LePoer, “South Asia: U.S. Interests and Policy Issues,” Congressional Research Service, February 12, 1993, CRS-1.

26 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 27.

In the following years, administration officials made similar points about India. In October 2005, for example, the State Department official R. Nicholas Burns identified India as one of the most important countries in Asia. “As we look out over the century ahead, there will be no region of the world more vital to America’s long-term military, economic and political interests than Asia,” Burns explained. “And the part of Asia that is now receiving the most substantial new attention of American diplomats, generals, strategists and business people is South Asia and, in particular, India.” Indeed, Burns attributed special importance to India.<sup>27</sup>

A couple years later, Burns attributed even more importance to India. In a public speech, Burns stated that U.S. officials would soon include the Indian government among their most important partners in the world. “I believe that this partnership will be for the 21st century one of the most important partnerships that our country, the United States, has with any country around the world,” Burns remarked. “I would wager that in 20 or 30 years' time, most Americans will say that India is one of our two or three most important partners worldwide.”<sup>28</sup>

In fact, many additional officials harbored similar expectations. For example, the U.S. diplomats in India made the very same prediction. “With India set to surpass China as the fastest growing economy in 2015, this may well become our most important bilateral relationship within 20 years,” the diplomats reported.<sup>29</sup>

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27 R. Nicholas Burns, “The U.S. and India: The New Strategic Partnership,” October 18, 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/us/rm/2005/55269.htm>.

28 R. Nicholas Burns, “A Future Unbound: U.S.-India Relations,” May 23, 2007, <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/a-future-unbound-us-india-relations>.

29 Embassy New Delhi, “SCENESETTER FOR SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NANCY PELOSI AND DELEGATION'S MARCH 2008 VISIT TO INDIA,” 08NEWDELHI763, March 13, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/03/08NEWDELHI763.html>.

Periodically, officials also provided more insights into the reasons why they increasingly valued India. In March 2008, the State Department official Evan Feigenbaum explained that India remained the key to tying the broader region together. “A lot of people are interested in India, first, at a global level, second as part of a growing interest in an Asia – East, Central, and South – that’s in many ways becoming an integrated economic and strategic space,” Feigenbaum explained. Indeed, Feigenbaum portrayed India as the key to creating their strategic hub. The “conversation really has exploded the boundaries of South Asia,” he added. “We’re talking about Asia – East and Central. We’re talking about the Middle East. And in fact that’s something we’re hoping to do more of.”<sup>30</sup>

Under the subsequent Obama administration, many officials shared similar aspirations. When the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited India in June 2009, she explained that India featured the potential to play a powerful role in shaping systems of regional and global order. “I have returned to India to talk about this partnership which I think is critical not only to both of our countries, but literally to the future of the world, the kind of world we want to shape together,” Clinton explained.<sup>31</sup>

A few months later, President Obama made a similar point. When it came to shaping the world, “India is indispensable,” Obama explained. In the years ahead, “India will play a pivotal role in meeting the major challenges we face today.”<sup>32</sup>

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30 Evan Feigenbaum, “U.S.-India Relations,” March 25, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/2008/102765.htm>.

31 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks at U.S.-India Business Council’s 34th Anniversary ‘Synergies Summit,’” June 17, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/06/125033.htm>.

32 Barack Obama, “Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India,” November 24, 2009, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2009*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2009 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013), 1726, 1727.

In June 2010, the State Department official William J. Burns then made one more key point about India. In a public speech, Burns explained that India remained critically important to the global strategy of the United States. “The simple truth is that India's strength and progress on the world stage is deeply in the strategic interest of the United States,” Burns explained. To support his point, Burns provided a number of reasons. “India is now the world's second fastest growing economy and a central player in the G-20,” he stated. In addition, the country “plays an increasingly significant role in Asia, and on a wide range of global challenges.” After making his points, Burns then concluded that India had never before played such an important role in the global strategy of the United States. “Never has there been a moment when India and America mattered more to one another,” Burns remarked. “And never has there been a moment when partnership between India and America mattered more to the rest of the globe.”<sup>33</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States identified India as a tremendously important country. At the most basic level, they identified India as the key to creating their strategic hub. Viewing the country as the core power in South Asia, they felt that they could use the country to create a new India-centered South Asia. At the same time, they believed that the country could provide them with additional leverage throughout the rest of the world. As a result, U.S. officials characterized India as a pivotal country that remained critically important to their regional, continental, and global strategy.

### Harsh On-the-Ground Realities

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<sup>33</sup> William J. Burns, “India's Rise and the Promise of U.S.-Indian Partnership,” June 1, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/us/rm/2010/136718.htm>.

Of course, the leaders of the United States also encountered significant obstacles to their plans for India. Before they could even turn to the issue of Pakistan, they continually struggled to get their way with the Indian government. No matter how many times they predicted that the future held great things for the United States and India, U.S. officials never fully achieved their goal of forming a strategic partnership with the Indian government.

During the early years of the Cold War, the leaders of the United States recognized that they faced a special challenge with the Indian government. As U.S. intelligence analysts recognized, the Indian government intended to remain neutral in the Cold War. “India has pursued a policy of non-alignment in the struggle between the Soviet Bloc and the West,” the analysts explained. In other words, the analysts found that U.S. officials would never get the Indian government to formally side with the United States in global affairs. “While India is a member of the Commonwealth and generally maintains friendly relations with the US, it has firmly dissociated itself from many of the diplomatic and military policies of the US and UK, and has laid great stress on preserving its independence of judgment and action,” U.S. intelligence analysts reported. Indeed, the analysts made it clear that the Indian government intended to maintain its independence in the international system. “India will almost certainly maintain its present position of nonalignment in the East–West struggle,” the analysts concluded.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “National Intelligence Estimate,” NIE-79, June 30, 1953, in *Africa and South Asia (in two parts), Part 2*, vol. 11 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 1085, 1085-1086, 1087.

Moreover, many U.S. officials found the Indian government's policy of non-alignment especially troubling. For example, the staff members of the National Security Council refused to tolerate the idea of a non-aligned Indian government. Although they conceded that the “attitude of 'neutralism' is understandable,” the staff members insisted that the United States and its allies “cannot permit South Asia to remain neutral and thereby deny the use of military facilities and strategic resources in the area.” In the end, “South Asia must be made to realize that its ultimate choice lies with the Kremlin or the West,” the staff members asserted.<sup>35</sup>

After the end of the Cold War, many observers maintained the same critical view of the Indian government’s approach. For example, the career diplomat Dennis Kux argued in 1992 that non-alignment could cause significant problems for U.S. relations with the Indian government in the post-Soviet world. “The prospects for improved relations would dim should New Delhi redefine nonalignment in North-South terms – positioning itself as a leader of the Third World in a strident struggle against the United States and the industrialized West,” Kux warned.<sup>36</sup>

During the opening decade of the twenty-first century, many officials continued to identify non-alignment as a major complication. In January 2008, the U.S. diplomats in India complained that the Indian government's commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the United Nations created many difficulties for the United States. Despite the fact that the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh “has said the NAM

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35 “Study Prepared by the Staff of the National Security Council,” NSC 5409, undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Africa and South Asia (in two Parts), Part 2*, vol. 11 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 1112-1113, 1113.

36 Dennis Kux, *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1992), 452.



today 'must be of moderation, harmony, tolerance and reasons,' the voting evidence remains that the NAM regularly works counter to U.S. goals," the diplomats reported.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, U.S. officials found that their difficulties with the Indian government often extended beyond the core issue of non-alignment. Since Indian officials remained determined to maintain their independence in global affairs, U.S. officials found that they often struggled to get their Indian counterparts to comply with U.S. initiatives. As they worked to implement a wide array of programs in the country, U.S. officials often experienced significant logistical obstacles.

On January 11, 2008, the U.S. Ambassador to India David Mulford vented his frustrations to the Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon. In spite of "the intense efforts that both sides have put into strengthening the partnership, the persistence and number of problems has reached a point to cause players in Washington, NGOs, U.S. companies, foundations, universities, and think tanks to question whether the Government of India remains committed to the grand vision that President Bush and Prime Minister Singh have set out to accomplish," Mulford explained. To support his point, Mulford pointed to the growing disconnect between the stated goals of public officials and the experience of the many U.S. players in India. There remains a "stark difference between the broad strategic vision and the harsh on-the-ground realities that trouble the USG and private sector players doing business in India," Mulford explained. Currently, "the rhetoric is so far above the actual contours of the relationship as to risk the impression that the Emperor has no clothes." To emphasize the seriousness of the

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<sup>37</sup> Embassy New Delhi, "PUT THE ONUS ON INDIA FOR UNSC SEAT," 08NEWDELHI29, January 4, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08NEWDELHI29.html>.

matter, Mulford then made a more direct move. Explaining that he faced “pressure to take reciprocal action,” Mulford threatened his Indian counterpart, warning him that the U.S. government might punish India. Any “such measures could lead to an unpleasant chain of events,” he warned. Indeed, Mulford instructed the Indian Foreign Secretary to fix the problems or face the consequences.<sup>38</sup>

The U.S. diplomats in the country, who recorded the meeting, shared the same sense of frustration. In their description of the meeting, the diplomats complained that they faced an assortment of problems in the country. “Since the U.S. and India are partners in building an important strategic relationship, and the U.S. is the country that is trying to bring India in from the nuclear cold, we either should not be having these kinds of petty problems, or, if they do come up, we should work together positively to resolve them immediately,” the diplomats reported. “This is not happening,” they continued. “Instead, these problems are multiplying, festering and being deepened, and attitudes here are out of step with our stated goals.” Indeed, the diplomats found it especially challenging to fulfill their strategic objectives. Thus far, “the Indian government's attitude remains surly, unwelcoming, suspicious, and small minded,” they added.<sup>39</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, the diplomats remained equally frustrated. When they welcomed the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to the country in July 2009, the diplomats complained that they continued to face significant obstacles in the country. “India's bureaucracy remains stove piped and slow-moving,” the diplomats reported. After making their point, the diplomats then offered an explanation for the

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38 Embassy New Delhi, “LET'S FIX IRRITANTS THAT PLAGUE THIS PARTNERSHIP, AMBASSADOR TELLS MENON,” 08NEWDELHI126, January 14, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/01/08NEWDELHI126.html>.

39 Ibid.

problem. Providing more details, they specified that they could never fully get their way with Indian officials. Many of the problems stem from “senior officials who came of age during the Cold War, steeped in the ‘non-aligned’ rhetoric of the 60s and 70s,” the diplomats charged. Indeed, the diplomats blamed their struggles on the Indian government’s historic policy of non-alignment.<sup>40</sup>

Even when they did not identify non-alignment as the root of their struggles in India, U.S. officials made it clear that they could not always get their way with the Indian government. While they certainly maintained close working relations with Indian officials on various issues, they found that they could never persuade Indian officials to abandon their independent spirit. As a result, U.S. officials struggled to form a strategic alliance with the Indian government.

#### Pakistan: An Important and Pivotal Nation

In spite of their struggles, U.S. officials moved forward with their plans for the region. Rather than permitting the Indian government to thwart their plans to transform the region into a strategic hub, U.S. officials made it clear to the Indian government that they had an alternative option.

At the risk of inflaming regional tensions, U.S. officials turned to Pakistan. Despite the fact that the Indian and Pakistani governments remained engaged in a heated rivalry, U.S. officials believed that they could still use Pakistan to gain powerful leverage

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<sup>40</sup> Embassy New Delhi, “SCENESETTER FOR SECRETARY OF STATE CLINTON’S VISIT TO INDIA,” 09NEWDELHI1464, July 15, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/07/09NEWDELHI1464.html>.

over the area. Since the Pakistani government played its own influential role in the area, U.S. officials felt that they could use the country to strengthen their influence in South Asia. Consequently, U.S. officials extended their involvement to Pakistan.<sup>41</sup>

Right from the start of their involvement in South Asia, the leaders of the United States gave special consideration to Pakistan. When the staff members of the National Security Council outlined their objectives for South Asia during the early years of the Cold War, they identified India and Pakistan as their two main starting points. “United States policy in South Asia must necessarily give particular emphasis to the primary powers in the area – India and Pakistan,” the staff members reported. Moreover, the staff members noted that Pakistan featured special advantages. Even if Pakistan “is weaker than India economically and politically and is much less endowed with economic and military potentials,” the staff members believed that the country could provide the United States with powerful advantages throughout the area. Pakistan features “the greatest possibilities, next to Turkey, for contributing to the defense of the Middle East and has indicated its willingness to enter into closer association with the United States,” the staff members explained. Indeed, the staff members identified Pakistan as one of the key countries in the area.<sup>42</sup>

In fact, the leaders of the United States soon came to play the dominant role in Pakistan. Although they spent the rest of the twentieth century extending their support to the Pakistani government during various periods only to withdraw it at others, U.S.

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41 For the background, see Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001).

42 “Study Prepared by the Staff of the National Security Council,” NSC 5409, undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Africa and South Asia (in two Parts), Part 2*, vol. 11 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 1113, 1114.

officials quickly acquired the upper hand in the relationship. “In the bilateral relationship, the United States was clearly the senior and Pakistan the junior partner,” the career diplomat Dennis Kux explained in his review of the relationship.<sup>43</sup>

At the outset of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials also demonstrated what it meant for the United States to be the senior partner in the relationship. On the day after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, officials in the Bush administration simply issued the Pakistani government an ultimatum. “Pakistan faces a stark choice: either it is with us or it is not,” the State Department official Richard Armitage declared. “This was a black-and-white choice, with no grey.” Indeed, Armitage explained that the Pakistani government could either side with the United States as it retaliated for the attacks or face the consequences of standing in the way.<sup>44</sup>

After reminding the Pakistani government of its place in the world, administration officials then began touting an additional message. Hoping to secure their influence over Pakistan for the long term, administration officials announced their intentions to create a stabler relationship with the Pakistani government. After all, “the U.S. partnership with Pakistan is not just for today and tomorrow,” the Secretary of State Colin Powell explained. “Our partnership is for the long term.”<sup>45</sup>

In one indication of its seriousness, the Bush administration assigned a special status to the Pakistan. After much deliberation, the Bush administration designated

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43 Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 361.

44 Secretary of State, “DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE’S MEETING WITH PAKISTAN INTEL CHIEF MAHMUD: YOU’RE EITHER WITH US OR YOU’RE NOT,” STATE, 157813, September 13, 2001, Document 3, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 358, National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, DC. Available online at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/>.

45 Colin L. Powell, “The Promise of Our Partnership,” March 17, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/30490.htm>.

Pakistan as one of its main military allies outside of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). “I hereby designate the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally of the United States,” President Bush announced on June 16, 2004.<sup>46</sup>

In the following years, additional officials provided additional confirmation of their new commitment to Pakistan. In June 2007, for example, the State Department official Richard Boucher identified Pakistan as a key ally of the United States. “It’s one of America’s most vital relationships,” Boucher explained. Today, “the United States’ relationship with Pakistan is one of the most important we have with any country in the world.”<sup>47</sup>

A few months later, the State Department official John D. Negroponte provided additional emphasis. “Pakistan has long been a strong U.S. ally, but now more than ever, Pakistan stands as an important and pivotal nation in the world,” Negroponte asserted.<sup>48</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials continued to attribute special importance to Pakistan. For example, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton identified Pakistan as one of the key countries in the region. “I mean, anyone who looks at a map of Pakistan sees how strategically located it is between India and China and Iran and, of course, to the north,” Clinton stated. In addition, Clinton insisted that officials in the Obama administration wanted to see the country emerge as one of the most influential players in the region. The leaders of the United States hope “to really see the time when Pakistan realizes its destiny,” Clinton explained. “I mean, strategically,

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46 The White House, “Designation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally,” June 16, 2004, in *Federal Register* 69, no. 124 (June 29, 2004): 38797.

47 Richard A. Boucher, “15th Annual U.S.-Pakistan Friendship Day,” June 20, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rm/2007/87169.htm>.

48 John D. Negroponte, “U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue,” September 12, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/2007/91989.htm>.

geographically, in every sense, it's all there." In fact, Clinton even described Pakistan as one of the most important countries in the world. "Pakistan is one of the most strategically located countries in the world," she asserted. Indeed, Clinton attributed the utmost importance to the country.<sup>49</sup>

The following year, the State Department official Richard Holbrooke then provided some additional insights. Addressing the Obama administration's long-term goals for Pakistan, Holbrooke explained that the administration intended to move beyond the earlier "transactional relationship" in which "something terrible happens in Pakistan and you send over somebody to Islamabad and say you can't do this again or else." Despite the fact that "sometimes those things still happen," the Obama administration will "now embed that in a larger strategic relationship across the board," Holbrooke explained. Indeed, Holbrooke indicated that the Obama administration intended to make Pakistan into a long-term strategic ally while it preserved a dominant position for the United States in the bilateral relationship.<sup>50</sup>

Even as they worked to maintain their dominance, the leaders of the United States assigned a special status to Pakistan. Since the Pakistani government often followed the lead of the United States in global affairs, U.S. officials made Pakistan into their key ally in South Asia. Although they remained convinced that India remained the key to transforming the region into a strategic hub, U.S. officials found it advantageous to start their efforts in the region with Pakistan.

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49 Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Roundtable with Business Leaders Opening and Closing Remarks," October 29, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/10/131073.htm>; Hillary Rodman Clinton, "Town interview Hosted by Prominent Pakistani Women Journalists," October 30, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2009a/10/131141.htm>.

50 Richard Holbrooke, "The United States and Pakistan: Partners in Development," October 20, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rmks/2010/150072.htm>.

## Democrats and Dictators

During their involvement in Pakistan, the leaders of the United States also understood that their actions came with significant political consequences. By periodically extending their assistance to the Pakistani government, U.S. officials enabled an authoritarian government to assert its control over the country. No matter how many times they claimed to support democracy in Pakistan, U.S. officials ensured that an authoritarian government maintained a powerful grip on power.

In fact, U.S. officials knew perfectly well that they had aligned themselves with an authoritarian government. When a number of officials met with the Pakistani military dictator Pervez Musharraf in April 2006, they received direct confirmation. In reality, “we have never had democracy in Pakistan,” Musharraf explained.<sup>51</sup>

The U.S. diplomats in the country, who worked closely with Musharraf, shared the same understanding of the country's political history. In one of their internal reports, the diplomats explained that a collection of authoritarian leaders had ruled over the country for most of its history.<sup>52</sup>

In the first part of their report, the diplomats described how a series of “Civilian (Un)Democrats” had periodically acquired political power. “Pakistan's civilian leaders, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s and Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in the 1990s have

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51 Embassy Islamabad, “PRESIDENT MUSHARRAF EXPRESSES CONCERN TO SENATOR HAGEL ON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.,” 06ISLAMABAD6420, April 14, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/04/06ISLAMABAD6420.html>.

52 Embassy Islamabad, “PAKISTAN ELECTIONS (1): THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF PAKISTANI POLITICS,” 06ISLAMABAD19121, September 27, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/09/06ISLAMABAD19121.html>.



all left much to be desired in the democracy department,” the diplomats explained. Providing more details, the diplomats specified that the civilian (un)democrat Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had run the country like a dictator. “Z.A. Bhutto was arguably more dictatorial than any Pakistani leader before or after, civilian or military,” they noted. In addition, the diplomats explained that Bhutto's civilian successors displayed the same dictatorial tendencies. “Benazir and Nawaz never enjoyed the power wielded by Z.A. Bhutto, but even within their more limited remit, they were far from democratic – a characteristic best illustrated by the autocratic way they continue to run their respective political parties,” the diplomats explained. Both officials ran “notoriously corrupt” governments and continue to “manage their parties as personal fiefdoms.” Indeed, the diplomats characterized the country's civilian leaders as civilian (un)democrats who aspired to rule the country as dictators.<sup>53</sup>

In the second part of their report, the diplomats explained that the Pakistani military played an even more powerful role in the country. While they acknowledged that civilian rulers periodically achieved political power, the diplomats noted that the Pakistani military often ruled the country from behind the scenes. “For its part, Pakistan's army has traditionally shied away from monopolizing power for extended periods, preferring to 'manage' civilian politicians and drive through constitutional adjustments to protect its prerogatives and its vision of the national interest,” the diplomats explained. At the same time, the diplomats confirmed that the military maintained the ultimate say on many of the most important issues in the country. “Whether in or out of power, the Army has enforced an unwritten rule that effectively bars civilians from interfering in matters of

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53 Ibid.

national security (Kashmir, India, Afghan policy), military procurement, defense spending and internal military administration (such as promotions),” the diplomats reported. In other words, the diplomats described the Pakistani military as the ultimate authority.<sup>54</sup>

To complete their report, the diplomats then summarized the basic features of the country’s political system. In their final section, they explained that a mix of civilian (un)democrats and military leaders had ruled Pakistan for most of its history. “Leadership in Pakistan has rotated on a roughly ten year cycle, with the civilians in charge during the 1950's; the military during the 60s; civilians for much of the 70s; the military in the 80s; civilians for most of the 90s; and the military, again, since 1999,” the diplomats explained. “This polarization between the civilians and the military has been the fundamental dynamic of Pakistani political life for 50-some years.” In sum, the diplomats described a political process in which a mix of civilian rulers and military officials periodically ran the country while “the sustained interference of the military” held the entire system together.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, the diplomats believed that the country's current military dictator Pervez Musharraf conformed to the historical trends. In a related report, the diplomats observed that Musharraf had ushered in the latest period of military rule. “To the dismay of most Pakistani democracy activists and opposition politicians, for seven years, Pervez Musharraf has remained Chief of Army Staff (COAS) while serving as Pakistan's Chief Executive and President,” the diplomats explained. Even if Musharraf formally

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54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

relinquished his military position, the diplomats believed that Musharraf would remain a powerful dictator. “Given the concentration of power in the Office of the President over the recent years, even without his uniform, President Musharraf would retain far more power and influence than any of his civilian predecessors,” the diplomats reported.<sup>56</sup>

In spite of the lack of democracy in Pakistan, U.S. officials still supported the Pakistani government. Not only did they work closely with Musharraf to transform Pakistan into a long-term strategic partner of the United States, but they also identified the dictator as one of their closest allies in the region. “President Musharraf has been a very strong ally,” the State Department official Richard Boucher explained in March 2007. The Bush administration is “proud to work with him.”<sup>57</sup>

In fact, President Bush heaped praise on the dictator. In November 2007, Bush stated that Musharraf has “advanced democracy in Pakistan.” The dictator has “been a strong ally of the United States, and I certainly hope he succeeds,” he added. In spite of the fact that Musharraf had just suspended the Pakistani constitution, censored the media, fired the chief justice of the supreme court, and arrested thousands of his political opponents, Bush defended the dictator. “Well, he hasn't crossed the line,” Bush insisted. “As a matter of fact, I don't think that, uh, he will cross any lines.” After making his point, Bush then returned to the idea that Musharraf wanted to bring democracy to Pakistan. “I think he truly is somebody who believes in democracy,” Bush noted.

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56 Embassy Islamabad, “PAKISTAN ELECTIONS (4): THE UNIFORM,” 06ISLAMABAD19124, September 27, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/09/06ISLAMABAD19124.html>.

57 Richard A. Boucher, “The U.S.- Pakistan Relationship Remains Strong,” March 15, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rm/2007/81809.htm>.

Ultimately, the dictator “has done more for Democracy in Pakistan than, than any modern leader has.” Indeed, Bush characterized Musharraf as a champion of democracy.<sup>58</sup>

The following year, U.S. officials provided another indication of how much they valued Musharraf. Once the Pakistani dictator had stepped down from power, U.S. officials helped ensure that he received immunity from his crimes. “During his tenure, Musharraf was a trusted ally who was closely identified with America; it was in U.S. interests that he received a dignified exit,” the U.S. diplomats in the country explained.<sup>59</sup>

At the time, the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson played a key role in the process. When she met with Pakistani officials on August 23, 2008, Patterson helped protect the former dictator by reminding her Pakistani counterparts that “only the promise of indemnity had persuaded Musharraf to step down as President.” With her remarks, Patterson made it clear that she wanted to see Pakistani officials abide by their agreement to provide Musharraf with immunity. “We believed, as we had often said, that Musharraf should have a dignified retirement and not be hounded out of the country,” the ambassador stated.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. officials knew fully well that Musharraf's successor would hardly change things for Pakistan. Although Musharraf's exit had resulted in a return to civilian rule, U.S. officials understood that the country's new civilian ruler Asif Ali Zardari shared a lot of the same qualities of his civilian predecessors. As early as August

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58 George W. Bush, interview by Charles Gibson, *ABC News*, ABC, November 20, 2007, <http://abcnews.go.com/WN/Vote2008/story?id=3891196&page=1&singlePage=true>. For more discussion of the political situation in Pakistan at the time, see K. Alan Kronstadt, “Pakistan's Political Crises,” Congressional Research Service, January 3, 2008.

59 Embassy Islamabad, “PERVEZ MUSHARRAF RESIGNS,” 08ISLAMABAD2750, August 18, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08ISLAMABAD2750.html>.

60 Embassy Islamabad, “IMMUNITY FOR MUSHARRAF LIKELY AFTER ZARDARI'S ELECTION AS PRESIDENT,” 08ISLAMABAD2802, August 23, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/08/08ISLAMABAD2802.html>.

1998, for example, the U.S. diplomats in Pakistan had described Zardari as the “chief bag man and patronage dispenser” for his wife Benazir Bhutto.<sup>61</sup>

In other reports, the diplomats provided more details about Zardari's criminal background. “Zardari comes with a great deal of baggage,” the diplomats explained. “He has spent 11 years in and out of prison, charged but never convicted of crimes ranging from blackmail and extortion to murder.”<sup>62</sup>

In one report, the diplomats also revealed their deep familiarity with Zardari's criminal history. Going into some detail, the diplomats outlined Zardari's likely involvement in many serious crimes. “He was arrested for the first time in 1990 on blackmail charges for allegedly tying a remote-control bomb to the leg of a UK-based Pakistani businessman, Murtaza Bukhari, and sending him into a bank to withdraw money from his account as a pay-off,” the diplomats explained. “These charges were dropped in 1992 when Benazir was elected Prime Minister.” After describing the incident, the diplomats then noted that Zardari had probably played some role in the assassination of his wife's brother Murtaza Bhutto. “Murtaza was killed in a police ambush outside his home in September 1996, and the Pakistani public widely holds Zardari responsible for Murtaza's death,” the diplomats explained. In all, the diplomats described Zardari as one of the country's most notorious gangsters.<sup>63</sup>

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61 Embassy Islamabad, “PAKISTAN: A CONVERSATION WITH BENAZIR BHUTTO,” 98ISLAMABAD6509, August 31, 1998, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/1998/08/98ISLAMABAD6509.html>.

62 Embassy Islamabad, “BHUTTO'S ASSASSINATION: THE DAY AFTER,” 07ISLAMABAD5383, December 28, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/12/07ISLAMABAD5383.html>.

63 Embassy Islamabad, “PROFILE: PPP CO-CHAIR ASIF ZARDARI,” 08ISLAMABAD1368, March 31, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/03/08ISLAMABAD1368.html>.

Regardless of Zardari's baggage, U.S. officials still found many reasons to like the new Pakistani leader. In the months before Zardari succeeded Musharraf, U.S. officials found that Zardari said all of the right things. For example, they enjoyed hearing Zardari explain that he looked forward to “being guided” by U.S. officials. They also liked it when he promised not to act “without consulting” U.S. officials.<sup>64</sup>

By the time the Obama administration had entered office, U.S. officials found even more reasons to favor the Pakistani leader. “Zardari is pro-American and anti-extremist,” the U.S. diplomats in Pakistan explained in February 2009. Currently, “we believe he is our best ally in the government,” they reported.<sup>65</sup>

By working with Zardari, U.S. officials also perpetuated one of the key trends in the country. While they claimed to support democracy in Pakistan, U.S. officials continued to empower an authoritarian regime. Despite the fact that Zardari returned the country to civilian rule, he ran the country like a dictator. “Clearly, Zardari runs the show,” the U.S. diplomats in Pakistan confirmed.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, the leaders of the United States helped to perpetuate a system of authoritarian rule in Pakistan. Whether they worked with the country’s military leaders or its autocratic politicians, U.S. officials empowered an authoritarian regime that remained in charge of the country’s fate. As a result, U.S. officials played a central role in ensuring that an authoritarian government remained in power in Pakistan.

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64 Embassy Islamabad, “CODEL BIDEN'S MEETING WITH ASIF ZARDARI,” 08ISLAMABAD1476, April 7, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08ISLAMABAD1476.html>; Embassy Islamabad, “CODEL SCHIFF MEETS WITH PPP LEADER ZARDARI: POLITICAL MOVES AND BALANCING AID,” 08ISLAMABAD1998, May 30, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08ISLAMABAD1998.html>.

65 Embassy Islamabad, “SCENESETTER FOR SPECIAL ENVOY HOLBROOKE,” 09ISLAMABAD236, February 4, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09ISLAMABAD236.html>.

66 Ibid.

## Spewing Out Terrorists

As they extended their support to the authoritarian Pakistani government, the leaders of the United States also recognized that their actions featured another significant consequence. No matter how many times they praised their allies in the Pakistani government as anti-extremists who wanted to bring democracy to the country, U.S. officials knew that the Pakistani government supported some of the world's most notorious Islamic terrorist organizations. Indeed, U.S. officials remained well aware of the fact that the Pakistani government played a central role in managing a regional terrorist network.<sup>67</sup>

In fact, the leaders of the United States played their own special role in creating the regional terrorist network. In 1979, U.S. officials laid the groundwork for the network by spearheading a covert operation to empower radical Islamic fighters in nearby Afghanistan to fight the Soviet Union. "That secret operation was an excellent idea," the U.S. official Zbigniew Brzezinski later reflected. "It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap."<sup>68</sup>

After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, U.S. officials escalated their operation. By working closely with their allies in both the Saudi

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67 For more discussion, see Bruce Riedel, "Pakistan and Terror: The Eye of the Storm," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618, no. 1 (July 2008): 31-45.

68 "Les Révélations d'un Ancien Conseiller de Carter: 'Oui, la CIA est entrée en Afghanistan avant les Russes...,'" *Le Nouvel Observateur* [Paris], January 15-21, 1998, 76. For a translation of the article in English, see David N. Gibbs, "Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Retrospect," *International Politics* 37, no. 2 (June 2000): 233-245. For more discussion, see Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

government and the Pakistani government, U.S. officials implemented a massive covert operation to create a vast network of Islamic fighters called the Mujahedin. “Thanks to our massive infusion of assistance during 1985-1986, the Mujahedin were able to withstand the Soviet maximum push,” the career C.I.A. official Robert Gates later recalled.<sup>69</sup>

At times, some officials even praised the contribution of one of the most notorious operatives in the Mujahedin. The career C.I.A. official Milton Bearden, who oversaw a large part of the operation as the C.I.A. Chief of Station in Islamabad, Pakistan, informed the news program *FRONTLINE* in 2000 that the Saudi operative Osama bin Laden made an important contribution to the program. “Bin Laden actually did some very good things,” Bearden explained. Since bin Laden had worked closely with Saudi and Pakistani officials to steer Arab militants into Afghanistan, Bearden welcomed bin Laden's contribution to the operation. “He put a lot of money in a lot of right places in Afghanistan,” Bearden commented. Indeed, Bearden characterized bin Laden as a useful operative who had played a constructive role.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, U.S. officials knew that the Pakistani government had kept the terrorist network in place after the Soviet Union had withdrawn from Afghanistan. Just a few months before the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the State Department confirmed that it continued to receive “reports of Pakistani support to terrorist groups and elements active

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69 Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 429. For more discussion, see Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

70 *FRONTLINE*, “Hunting bin Laden,” PBS, March 21, 2000. A transcript of the program is available online at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/etc/script.html>. For more discussion, see Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).



in Kashmir, as well as Pakistani support, especially military support, to the Taliban, which continues to harbor terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.” In other words, the State Department indicated that the Pakistani government continued to oversee a regional terrorist network.<sup>71</sup>

Given their familiarity with the terrorist network, U.S. officials also knew right where to look after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. In the days after the attacks, U.S. officials quickly focused their attention on Pakistan. For example, the State Department official Richard Armitage immediately turned to Pakistani officials, instructing them to “end all logistical support for bin Laden.” At the same time, an analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency confirmed that the Pakistani government’s Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) maintained a direct connection to bin Laden. An al-Qaeda training camp “was built by Pakistan contractors funded by the Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI),” the analyst explained. While local tribal leaders may have guaranteed the security of the camp, “the real host in that facility was the Pakistani ISI,” the analyst noted. Indeed, U.S. officials knew perfectly well that the Pakistani government had provided bin Laden with support and assistance.<sup>72</sup>

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71 U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2000*, April 2001, 32.

72 Secretary of State, “DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE’S MEETING WITH GENERAL MAHMUD: ACTIONS AND SUPPORT EXPECTED OF PAKISTAN IN FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM,” STATE, 158711, September 14, 2001, Document 5, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 358, National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, DC. Available online at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/>; Defense Intelligence Agency, “IIR [Excised]/Veteran Afghanistan Traveler’s Analysis of Al Qaeda and Taliban Exploitable Weaknesses,” October 2, 2001, Document 28, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 97, National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University, Washington, DC. Available online at <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/>. For more discussion, see the following sources: Raymond Bonner and Steve LeVine, “‘We Are Freedom Fighters,’ Says a Leader of Militants,” *New York Times*, August 27, 1998; James Risen and Judith Miller, “Pakistani Intelligence Had Ties to Al Qaeda, U.S. Officials Say,” *New York Times*, October 29,

In the following years, additional observers provided more general confirmation of the link between the Pakistani government and the assortment of Islamic terrorist groups that operated in the region. For example, the career diplomat Peter Tomsen informed a congressional committee in October 2003 that the Pakistani government oversaw a vast terrorist network. “That infrastructure is still there,” Tomsen explained. “It spews out fighters that go into Kashmir, as well as into Afghanistan.” Moreover, Tomsen warned the Pakistani ISI remained one of the main forces behind the regional terrorist network. “There’s one face of ISI which cooperates with us; there’s another face of ISI which is still protecting and feeding this asset that they’ve built up over 25 years,” Tomsen noted. In sum, Tomsen indicated that the Pakistani government continued to use its terrorist infrastructure to conduct various terrorist operations throughout the region.<sup>73</sup>

At times, administration officials confirmed that various terrorist organizations also operated directly inside Pakistan. For example, the Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte informed a congressional committee in January 2007 that a number of Islamic extremist groups maintained their base of operations inside the country. Members of al-Qaeda “continue to maintain active connections and relationships that radiate outward from their leaders’ secure hideout in Pakistan to affiliates throughout the Middle East, northern Africa, and Europe,” Negroponte explained. With his remarks, Negroponte made it clear that “a frontline partner in the war on terror” remained home to some of the

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73 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Afghanistan: In Pursuit of Security and Democracy*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., October 16, 2003, 67, 68.

region's most violent extremist groups. Pakistan “remains a major source of Islamic extremism and the home for some top terrorist leaders,” Negroponte confirmed.<sup>74</sup>

The following year, the State Department indicated that the Pakistani government also provided terrorist groups with critical forms of support. In an internal report, the State Department explained that the Pakistani government shielded a number of the terrorist groups from international sanctions. “Pakistan has not followed through on its obligations to enforce UN-mandated sanctions against listed terrorist individuals/entities, specifically against three UN-listed entities: Al Rashid Trust, Al Akhtar Trust, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba,” the State Department reported. In fact, the State Department found that the Pakistani government permitted some of the groups to run their operations from directly inside the country. “Al-Akhtar and al-Rashid Trust continue to operate openly in Pakistan, despite their inclusion on the 1267 Consolidated List of individuals/entities subject to sanctions due to their links to Usama bin Laden/al-Qaida and/or the Taliban,” the State Department reported. Altogether, the State Department found that the Pakistani government provided a number of terrorist groups with sanctuary in Pakistan.<sup>75</sup>

A few months later, the career C.I.A. official Bruce Riedel then made a more direct point. In a major report, Riedel identified the Pakistani government as a state sponsor of terrorism. The Pakistani government “has been one of the most prolific state sponsors of terror aimed at advancing its national security interests,” Riedel asserted. To support his point, Riedel specified that the Pakistani government was the main force

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74 U.S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence, *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., January 11, 2007, 60, 69.

75 Secretary of State, “(U) SECURING GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN SUPPORT FOR THE UN 1267 (AL QAIDA/TALIBAN SANCTIONS) REGIME,” 08STATE36712, April 8, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/04/08STATE36712.html>.

behind many of the terrorist organizations in the area. “The Pakistani army and its intelligence service, the Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (known as ISI), created many of the terrorist groups that today flourish in the country and assisted in the growth of terrorist groups founded by others,” Riedel explained. “Despite promises to cut off ties to these groups, Pakistan continues to provide them safe haven and in some cases direct support.” Indeed, Riedel identified the Pakistani government as one of the leading state sponsors of terrorism in the world.<sup>76</sup>

As various observers highlighted the Pakistani government's direct ties to terrorism, other officials then began warning about one of the specific groups that received its support from the Pakistani government. Throughout 2008, many officials warned about Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), a terrorist organization created by the Pakistani government. “LET is a dangerous al Qaida affiliate that has demonstrated its willingness to murder innocent civilians,” the Treasury Department official Stuart Levey warned in May 2008.<sup>77</sup>

At times, some officials even suggested that LET might soon achieve the same kind of notoriety as al Qaeda. The organization “is becoming so powerful that it may one day rival Al-Qaeda as a threat to the region and the world,” the State Department official Richard Boucher stated in October 2008.<sup>78</sup>

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76 Bruce Riedel, “Pakistan and Terror: The Eye of the Storm,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618, no. 1 (July 2008): 31, 32. Also see Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, “C.I.A. Outlines Pakistan Links With Militants,” *New York Times*, July 30, 2008.

77 U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Targets LET Leadership,” May 27, 2008, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp996.aspx>. For more discussion of the relationship between the ISI and LET, see Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 44-47.

78 Embassy New Delhi, “REGIONAL SECURITY INITIATIVE: DEVELOPING A SOUTH ASIA COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY,” 08NEWDELHI2830, October 31, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08NEWDELHI2830.html>.

As U.S. officials issued their warnings, LET then conducted one of the most heinous terrorist attacks of the year. With support from the ISI, LET carried out a series of coordinated shootings and bombings in Mumbai, India over a series of days in late November 2008. During the operation, LET operatives killed more than 150 people.<sup>79</sup>

Right from the start of the attack, U.S. officials recognized that the operation had very likely originated in Pakistan. “Although responsibility for the planning and execution of the attacks has not yet been confirmed, the links to Pakistan appear strong,” the U.S. diplomats in India reported. Their colleagues in Pakistan, who also reported on the attacks, shared the same belief. “The continued denials of involvement by officials, including Zardari, Qureshi, and Gilani, who have limited information on the activities of LeT and the extent of its current relationship with ISI, are exposing some of the naivete of current government leaders,” the diplomats noted.<sup>80</sup>

Not long after the attacks, U.S. officials grew increasingly convinced of ISI involvement. While they often denied the link with the goal of preventing the Indian government from launching a retaliatory attack against Pakistan, U.S. officials steadily acquired more and more evidence that verified the connection. “The CIA later received reliable intelligence that the ISI was directly involved in the training for Mumbai,” the journalist Bob Woodward confirmed.<sup>81</sup>

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79 For more discussion of the terrorist attacks, see K. Alan Kronstadt, “Terrorist Attacks in Mumbai, India, and Implications for U.S. Interests,” Congressional Research Service, December 19, 2008. For confirmation of the ISI's role in the attacks, see Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 44-47.

80 Embassy New Delhi, “INDIA & PAKISTAN TALK AS TERROR CRISIS UNFOLDS,” 08NEWDELHI3020, November 28, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/11/08NEWDELHI3020.html>; Embassy Islamabad, “ZARDARI PROMISES TO SEND AN ISI DIRECTOR TO INDIA,” 08ISLAMABAD3719, November 30, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/11/08ISLAMABAD3719.html>.

81 Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 46.

In spite of their knowledge, U.S. officials did little to change their approach to Pakistan. Rather than reassessing their decision to partner with a state sponsor of terrorism, U.S. officials quickly returned to their same old pattern of working with the Pakistani government while they routinely pointed to its ties to terrorism.

After the Obama administration entered office, the U.S. diplomats in Pakistan provided one example. When they prepared administration officials for a visit from a former head of the Pakistani ISI, the diplomats explained that both the Pakistani army and the Pakistani ISI continued to support terrorist groups. “They continue to provide overt or tacit support for proxy forces (including the Haqqani group, Commander Nazir, Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, and Lashkar-e-Taiba) as a foreign policy tool,” the diplomats explained. The events in Mumbai merely “exposed the fruits of previous ISI policy to create Lashkar-e-Taiba and still threatens potential conflict between nuclear powers.”<sup>82</sup>

Later in the year, the U.S. diplomats provided more general confirmation of the ties between the Pakistani government and the various terrorist groups in the region. The “Pakistani establishment” still provides “support to terrorist and extremist groups, some Afghan-focused and some India-focused,” the diplomats explained. Moreover, the diplomats found little reason to believe that the Pakistani government would ever change its approach. “There is no chance that Pakistan will view enhanced assistance levels in any field as sufficient compensation for abandoning support to these groups, which it sees as an important part of its national security apparatus against India,” the diplomats

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82 Embassy Islamabad, “SCENESETTER FOR GENERAL KAYANI'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON,” 09ISLAMABAD365, February 19, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09ISLAMABAD365.html>.

reported. Indeed, the diplomats reported that the Pakistani government supported terrorist groups as a matter of national policy.<sup>83</sup>

Back in Washington, officials at the State Department provided additional confirmation of the connection. For example, State Department officials reported in December 2009 that the Pakistani government still provides “intermittent support to terrorist groups and militant organizations.” In addition, the State Department officials confirmed that the country's main intelligence organization played a key role in managing the regional terrorist network. “Although Pakistani senior officials have publicly disavowed support for these groups, some officials from the Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) continue to maintain ties with a wide array of extremist organizations, in particular the Taliban, LeT and other extremist organizations,” the officials explained.<sup>84</sup>

Clearly, the leaders of the United States remained well aware of the fact that the Pakistani government lay behind many of the terrorist groups in the region. Although they often portrayed the Pakistani government as one of their most important allies in the war against terrorism, U.S. officials knew that the Pakistani government sponsored some of the most ruthless terrorist groups in the world. Indeed, U.S. officials knowingly backed an authoritarian government that oversaw one of the world's most dangerous terrorist networks.

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83 Embassy Islamabad, “REVIEWING OUR AFGHANISTAN - PAKISTAN STRATEGY,” 09ISLAMABAD2295, September 23, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/09/09ISLAMABAD2295.html>.

84 Secretary of State, “TERRORIST FINANCE: ACTION REQUEST FOR SENIOR LEVEL ENGAGEMENT ON TERRORISM FINANCE,” 09STATE131801, December 30, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/12/09STATE131801.html>.

## Afghanistan: Let's Hit Them Hard

Despite the fact that the Pakistani government played the central role in the regional terrorist network, the leaders of the United States decided to confront another country in the region over the issue of terrorism. Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, U.S. officials decided to target Afghanistan. Rather than addressing the root causes of terrorism in South Asia, which involved their own actions in the region during the Cold War as well as the ongoing involvement of the Pakistani government throughout the broader region, U.S. officials decided to attack the country that bore the brunt of the regional terrorist network.

Before they decided to attack Afghanistan, U.S. officials knew perfectly well that the people of Afghanistan had already suffered immensely. As the State Department official Robin L. Raphel explained to a congressional committee in June 1996, years of fighting had left the country in ruins. “Seventeen years of relentless fighting, sometimes sporadic and sometimes intense, have all but destroyed Afghanistan, its economy, its infrastructure, its institutions, and its social systems,” Raphel explained.<sup>85</sup>

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85 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Afghanistan: Is There Hope for Peace?*, 104th Cong., 2nd sess., June 6, 25, 26, and 27, 1996, 13. For more discussion, see the following sources: Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Human Rights Watch, *Background on Afghanistan: History of the War*, October 2001; Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy Concerns*, Congressional Research Service, November 15, 2001.



In the days following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, officials in the Bush administration pointed to the same basic situation in the country. “Afghanistan is a poor country,” the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld explained. It has “been pounded in repeated wars.”<sup>86</sup>

In spite of their knowledge, the Bush administration still decided to bring more warfare to the country. Since the terrorist group al Qaeda had ran its operations from the country, administration officials decided that they must go into Afghanistan to attack al Qaeda.

At the time, the C.I.A. official Cofer Black outlined the administration’s plans. In a number of statements, Black explained that U.S. forces would soon go into Afghanistan to violently murder as many members of al Qaeda as possible. “When we’re through with them, they will have flies walking across their eyeballs,” Black informed President Bush on September 13, 2001. A few days later, Black delivered a similar message to Russian officials. “We’re going to kill them,” Black explained. “We’re going to put their heads on sticks.” At one point, Black even instructed the leader of a C.I.A. team to kill and dismember the al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. “I want his head in a box,” Black said. “I want to take it down and show the president.” Indeed, Black made it clear that the Bush administration planned to go on a killing spree in Afghanistan.<sup>87</sup>

As Black laid out the mission, President Bush also decided to take broader military action. Rather than limiting the military operations to the pursuit of al Qaeda, Bush decided to attack the entire country. “We’re going to hurt them bad so that everyone

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86 Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Secretary Rumsfeld Interview with Fox News,” September 21, 2001, <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=1903>.

87 Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 52, 103, 141.

in the world sees, don't deal with bin Laden,” Bush explained. Hoping to send a powerful message to the rest of the world, Bush decided to unleash the full force of the U.S. military on Afghanistan. “We'll attack with missiles, bombers, and boots on the ground,” he explained. “Let's hit them hard.” In short, Bush decided to wage a major war against Afghanistan. “We are going to rain holy hell on them,” Bush declared.<sup>88</sup>

In a major speech on September 20, 2001, Bush publicly announced his plans. In the same speech in which he declared his intentions to launch a global war against terrorism, Bush explained that he would begin the war by initiating a major military campaign against Afghanistan. The ruling Taliban regime in Afghanistan “will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate,” Bush announced.<sup>89</sup>

After Bush issued his ultimatum, U.S. officials then began taking action. In early October 2001, C.I.A. officials instructed their agents to begin working with the country's warlords to conduct sabotage operations against the Taliban. “Instruct all assets throughout Afghanistan to begin sabotage operations immediately everywhere,” the C.I.A. officials instructed. “This would include tossing hand grenades through Taliban offices, disrupting Taliban convoys, pinning down those moving Taliban supplies and ammunition, and generally making pests of themselves.” In other words, the C.I.A. initiated a war of terror against the Taliban.<sup>90</sup>

At the same time, the Defense Department began a second major component of the war. On October 7, 2001, the Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld started a major

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88 Ibid., 63, 98.

89 George W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the United States Response to the Terrorist Attacks of September 11,” September 20, 2001, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2001*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2001 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 1141.

90 Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 201-203.

bombing campaign against Afghanistan. “The operation today involved a variety of weapon systems and it originated from a number of separate locations,” Rumsfeld explained. “We used land- and sea-based aircraft, surface ships and submarines, and we employed a variety of weapons to achieve our objective.”<sup>91</sup>

Through their actions, the Bush administration brought a tremendous amount of violence to the country. With the bombing campaign, the administration quickly killed thousands of people. In one major attack against an Afghan air base in early November 2001, U.S. forces inflicted over two thousand enemy casualties. In addition, the administration facilitated the deaths of thousands more people by working with the country's warlords. For example, the C.I.A. asset Abdul Rashid Dostum committed one of the worst massacres of the war in late November 2001 by killing as many as one thousand prisoners of war. Altogether, the administration delivered a major death blow against Afghanistan, exactly as President Bush wanted.<sup>92</sup>

Of course, the Bush administration viewed the military campaign as a major success. Since the ruling Taliban government quickly collapsed, administration officials

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91 Donald H. Rumsfeld and Myers Briefing on Enduring Freedom,” October 7, 2001, <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2011>.

92 For details about the attack against the Afghan air base, see Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 309. For information about the massacre, see the following sources: Babak Dehghanpisheh, John Barry, Roy Gutman, Donatella Lorch, Karen Breslau, and Stryker McGuire, “The Death Convoy of Afghanistan,” *Newsweek*, August 26, 2002, <http://www.newsweek.com/2002/08/25/the-death-convoy-of-afghanistan.html>; James Risen, “U.S. Inaction Seen After Taliban P.O.W.'s Died,” *New York Times*, July 11, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/11/world/asia/11afghan.html>. For estimates of the civilian casualties, see the following sources: Ian Traynor, “Afghans are still dying as air strikes go on. But no one is counting,” *Guardian*, February 12, 2002, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/feb/12/afghanistan.iantraynor>; Jonathan Steele, “Forgotten victims,” *Guardian*, May 20, 2002, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/may/20/afghanistan.comment>; David Zucchino, “The Americans... They Just Drop Their Bombs and Leave,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 2002, <http://www.latimes.com/templates/misc/printstory.jsp?slug=la-060202bombs>. Also see the various reports published by the Congressional Research Service titled “Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians.”

felt that they had succeeded in their mission. “In a short period of time, most of the country now is in the hands of our allies and friends,” President Bush announced on November 29, 2001. “We’ve destroyed the Taliban military. They’re in total confusion.”<sup>93</sup>

Indeed, the Bush administration quickly achieved one of its main objectives in the war. Although the administration failed to kill Osama bin Laden, it quickly overthrew the Afghan government, which it blamed for providing bin Laden and al Qaeda with safe haven. As a result, administration officials declared that they had won a great victory in Afghanistan.

#### A Lot of Money and Force

During the military campaign, the Bush administration also focused on another major objective for the country. Hoping to replace the Taliban government with a government that would be more friendly to the United States, the Bush administration began working to create a new government in Afghanistan. While it certainly declared its intentions to return the country to the Afghan people, the Bush administration decided that it would create a new political structure for the country.

As the administration began its intervention, administration officials also began the process of creating a new government. Before they had even overthrown the ruling Taliban regime, administration officials started looking for a new Afghan leader.

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<sup>93</sup> George W. Bush, “Remarks to the United States Attorneys Conference,” November 29, 2001, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2001*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2001 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 1461.

Just days into their military operation, the head of the C.I.A. George Tenet outlined the main criteria for the new leader. In the first place, Tenet explained that the new leader should not come from the Northern Alliance, meaning the collection of warlords on the C.I.A. payroll. “The Northern Alliance will want to take Kabul, and it would be hard to control,” he warned. Concerned that the administration would struggle to control the warlords, Tenet advised administration officials to select someone from the country's largest ethnic group to lead the country. “We need a non-Taliban Pashtun to cooperate with the Northern Alliance on Kabul,” he explained. In short, Tenet advised the administration to select a Pashtun leader who would work against the Taliban while remaining open to working with the country's warlords.<sup>94</sup>

Sharing the same idea, administration officials selected a non-Taliban Pashtun to become the new leader of Afghanistan. Once the Taliban regime began to collapse, administration officials decided to install the C.I.A. asset Hamid Karzai as the new leader of the country. “He was the only Pashtun fighting the Taliban and staying alive,” one senior intelligence official explained. Although administration officials knew that Karzai had previously been a member of the Taliban, they came to view him as their ideal leader for a new Afghan government. “After the CIA met up with him and reported back George Tenet made a very quick decision that this is the guy we back,” the intelligence official confirmed.<sup>95</sup>

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94 Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 223.

95 Ibid., 314-315, 321. For the quote, see Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008), 86. For more discussion of the relationship between the C.I.A. and Karzai, see the following sources: Matthew Rosenberg, “Karzai’s Office Gets Bags Full Of C.I.A. Cash,” *New York Times*, April 29, 2013; Matthew Rosenberg, “Afghan Leader Confirms Cash Deliveries by C.I.A.,” *New York Times*, April 30, 2013; Matthew Rosenberg, “Karzai Says He Was Assured C.I.A. Cash Would Keep Coming,” *New York Times*, May 5, 2013.

After they installed Karzai as the leader of a new Afghan government, U.S. officials also began instructing him how to run the country. For example, U.S. officials began urging Karzai to work with the country's warlords. Although they did not want to see the warlords run the new Afghan government, U.S. officials insisted that Karzai must ensure that the warlords acquired a stake in the country's political process.<sup>96</sup>

Meeting with Karzai in April 2003, the U.S. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher delivered the basic instructions. The "challenge was to integrate the warlords," Rohrabacher explained. To justify the approach, Rohrabacher argued that the country's warlords could impose order on Afghanistan in the same way that gangsters had once imposed order on the western part of the United States. In the past, "many of the Wild West's most famous sheriffs were former outlaws," Rohrabacher explained. Consequently, "law and order was maintained in those times primarily by local militias." Indeed, Rohrabacher argued that the warlords could uphold law and order in Afghanistan.<sup>97</sup>

As U.S. officials delivered their instructions, they also made it clear that they remained the ultimate source of power in Afghanistan. Although they certainly championed Karzai as the new leader of the country, U.S. officials signaled that they would be the ones who ultimately ushered in a new age in Afghanistan. "When we

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96 For more discussion, see Ahmed Rashid, "The One-Billion-Dollar Warlords: The War Within Afghanistan," in *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008), 125-144.

97 Embassy Kabul, "CONGRESSMAN ROHRABACHER'S APRIL 16 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KARZAI," 03KABUL1029, April 21, 2003, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2003/04/03KABUL1029.html>.

achieve success Afghanistan, it will be an *American* success,” the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad explained.<sup>98</sup>

In fact, many observers viewed Khalilzad as the real leader of the country. While they often pointed to Karzai as the new public face of the country, a number of observers felt that Khalilzad exercised far more control over Afghanistan. “The genial Mr. Karzai may be Afghanistan's president, but the affable, ambitious Mr. Khalilzad often seems more like its chief executive,” the *New York Times* reported. “With his command of both details and American largesse, the Afghan-born envoy has created an alternate seat of power.”<sup>99</sup>

Even after Khalilzad left the country in mid-2005, the leaders of the United States remained the ultimate power in Afghanistan. By providing Karzai with support and assistance, U.S. officials enabled the new Afghan government to keep functioning. Since Karzai “is not strong enough,” he requires “our encouragement, our occasional pressure, and a lot of our money and force to back him up,” the U.S. diplomats in Afghanistan explained.<sup>100</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials continued to maintain a powerful hold over Afghanistan. In one display of their power, administration officials decided to keep Karzai positioned as the head of the Afghan government. “We

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98 Zalmay Khalilzad, “Afghanistan Progress Report,” April 5, 2004, <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/wwwhspzk040504.html>.

99 Amy Waldman, “In Afghanistan, U.S. Envoy Sits In Seat of Power,” *New York Times*, April 17, 2004.

100 Embassy Kabul, “SCENESETTER FOR PRESIDENT KARZAI'S UPCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON,” 06KABUL4251, September 19, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/09/06KABUL4251.html>.

have to work with Karzai,” the C.I.A. Director Leon Panetta explained. After all, the C.I.A. has maintained an “alliance with the Karzai family for more than eight years.”<sup>101</sup>

In addition, administration officials made a far more consequential decision. As they considered their long-term objectives in the region, they decided that the United States must remain permanently involved in Afghanistan. “We’re not leaving Afghanistan prematurely,” the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates explained. “In fact, we’re not ever leaving at all.” Indeed, Gates stated that the United States would play an enduring role in the country.<sup>102</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States established their control over Afghanistan. Not only did they decide who would run the new Afghan government, but they also created a new political system that relied on U.S. power for its very survival. No matter what the people of Afghanistan felt about the matter, U.S. officials remained in direct control of the country. As a result, U.S. officials acquired a direct foothold in South Asia.

## A Criminal Syndicate

As they created their client state in Afghanistan, U.S. officials also shaped one of the defining features of the new Afghan government. By installing a C.I.A. asset to lead the country, U.S. officials created a government that thrived on corruption. Indeed, U.S.

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101 Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 224. For more discussion of the relationship between the C.I.A. and Karzai, see the following sources: Matthew Rosenberg, “Karzai’s Office Gets Bags Full Of C.I.A. Cash,” *New York Times*, April 29, 2013; Matthew Rosenberg, “Afghan Leader Confirms Cash Deliveries by C.I.A.,” *New York Times*, April 30, 2013; Matthew Rosenberg, “Karzai Says He Was Assured C.I.A. Cash Would Keep Coming,” *New York Times*, May 5, 2013.

102 Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 354.



officials created a new Afghan government that quickly became one of the most corrupt regimes in the world.

The U.S. diplomats in Afghanistan, who oversaw the operations of the Afghan government, made note of the extensive corruption in their reports to the State Department. When they summarized some of the latest political developments in the country for the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in January 2006, the diplomats explained that “government institutions in Afghanistan” remained “riddled with corruption.” Although they tried to remain optimistic about the situation in the country, they made it clear that the new Afghan government featured “widespread, endemic corruption at the national, provincial and regional levels.”<sup>103</sup>

In another report, the diplomats also called attention to one of the main consequences of the corruption. As they welcomed a number of U.S. officials to the country in early 2007, the diplomats explained that “increasingly systemic corruption” made the Afghan government increasingly unpopular with the Afghan people. “Corruption is eroding public confidence in the GOA,” they observed. In other words, the diplomats found that the extensive corruption caused many of the Afghan people to turn against the Afghan government. Much of the corruption “is related to drug trafficking” and “is poisoning efforts to build a capable and credible governance system,” they added.<sup>104</sup>

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103 Embassy Kabul, “LONDON CONFERENCE SCENESETTER FOR SECRETARY RICE,” 06KABUL329, January 24, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/01/06KABUL329.html>.

104 Embassy Kabul, “SCENE SETTER: US-AFGHAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TALKS IN KABUL - MARCH 13,” 07KABUL804, March 8, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/03/07KABUL804.html>; Embassy Kabul, “SCENESETTER II: US-AFGHAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BILATERAL MEETINGS MARCH 13-14,” 07KABUL805, March 8, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/03/07KABUL805.html>.

Concerned about the potential consequences of the corruption, the diplomats then began to insist that the Afghan leader Hamid Karzai must do something to address the growing concerns of the Afghan people. In one of their reports, the diplomats suggested that Karzai should make a series of gestures that made it appear as if he opposed the corruption. “He must balance his inclination to make concessions designed to keep his enemies inside the tent with more dynamic leadership to avoid the growing impression that he is too accommodating of warlords, drug lords, and corrupt officials,” the diplomats advised. Otherwise, the diplomats feared that the Afghan people would never fully trust the Afghan government. “Karzai has tried, albeit slowly, to remove some corrupt officials; however, the effective impunity of the powerful is demoralizing to the general public,” they warned.<sup>105</sup>

In another report, the diplomats also pointed to the main reasons why the Afghan public found the Afghan government so demoralizing. In February 2008, the diplomats explained that a collection of corrupt gangsters had effectively gained control of the government. “Mujahadin commanders and warlords continue to hold both appointed and elected positions and often put tribal and ethnic interests ahead of the nation's,” the diplomats explained. In addition, the diplomats found that the gangsters had spread their corrupt methods throughout the entire legal system. “The system is afflicted by corruption at all levels, from the police (under the Ministry of Interior), to the prosecutors (under the Attorney General), to the judges (under the Supreme Court), to corrections (under the Ministry of Justice),” the diplomats noted. “Both defendants and their political

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<sup>105</sup> Embassy Kabul, “SCENE-SETTER FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE'S VISIT TO KABUL,” 07KABUL2968, September 5, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/09/07KABUL2968.html>.

patrons or supporters are able to exert undue influence – either through bribes or violence or the threat thereof – at every stage of the process.” Indeed, the diplomats found that a collection of corrupt gangsters had taken over the government.<sup>106</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, the diplomats continued to relay similar warnings. When they welcomed a congressional delegation to the country in April 2009, the diplomats explained that widespread corruption still permeated every aspect of the Afghan government. “National and international will is holding, but poor governance and corruption are corrosive problems,” the diplomats reported.<sup>107</sup>

Later in the year, the U.S. General Stanley McChrystal then pointed to an additional issue. Returning to one of the main points that the U.S. diplomats in the country had been making for years, McChrystal explained that the extensive corruption made it impossible for the Afghan people to support the Afghan government. “The weakness of state institutions, malign actions of power-brokers, widespread corruption and abuse of power by various officials, and ISAF's own errors, have given Afghans little reason to support their government,” McChrystal reported. Providing more details, McChrystal specified that many corrupt government officials supported the very forces that made life so difficult for the Afghan people. “There are no clear lines separating insurgent groups, criminal networks (including the narcotics networks), and corrupt GIROA officials,” McChrystal explained. “Malign actors within GIROA support insurgent

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106 Embassy Kabul, “SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF CODEL BIDEN TO AFGHANISTAN,” 08KABUL409, February 19, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/02/08KABUL409.html>. For more discussion, see Dexter Filkins, “Bribes Corrode Afghans’ Trust In Government,” *New York Times*, January 2, 2009.

107 Embassy Kabul, “SCENESETTER FOR CODEL MCCONNELL,” 09KABUL803, April 1, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/04/09KABUL803.html>; Embassy Kabul, “CODEL CARPER - WELCOME TO AFGHANISTAN,” 09KABUL1295, May 21, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/05/09KABUL1295.html>.

groups directly, support criminal networks that are linked to insurgents, and support corruption that helps feed the insurgency.” In short, McChrystal identified the Afghan government as one of the main problems in the country.<sup>108</sup>

Toward the end of the year, numerous officials in the Obama administration then made their own comparable assessments. Meeting with President Obama in early October 2009, a number of members of the National Security Council acknowledged that they were supporting a tremendously corrupt regime in Afghanistan. “Right now we’re dealing with an extraordinarily corrupt government,” the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry conceded. The Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who oversaw the military occupation of the country, shared the same view. “This group is way beyond the pale in terms of corruption,” Gates remarked. At one point, the U.S. General David Petraeus even described the Afghan government as a criminal enterprise. “I understand the government is a criminal syndicate,” Petraeus remarked. Indeed, the highest level officials in the Obama administration all agreed that corruption and criminality pervaded every aspect of the Afghan government.<sup>109</sup>

At the end of the year, the U.S. diplomats in Afghanistan provided one of the clearest images of the extent of the corruption in the country. Reporting on the re-inauguration ceremony of the Afghan leader Hamid Karzai, the diplomats explained that many gangsters and warlords took their place alongside Karzai at the ceremony. “Karzai’s strong roots with the ‘mujahedeen’ and other traditional leaders who helped him win and

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108 International Security Assistance Force, “COMISAF’S INITIAL ASSESSMENT,” August 30, 2009, 2-4, 2-9, 2-9-2-10. For more discussion and a link to the document, see Bob Woodward, “McChrystal: More Forces or ‘Mission Failure,’” *Washington Post*, September 21, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/20/AR2009092002920.html>.

109 Bob Woodward, *Obama’s Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 218, 219, 220.

help him govern were in full display,” the diplomats explained. During the ceremony, “all the 'mujahedeen' of the 1980's and 1990's, including Dostum, Mohaqqueq, Mohsehni and the two vice presidents (Khalili and Fahim) were highly visible in the front row next to the President.” In short, the diplomats made it clear that Karzai relied on many of the country's most notorious gangsters to run the country.<sup>110</sup>

Clearly, the leaders of the United States remained well that they had created a criminal regime in Afghanistan. Although they had certainly eliminated the repressive Taliban regime, U.S. officials knew perfectly well that they had replaced it with a corrosive mix of corrupt politicians and warlords who ran the country with impunity. Indeed, U.S. officials knowingly enabled a criminal syndicate to gain political power in Afghanistan.

When the *New York Times* reviewed the situation in Afghanistan in late 2010, it could only acknowledge what everyone had already known. “Afghanistan is now widely recognized as one of the world’s premier gangster-states,” the paper reported.<sup>111</sup>

## A Land Bridge

Of course, the leaders of the United States remained far more concerned about their other objectives for the country. Since Afghanistan lay at the intersection of South and Central Asia, U.S. officials hoped to use the country to create their new regional

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110 Embassy Kabul, “KARZAI'S INAUGURATION - LEGITIMACY, POLITICAL ROOTS, AND PROMISES,” 09KABUL3725, November 19, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09KABUL3725.html>. For more discussion of the 2009 election, see the various reports published by the Congressional Research Service titled “Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance.”

111 Dexter Filkins, “Inside Corrupt-istan,” *New York Times*, September 5, 2010.

system at the heart of Asia. Rather than making it their main goal to bring freedom and democracy to the people of Afghanistan, U.S. officials approached the country as one of the keys to creating their strategic hub.

Before 9/11, U.S. officials had already begun working to use the country for similar purposes. During the late 1990s, the Clinton administration attempted to persuade the ruling Taliban regime to permit the U.S. oil company Unocal to construct a major new pipeline through Afghanistan.<sup>112</sup>

In June 1996, the Unocal executive Martin F. Miller outlined the main thinking behind the project. “Afghanistan is strategically located to provide what we call a commerce corridor to the Arabian Sea for its landlocked central Asian neighbors,” Miller explained. “Ultimately, this corridor could include the pipelines, a railroad, a multi lane highway, and a communications trunk line, fiber optics trunk line.”<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, the Clinton administration shared the same ambitions. Although the Clinton administration eventually turned away from the Taliban, bringing the plans for the pipeline to an end, administration officials remained hopeful that they could use the country to create a new kind of regional trading system. Many people “want to see Afghanistan regain its traditional role as an important trade route between Central and South Asia,” the State Department official Karl F. Inderfurth confirmed.<sup>114</sup>

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112 For more discussion, see the following sources: Ahmed Rashid, “The New Great Game: Battle for Central Asia's Oil,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 10, 1997; Richard Mackenzie, “The United States and the Taliban,” in *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*, ed. William Maley (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1998), 90-103; Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil, and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

113 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Afghanistan: Is There Hope for Peace?*, 104th Cong., 2nd sess., June 6, 25, 26, and 27, 1996, 143.

114 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, *Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2000*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., March 9, 25, April 29, and May 19, 20, 1999, 15.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Bush administration revived the same plans for Afghanistan. Not long after the administration created the new Afghan government, the Secretary of State Colin Powell explained that he hoped to see the country emerge as the central link in a broader regional network. With the right kinds of infrastructure, people can really “start to imagine the kinds of transmission capability you might have for petroleum products and natural gas,” Powell explained. “It fundamentally reshapes the economy of that whole part of Central Asia and the subcontinent.”<sup>115</sup>

Around the same time, the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad provided direct confirmation of the Bush administration’s intentions. “Our goal is to reestablish Afghanistan’s historic role as a switching point for regional trade and commerce,” Khalilzad explained.<sup>116</sup>

During its second term in office, the Bush administration then formally introduced its plans for the country. When it issued a revised version of its National Security Strategy in March 2006, the administration explained that it intended to use Afghanistan to create a new regional system. “Increasingly, Afghanistan will assume its historical role as a land-bridge between South and Central Asia, connecting these two vital regions,” the administration reported.<sup>117</sup>

A few months later, the State Department official Richard Boucher presented a similar vision for the country. In a public address, Boucher explained that Afghanistan could function as the main link between South and Central Asia. “One glance at a map

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115 Colin L. Powell, “Remarks En Route to Kuwait,” March 18, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/30562.htm>.

116 Zalmay Khalilzad, “Afghanistan Progress Report,” April 5, 2004, <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/wwwhspzk040504.html>.

117 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, 40.

shows that geography placed Afghanistan at the pivot point for interactions between South and Central Asia,” Boucher explained. While the country has often “acted as a barrier dividing the two regions,” it has recently “regained its natural role as the pivot of Central and South Asia.” To emphasize his point, Boucher proposed that Afghanistan could perhaps even emerge as a key link in a broader continental system. “It has the potential to be a land bridge connecting the vast Kazakh steppes and beyond with the great ports of the Indian Ocean and greater Asia,” Boucher explained. “This broad idea is merely a revival of the fundamental basis for the Silk Road.” Indeed, Boucher identified Afghanistan as one of the keys to uniting the entire hemisphere.<sup>118</sup>

The following year, Boucher presented a similar vision for the country. In September 2007, Boucher explained that Afghanistan featured “strategic importance” and “you might call it heart of Asia in some ways.” Providing more details, Boucher specified that the country could function at the center of a new continental system. “It can be the hub between South Asia and Central Asia,” providing a central node “for goods and ideas, people and energy moving back and forth between Central Asia and the Sea,” he explained.<sup>119</sup>

During the Bush administration's final year in office, the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice then once again confirmed that the Bush administration intended to transform Afghanistan into a powerful new pivot point at the heart of Asia. “Afghanistan

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118 Richard A. Boucher, “Remarks at Electricity Beyond Borders: A Central Asia Power Sector Forum,” June 13, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rm/2006/67838.htm>.

119 Richard A. Boucher, “Remarks to the Press: Discussing Afghanistan,” September 6, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/rm/2007/92125.htm>.



can only succeed if it develops as a land bridge linking South and Central Asia,” Rice stated.<sup>120</sup>

In fact, officials in the subsequent Obama administration pursued the same goal for the country. When the State Department official Michael Owen met with his counterparts from the European Union in June 2009, he explained the Obama administration shared the same intentions. “The U.S. was working to link Afghanistan to both Central Asia and South Asia,” Owen explained.<sup>121</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States pursued one main objective for Afghanistan. Rather than making it their primary goal to end terrorism in the region or support democracy in the area, U.S. officials principally sought to transform Afghanistan into a land bridge that unified South and Central Asia into a new regional unit. Given the country’s location at the pivot point between South and Central Asia, they viewed Afghanistan as one of the keys to creating their strategic hub. Consequently, U.S. officials remained convinced that they would never succeed in Afghanistan until they finally transformed the country into a powerful new land bridge at the heart of Asia.

## Conclusion

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120 Secretary of State, “(SBU) Secretary Rice’s September 29, 2008 meeting with Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin,” 08STATE105791, October 2, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08STATE105791.html>.

121 USEU Brussels, “U.S.-EU EXCHANGES ON SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA,” 09BRUSSELS859, June 22, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/06/09BRUSSELS859.html>.

In the end, the leaders of the United States pursued an ambitious agenda for South Asia. Maintaining their focus on their strategic objectives, U.S. officials worked to transform South Asia into another major component of their global empire.

With Afghanistan, U.S. officials saw a major new opportunity to create their regional system. While they had once exploited the country to weaken the Soviet Union, they took a new approach to the country during the post-Soviet period, making it their goal to transform Afghanistan into a land bridge that linked South and Central Asia.

At the same time, U.S. officials bolstered their efforts by working with the Pakistani government. Since the country played one of the most powerful roles in the area, U.S. officials often turned to the Pakistani government to reinforce their power in the area.

All the while, U.S. officials maintained their focus on India. Viewing India as the main center of power in the region, U.S. officials sought to convince the Indian government to abandon its historic policy of non-alignment and form a strategic alliance with the United States.

Over the course of their efforts, U.S. officials played a tremendously powerful role in the area. Although they struggled to achieve their ultimate objective of transforming South Asia into a strategic hub, U.S. officials maintained the upper hand in regional affairs. By invading and occupying Afghanistan at the start of the twenty-first century, they even acquired a direct foothold in the area.

In short, the leaders of the United States played an imperial role in South Asia. As they worked to construct their regional system, U.S. officials ensured that much of South

Asia remained under their influence on the periphery of their global structure of imperialism.

## Chapter 6

### Africa

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- The Blood of Africa
- Africa: Open for Grabs
  - AFRICOM: A Radical New Experiment
  - Anchors for Engagement
- South Africa: The Continent's Economic Locomotive
  - Embarrassing Matters
- Nigeria: One of Africa's Most Pivotal Countries
  - Pervasive Corruption
  - Stealing the Nation
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

As the leaders of the United States have projected their power across the world, they have also set their sights on one more part of the planet. Without leaving any area of the globe beyond their reach, U.S. officials have also extended their imperial system into Africa. “Ultimately, we look at the strategic importance of Africa and we have no option

but to be involved,” the U.S. General William Ward explained in the early twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, many scholars have found that the United States played a powerful role in Africa. For example, the scholar Walter Rodney argued in his study *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) that the United States acquired a powerful hold over the continent after World War II. For centuries, the “capitalists of Western Europe were the ones who actively extended their exploitation from inside Europe to cover the whole of Africa,” Rodney explained. “In recent times, they were joined and to some extent replaced by capitalists from the United States.”<sup>2</sup>

Not long after Rodney completed his study, the scholar Immanuel Wallerstein made a similar observation. In his essay “Africa, the United States, and the World Economy” (1975), Wallerstein pointed out that the United States had begun to replace the imperial powers of Europe as the dominant force in the continent. Previously, “the United States was perfectly content with what was happening in Africa and therefore seldom felt any need to intervene in a significant way,” Wallerstein explained. Only once African nations began to acquire their political independence from Europe in the decades after World War II did the U.S. policy of “relative satisfaction” begin “coming to an end.”<sup>3</sup>

In a more recent study, the scholar Elizabeth Schmidt has provided more details about the growing role of the United States in Africa. In her study *Foreign Intervention in*

- 1 William Ward, “Ward Highlights U.S. Mission, Challenges in Africa at Military Strategy Forum,” July 22, 2010, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/transcript/7566/transcript-ward-highlights-us-mission-challenges-i>.
- 2 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1972), 37.
- 3 Immanuel Wallerstein, “Africa, the United States, and the World Economy: The Historical Bases of American Policy,” in *U.S. Policy Toward Africa*, ed. Frederick S. Arkhurst (New York: Praeger, 1975), 15. Also see Immanuel Wallerstein, *Africa and the Modern World* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1986).

*Africa* (2013), Schmidt explained that the United States increasingly intervened in the continent in order to “replace the imperial powers as the dominant external force in Africa.” Although Schmidt found that various external powers competed for control of Africa throughout the postwar period, she made it clear that the United States quickly emerged as the dominant player in the area. “The United States was the most powerful of the external actors whose ideology and interests shaped Africa’s Cold War contests,” Schmidt asserted.<sup>4</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama played a comparable role in Africa. While they certainly accepted the fact that the European powers maintained significant influence over the continent, officials in both administrations worked to secure their own dominant stake in Africa. Through their efforts, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations began the twenty-first century by keeping much of the continent under their influence on the periphery of their global structure of imperialism.

### The Blood of Africa

In fact, the leaders of the United States have always maintained an interest in Africa. During the founding of the United States, U.S. officials created a slave nation that traced its roots directly to Africa. After they formally abolished slavery in 1865, U.S. officials continued to lead a diverse nation in which many Americans traced their family

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7, 22.

history to Africa. Although U.S. officials rarely acknowledged the transatlantic connection, preferring instead to celebrate the transatlantic ties between the United States and Europe, they have always run a nation that shared a direct connection with Africa.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, U.S. officials first began to openly acknowledge the connection. Once the African American civil rights movement had awakened the conscience of white Americans to the issue of racism, officials in Washington became more willing to identify the historic relationship between the United States and Africa. “Our nations and our continents are bound together by strong ties that we inherit from our histories,” the U.S. President Jimmy Carter stated during his historic visit to Africa in 1978.<sup>5</sup>

During the final years of the twentieth century, U.S. officials spoke more openly about the transatlantic connection. When the U.S. President Bill Clinton visited the House of Slaves at the Island of Gorée in April 1998, he explained that the United States and Africa remained forever bound by the history of slavery. “Here, on this tiny island in the Atlantic Ocean, Africa and America meet,” Clinton remarked. To emphasize his point, Clinton specified that the events that had taken place at the island remained a fundamental part of U.S. history. “In 1776, when our Nation was founded on the promise of freedom as God’s right to all human beings, a new building was dedicated here on Gorée Island to the selling of human beings in bondage to America,” Clinton explained. “Gorée Island is, therefore, as much a part of our history as a part of Africa’s history.”<sup>6</sup>

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5 Jimmy Carter, “Remarks at the National Arts Theatre,” April 1, 1978, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter, 1978*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 1978 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), 647.

6 William J. Clinton, “Remarks at Goree Island, Senegal,” April 2, 1998, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 1998*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 1998 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 495.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the U.S. President George W. Bush pointed to the same shared history. During his own visit to the Island of Gorée in July 2003, Bush explained that many slaves survived “one of the greatest crimes of history” only to find more pain and suffering in the United States. “A republic founded on equality for all became a prison for millions,” Bush remarked.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, Bush pointed to another key aspect of the connection. After acknowledging that the United States began as a slave nation, Bush explained that many African Americans still managed to transcend the horrors of slavery to play one of the most important roles in U.S. history. “Down through the years, African Americans have upheld the ideals of America by exposing laws and habits contradicting those ideals,” Bush explained. Indeed, Bush acknowledged that African Americans played a key role in making the United States into a much freer society. “By a plan known only to Providence, the stolen sons and daughters of Africa helped to awaken the conscience of America,” Bush remarked. “The very people traded into slavery helped to set America free.”<sup>8</sup>

A few years later, the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made many of the same points. In a public address, Rice explained that people of African descent had made one of the greatest contributions to the development of the United States. “Africa has given so much to America – more than anyone,” Rice insisted. “It was the stolen sons and daughters of Africa who lifted up the body of America, brick by brick, field by field, city by city.” In addition, Rice agreed that African Americans played one of the most

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7 George W. Bush, “Remarks at Goree Island, Senegal,” July 8, 2003, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2003*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2003 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), 845.

8 *Ibid.*, 845, 846.



consequential roles in U.S. history. “More than anyone, it was the quiet righteousness of African Americans, men and women like my parents and my grandparents, sons and daughters of the American South who helped to redeem America at last from its original sin of slavery,” she remarked. Indeed, Rice made it clear that the United States owed some of its greatest achievements to Americans of African descent. “America cannot forget the deep historical ties that bind us to the peoples of Africa,” she concluded.<sup>9</sup>

Not long thereafter, one of the most momentous events in U.S. history then highlighted the historic connection in a powerful new way. On November 4, 2008, the U.S. politician Barack Obama was elected as the nation's first African American president. “It's been a long time coming,” Obama remarked during his victory speech.<sup>10</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, a number of officials brought a powerful new focus to the historic connection. For example, the State Department official Johnnie Carson explained that people on both sides of the Atlantic remained bound together in the deepest ways possible. “The blood of Africa flows in the veins of America,” Carson stated. Indeed, Carson identified Americans and Africans as a common people who shared the direct ties of blood. Ultimately, “it is impossible to imagine the dynamic, multifaceted America of today without the contributions of Africans and their descendants to every aspect of our national life,” he noted.<sup>11</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States created a nation with deep links to Africa. Although it took them centuries before they would publicly acknowledge the connection,

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9 Condoleezza Rice, “Remarks at the African Growth and Opportunity Forum 2006,” June 6, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/67590.htm>.

10 Barack Obama, “Remarks of President-Elect Barack Obama : Election Night,” November 4, 2008, [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/11/04/remarks\\_of\\_presidenelect\\_bara.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/11/04/remarks_of_presidenelect_bara.php).

11 Johnnie Carson, “Remarks before the Council on Foreign Relations,” June 25, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2009/127945.htm>.

U.S. officials understood that the people of the United States and the people of Africa shared a direct relationship. Whether they cited the ties of history or blood, U.S. officials made it clear that they ran a nation that remained directly connected to Africa.

#### Africa: Open for Grabs

Of course, the leaders of the United States also harbored another view of Africa. As they pursued their imperial ambitions for the world, U.S. officials viewed the continent as one the greatest opportunities to gain more control over another part of the world. Although they certainly grew more willing to acknowledge the transatlantic connection between the United States and Africa, U.S. officials primarily saw Africa as another exploitable part of the periphery.

After World War II, U.S. officials clearly outlined their imperial ambitions. Although they recognized that much of the continent remained under the direct control of the European powers, they found that they could still shape the continent to their advantage. Many observers believe that “Africa is a relatively malleable area, more susceptible at present and for some time to come to outside determinism than any other large area of the world,” officials at the State Department explained. “Accordingly, it is the last large region in which outsiders can continue for a time to do very much as they please.” Indeed, State Department officials believed that many parts of the continent

remained open for the taking. “Africa contains virtually the last frontier areas in the world,” they asserted.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, the leaders of the United States maintained the same imperial mindset. Despite the fact that a series of anti-colonial movements succeeded in throwing off the shackles of European colonialism to create a series of independent African nations, U.S. officials continued to believe that they could reshape the continent to their advantage.

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration grew especially excited about the possibilities. Convinced that the continent featured tremendous amounts of untapped resources, administration officials often described Africa as a source of great material wealth. “I think of Africa as the last great emerging market,” the State Department official Walter Kansteiner remarked in early 2003.<sup>13</sup>

The following year, the State Department official Charles Snyder made a similar point. “There really is a large emerging market there, a serious one, maybe the last one that's open for grabs in any real sense that doesn't have preexisting patterns that can't be broken at this point,” Snyder remarked. Indeed, Snyder argued that the continent featured a potentially lucrative market that remained open for grabs.<sup>14</sup>

At times, administration officials could barely even contain their excitement. As they considered the material opportunities in Africa, they found that tremendous wealth

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12 “Report Prepared in the Department of State,” undated, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, 1950*, vol. 5 of *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 1505, 1505-1506; “Policy Paper Prepared by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs,” April 18, 1950, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, 1950*, vol. 5 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 1525.

13 Anver Versi, “AGOA: Views from the Forum,” *African Business*, March 2003.

14 Charles Snyder, “Remarks to The American Enterprise Institute,” April 13, 2004, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/31950.htm>.

awaited them. “The wealth of that continent is unbelievable across the board – across from north to south, from east to west,” the State Department official Jendayi Frazer remarked.<sup>15</sup>

Sensing the same potential, the State Department official Gregory L. Garland made a related point. “Africa is an exciting place for business now,” Garland explained. “It is truly a frontier awaiting those with vision.”<sup>16</sup>

During the Bush administration's final year in office, the Defense Department official Theresa Whelan provided another key insight. Speaking to the press, Whelan explained that the Bush administration intended to secure its access to African markets. “Everybody wants to know what our hidden agenda is,” Whelan stated. “And so I decided to tell you what our hidden agenda is.” Citing “our national security interests,” she explained that the Bush administration sought “free market access” to the African continent. The United States has interests in “the ability to buy oil and other commodities from the African continent, just as many other countries have interests in the tremendous wealth and the potential that Africa is from an economic and a market standpoint,” she added.<sup>17</sup>

Under the Obama administration, U.S. officials displayed similar ambitions. The State Department official Johnnie Carson, who often mused about “the vast economic opportunities that remain untapped in Africa,” repeatedly insisted that the continent

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15 Jendayi Frazer, “Current Themes in U.S.-Africa Policy,” May 16, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2006/69321.htm>.

16 Gregory L. Garland, “Panel Discussion: Emerging Markets,” December 1, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/97693.htm>.

17 Theresa Whelan, “Pentagon Africa Policy Chief Whelan Describes U.S. Objectives for Africa Command,” February 18, 2008, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/transcript/6123/transcript-pentagon-africa-policy-chief-whelan-des>.

featured tremendous material opportunities. “Africa stands out as the world’s last, great emerging market,” Carson explained. The continent’s “great potential and enormous promise are as vast as the continent is itself.”<sup>18</sup>

Likewise, the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton believed that the continent featured great potential. For starters, Clinton agreed that Africa featured tremendous amounts of untapped material wealth. “There is so much wealth, so many resources, so many opportunities,” she remarked. In addition, Clinton stated that the Obama administration would work with any African regime that agreed to open more of the continent’s markets to the United States. “We will work with anybody,” Clinton proclaimed. After all, “we know how to open markets. The United States is an expert at opening markets.” After making her point, Clinton then delivered one final message. Recognizing that many Africans remained concerned about the potential for exploitation, Clinton urged the leaders of Africa to set aside their concerns and place their trust in the United States. “I mean, for goodness sakes, this is the 21st century,” Clinton remarked. “We’ve got to get over what happened 50, 100, 200 years ago, and let’s make money for everybody.”<sup>19</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States saw a tremendous opportunity in Africa. Viewing the continent as one of the last remaining frontier regions of the world, they believed that Africa featured some of the last sources of untapped wealth. No matter how many times they spoke with respect and compassion about the historical ties that bound

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18 Johnnie Carson, “U.S.-Africa Policy Under the Obama Administration,” April 5, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2010/139462.htm>; Charles W. Corey, “State’s Carson Says U.S., Africa Partnering on Infrastructure,” April 29, 2010, <http://www.america.gov/st/develop-english/2010/April/20100429092056WCyeroC0.5214655.html>.

19 Hillary Clinton, “Diplomacy Briefing Series: Conference on sub-Saharan Africa,” June 14, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/06/143134.htm>.

together the United States and Africa, U.S. officials made it their primary goal to pry open more of the country's markets for the United States. Indeed, U.S. officials sought to assert their control over the continent's material resources.

### AFRICOM: A Radical New Experiment

As they pursued their imperial ambitions, officials in Washington also initiated a major new project to help them achieve their objectives. Taking advantage of their tremendous military power, U.S. officials created a new military command in Africa. By creating the new military commands, which they called the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), U.S. officials began to play a more direct military role in Africa.<sup>20</sup>

On February 6, 2007, President Bush announced that he had made the decision to create the new military command. "Today I am pleased to announce my decision to create a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa," Bush stated. Indeed, Bush simply declared that his administration would create the new military command.<sup>21</sup>

On the day that Bush announced his decision, the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates provided more details. Speaking before a congressional committee, Gates explained that the president planned for the new military command to direct the administration's wide array of military programs in Africa. "The President has decided to

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20 For more discussion, see Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," Congressional Research Service, May 16, 2007.

21 George W. Bush, "Statement on the Creation of the Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa," February 6, 2007, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2007*, Book I – January 1 to June 30, 2007 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2011), 108.

stand up a new unified combatant command, Africa Command (AFRICOM), to oversee security cooperation, building partnership capability, defense support to nonmilitary missions, and, if directed, military operations on the African continent,” Gates explained.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, administration officials recognized that they also faced significant challenges to their plans. Given the long history of colonialism in Africa, administration officials knew that they would encounter resistance from the people of Africa. “There is considerable apprehension over U.S. motivations for creating AFRICOM, and some Africans worry that the move represents a neo-colonial effort to dominate the region militarily,” the analyst Lauren Ploch at the Congressional Research Service explained.<sup>23</sup>

To deal with the concerns of the people of Africa, U.S. officials considered a number of different tactics. For example, some of the U.S. diplomats who worked in Africa suggested that the Bush administration could reduce the controversy over AFRICOM by not speaking about U.S. military bases in Africa. “We repeat our suggestion that the term 'basing' be dropped from the AFRICOM lexicon, and use instead 'locating or situating' headquarters or other staff/personnel in African countries,” the diplomats advised. “From our experience, 'basing' carries too much baggage here, and likely elsewhere across Africa.” Indeed, the diplomats felt that the administration should make an effort to avoid the kind of language that many Africans associated with colonialism. “From our experience, the concept of 'basing' conjures up automatic images

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22 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2008*, Part 1, 110th Cong., 1st sess., February 6; March 15, 20, 22, 29; April 17, 24; May 3, 17, 2007, 5.

23 Lauren Ploch, “Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa,” Congressional Research Service, May 16, 2007, CRS-19.

of U.S. combat troops and carries too much baggage here, and likely elsewhere on the continent,” they explained.<sup>24</sup>

As many administration officials followed the advice, some officials tried the exact opposite approach. While a number of officials certainly agreed to stop talking about U.S. military bases in Africa, others used images of U.S. combat troops in Africa to defend the Bush administration's decision. “While AFRICOM is new, our military has a long history in Africa,” the State Department official Linda Thomas-Greenfield explained. “We can all the way go back to the administration of Thomas Jefferson 200 years ago.” Indeed, Thomas-Greenfield dated the involvement of the U.S. military in Africa all the way back to the Barbary Wars to make the case that the creation of AFRICOM represented nothing new for the continent. “AFRICOM’s strategic vision, then, is rooted in the long-standing reality of the importance of Africa,” she concluded.<sup>25</sup>

By trying so many different approaches, U.S. officials also sent a lot of mixed messages about AFRICOM. Rather than reducing the concerns of the African people, U.S. officials instead created a lot of confusion. Undoubtedly, “initial messages about AFRICOM were mixed,” the State Department official Jendayi Frazer acknowledged. “On the one hand, AFRICOM was merely a bureaucratic realignment within the Department of Defense, while on the other, AFRICOM was a radical new experiment in how the U.S. Government conducts foreign policy on the continent.”<sup>26</sup>

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24 Embassy Gaborone, “BOTSWANA-BASED DELIBERATIONS OVER AFRICOM,” 07GABORONE1249, October 10, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/10/07GABORONE1249.html>.

25 Linda Thomas-Greenfield, “Remarks on AFRICOM,” December 5, 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/99818.htm>.

26 Jendayi Frazer, “AFRICOM: The American Military and Public Diplomacy,” February 7, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2008/108989.htm>.



In spite of the mixed messages, U.S. officials still agreed on one basic factor. No matter how they tried to justify their decision to create the command, U.S. officials insisted that AFRICOM would help them bring more focus to their military activities in Africa. “AFRICOM signals U.S. recognition that Africa’s strategic importance requires a single focal point in the Department of Defense,” Frazer explained.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout Washington, many officials shared the same view. For example, the State Department official Claudia E. Anyaso insisted in April 2008 that U.S. officials needed to create AFRICOM because of the tremendous importance of Africa. Essentially, “the Department of Defense (DOD) is acknowledging the strategic importance of Africa by establishing a military command devoted solely to African security needs,” Anyaso stated.<sup>28</sup>

As the Bush administration moved forward with its plans to create AFRICOM, another official then made another key point. Shortly before the Bush administration opened the command on October 1, 2008, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen explained that AFRICOM would function as the central organization for the United States in Africa. The people who run the command “are literally the center of gravity for us as a – certainly as a military but I believe in our government for what’s going on in Africa,” Mullen explained. With his comments, Mullen indicated that U.S. officials would coordinate their approach to Africa through AFRICOM. “So it’s really going to be through this command more than anyplace else, certainly in our military and

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27 Ibid.

28 Claudia E. Anyaso, “An Overview of AFRICOM: A Unified Combatant Command,” April 22, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2008/103890.htm>.

possibly in our government, that we're going to be engaging Africa in the next 10 to 20 years," Mullen noted.<sup>29</sup>

Of course, U.S. officials also moved forward with their plans without ever resolving the many concerns of the African people. While they certainly celebrated the opening of the new military command on October 1, 2008 as a major achievement, they continued to face various forms of resistance to their decision.

After the Obama administration entered office, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified many of the outstanding issues. In the first place, the GAO found that some U.S. officials had developed serious concerns about AFRICOM. A number of "State and USAID officials noted that the creation of AFRICOM could blur traditional boundaries among diplomacy, development, and defense, thereby militarizing U.S. foreign policy," the GAO reported. In addition, the GAO confirmed that many Africans remained opposed to the command. "Among African countries, there is some apprehension that AFRICOM will be used as an opportunity to increase the number of U.S. troops and military bases in Africa," the GAO explained. "African leaders also expressed concerns to DOD that U.S. priorities in Africa may not be shared by their governments." Altogether, the GAO found that many people in both the United States and Africa harbored serious reservations about AFRICOM.<sup>30</sup>

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29 Michael Mullen, "Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Meets with AFRICOM Staff," June 27, 2008, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/transcript/6237/transcript—admiral-mike-mullen-chairman-of-the-jo>; Michael Mullen, "Chairman of Joint Chiefs Press Availability at U.S. Africa Command," June 27, 2008, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/transcript/6239/transcript-chairman-of-joint-chiefs-press-availabi>.

30 Government Accountability Office, *DEFENSE MANAGEMENT: Actions Needed to Address Stakeholder Concerns, Improve Interagency Collaboration, and Determine Full Costs Associated with the U.S. Africa Command*, GAO-09-181, February 2009, 14, 28. Available online at <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-09-181>.

Moreover, administration officials remained well aware of the concerns. For example, the Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair acknowledged before a congressional committee in March 2009 that many Africans still viewed the “military-diplomatic construct” as a potential threat. “I think the problem was that the Africans, with their history of colonialism and so on, did not see it the same way,” Blair explained. After making his point, Blair then specified that the people of Africa “frankly to this day” remained quite suspicious of AFRICOM. Currently, “many African countries are looking for a hidden agenda there in terms of growing American military power,” he noted. “I think that is the biggest problem that we have.”<sup>31</sup>

In spite of the ongoing opposition, the Obama administration decided to keep the command running. Rather than giving any serious consideration to the ongoing concerns about AFRICOM, administration officials treated the criticisms as a problem that they needed to minimize.

When President Obama visited Africa in July 2009, he made his own attempt to address the criticisms. Hoping to placate the concerns of Africans, he first conceded that both the United States and Europe had historically played an imperial role in Africa. “The West has often approached Africa as a patron or a source of resources rather than a partner,” Obama acknowledged. At the same time, Obama insisted that the people of Africa no longer had anything to fear from the United States. “Our Africa Command is focused not on establishing a foothold in the continent,” he insisted. It seeks to address

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<sup>31</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Current and Future Worldwide Threats to the National Security of the United States*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., March 10, 2009, 72.

“common challenges to advance the security of America, Africa, and the world.” Indeed, Obama insisted that AFRICOM would help Africa.<sup>32</sup>

Of course, other officials provided a more nuanced view. When the U.S. General in charge of AFRICOM William Ward visited a U.S. military base in Africa in February 2010, he informed the U.S. soldiers at the base that they would still leave a footprint in Africa. “Just think about that, hotrod – causing your footprint when you leave to remain,” Ward commented. “And that says a whole lot.”<sup>33</sup>

The following month, Ward provided more details. Speaking before a congressional committee, Ward explained that the U.S. military would leave a powerful mark throughout the entire continent. “Our offices of security cooperation, defense attachés, and network of forward-operating sites and cooperative security locations, including Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, are tremendously valuable as we pursue U.S. security interests,” Ward explained. To emphasize his point, Ward specified that the U.S. military would establish “permanent facilities” and “enduring locations” throughout Africa.<sup>34</sup>

At times, some officials even described AFRICOM as one of their most active military commands in the world. For example, the military official Michael Snodgrass explained in June 2010 that only the United States Central Command (CENTCOM),

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32 Barack Obama, “Remarks to the Ghanaian Parliament in Accra,” July 11, 2009, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2009*, Book II – July 1 to December 31, 2009 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013), 1088, 1091.

33 William Ward, “Ward Holds All-Hands Meeting with Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa,” February 10, 2010, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/transcript/7193/transcript-ward-holds-all-hands-meeting-with-combi>.

34 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 and Oversight of Previously Authorized Programs: Budget Requests from the U.S. European Command, U.S. Africa Command, and U.S. Joint Forces Command*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., March 10, 2010, 7, 149, 150.

which oversaw the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, remained more active. “I think it's probably safe to say that, although we're only two years old, the command is as heavily engaged, with the exception of CENTCOM, as any command in our DOD,” Snodgrass explained. “We've had a very large number of named operations, which range the gamut of planning and execution across the continent over the last two years.” Indeed, Snodgrass portrayed AFRICOM as one of the most active military commands in the world.<sup>35</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States began playing a powerful new military role in Africa. In the first place, U.S. officials created AFRICOM to coordinate their military and diplomatic activities throughout Africa. No matter what the people of Africa felt about the matter, U.S. officials used the command as their new base of operations for the continent. At the same time, U.S. officials began strengthening their military presence throughout the continent. Consequently, they began playing a more openly imperial role in Africa.

#### Anchors for Engagement

As they strengthened their military power in Africa, U.S. officials also added another major element to their strategy. Rather than relying solely on their military power to secure their access to the continent, U.S. officials augmented their power by working with a few influential allies. As long as they could keep a few powerful African

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35 Michael Snodgrass, “Air Force Times Interview with Major General Michael Snodgrass, U.S. Africa Command Chief of Staff,” June 16, 2010, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/transcript/7631/transcript-air-force-times-interview-with-major-ge>.

governments on their side in African affairs, U.S. officials believed they could keep the continent open to their influence on the periphery.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Bush administration described how the basic process worked. In its National Security Strategy, the Bush administration explained that it would maintain close ties with one powerful country in each major region of the continent. The “countries with major impact on their neighborhoods such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia are anchors for regional engagement and require focused attention,” the administration explained.<sup>36</sup>

During the Bush administration's second term in office, the U.S. official Jendayi Frazer provided more details. In February 2005, Frazer explained that the administration actually began its approach by treating Africa as a series of sub-regions. “We look at Africa in terms of its sub-regions,” Frazer explained. After making her point, she specified that the administration approached sub-Saharan Africa as a series of five distinct sub-regions, including West Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Central Africa. “The first cut of our approach to our Africa policy is this strategic understanding of the importance of the sub-regions,” she noted.<sup>37</sup>

Continuing with her explanation, Frazer then noted that the administration sought to identify a single center of power for each sub-region. The administration has “set out key countries in each one of the sub-regions,” she explained. “The key countries were determined primarily by objective criteria, for example the size of their population, the size of their economy, or their projection of diplomatic influence through peacekeeping

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36 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 11.

37 Jendayi Frazer, “U.S. Policy in Africa Under the Second Bush Administration,” February 24, 2005, <http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/frazer20050224.html>.

and conflict mediation.” Indeed, Frazer indicated that the administration considered various measures of power projection as they selected a key country for each sub-region.<sup>38</sup>

Once she had outlined the administration’s criteria, Frazer then made one final point. As she noted, the administration had identified four key countries in Africa. Although she acknowledged that the administration had not been able to identify a key country for Central Africa, she explained that the administration had identified South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia as “the big important countries in terms of power projection.”<sup>39</sup>

The following year, Frazer then provided an additional insight into the administration's strategy. In February 2006, Frazer explained that the administration had identified a smaller subset of key countries as their primary focus for the continent. Ultimately, “there are two countries in Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, that affect American interests across the continent and outside of the continent, and that would be Nigeria and South Africa,” she explained. “And so, we have to put a key focus on our relationship with these countries.” With her remarks, Frazer revealed that the administration focused its efforts on Nigeria and South Africa.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, Frazer explained why the administration had decided to distinguish Nigeria and South Africa from the other key countries. Quite simply, Nigeria and South Africa “are strategic in every sense of the word, in terms of their influence diplomatically, in terms of providing peacekeeping forces, in terms of the size of their economy,” Frazer

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38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Jendayi Frazer, “Assistant Secretary Frazer At The Baltimore Council On Foreign Affairs,” February 23, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2006/73959.htm>.

explained. The two countries “represent over 60 percent of the GDP of the continent as a whole.” They also feature “serious strategic resources, from oil in Nigeria, to platinum in South Africa.” As a result, both Nigeria and South Africa “are big, influential countries” and “stand apart from the rest.” Indeed, Frazer confirmed that the Bush administration relied on straight power concepts to identify Nigeria and South Africa as its top priorities for Africa.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, officials in the Obama administration applied the same approach to Africa. Just days after the Obama administration entered office, the State Department official Gregory Garland explained that “with respect Africa, the Obama Administration represents not change, but continuity.” To support his point, Garland explained that officials in Washington had already agreed to focus their efforts on Nigeria and South Africa. “Specifically, we understand that there are rising regional powers in Africa with their own national interests: Nigeria and South Africa,” Garland noted.<sup>42</sup>

The following year, the Obama administration then provided additional confirmation of the continuity in policy. In May 2010, the Obama administration reported in its National Security Strategy that it intended to focus its attention on the “key states” in the continent, such as Nigeria and South Africa. Although the administration laid out its strategy in a slightly new way, it indicated that it intended to take the same approach to the continent.<sup>43</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States added another major dimension to their strategy for Africa. Not only did they employ their military power to shape the continent,

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41 Ibid.

42 Gregory Garland, “The U.S.-Africa Relationship and the Presidential Transition,” January 29, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2009/120800.htm>.

43 The White House, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010, 45.



but they also sought to take advantage of a few key countries that they believed would provide them with the most leverage over Africa. Indeed, U.S. officials sought to acquire more influence in Africa by partnering with a few influential African governments.

### South Africa: The Continent's Economic Locomotive

Among the key states that they identified in Africa, U.S. officials also focused their attention on one particular country. Whenever they considered their plans for the continent, U.S. officials typically began their efforts with South Africa. Since the country played such an influential role throughout the broader region, U.S. officials viewed South Africa as their primary anchor for engagement.

After the end of World War II, officials in Washington clearly marked South Africa as a country of tremendous importance. Despite the fact that the ruling white minority in the country had begun to implement a program of racial segregation called *apartheid*, U.S. officials identified South Africa as one of the keys to their plans for the continent. “In view of the pre-eminent position which the Union of South Africa now occupies on the African continent by reason of her relatively large white population, her natural resources, temperate climate and capacity for further industrial development, it is in our interest to encourage South African cooperation with us on matters of mutual concern,” the State Department determined.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> “Policy Statement of the Department of State,” November 1, 1948, in U.S. Department of State, *The Near East, South Asia, and Africa (in two parts): Part 1*, vol. 5 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 524.

In more recent years, U.S. officials have maintained the same basic views of South Africa. Although they came to place less emphasis on the importance of the country's relatively large white population, especially after the country transitioned from *apartheid* to a system of majority rule during the 1990s, U.S. officials have continued to identify the country as their basic starting point for Africa.

During the administration of George W. Bush, the U.S. diplomats who managed relations with the South African government often singled out the country for its special importance. When they welcomed a congressional delegation to the country in February 2006, the diplomats identified South Africa as “an anchor country in our Africa policy.” In addition, the diplomats outlined some of the reasons for the country’s special status. Despite the fact that the people of South Africa “face serious problems, including income inequality between blacks and whites, massive unemployment, entrenched poverty, violent crime, and a severe HIV/AIDS pandemic,” the diplomats explained that South Africa played one of the most powerful roles in continental affairs. The country remains “the dominant and most developed economy in sub-Saharan Africa,” the diplomats explained.<sup>45</sup>

The following year, the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Eric M. Bost made a comparable assessment of the country. In a public speech, Bost identified South Africa as “the regional economic and political power.” While he agreed that the people of South Africa faced many challenges, Bost insisted that the country is “best positioned” to lead the continent into the future.<sup>46</sup>

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45 Embassy Pretoria, “SOUTH AFRICA SCENESETTER FOR CODEL PELOSI VISIT,” 06PRETORIA640, February 15, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/02/06PRETORIA640.html>.

46 Eric M. Bost, “Building a Better US-South Africa Relationship,” March 23, 2007, <http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/speech070323.html>.

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials presented the same views of the country. For example, the U.S. General William Ward informed a congressional committee in March 2009 that “South Africa remains the economic powerhouse of Sub-Saharan Africa.” To support his point, Ward explained that the country produced “over 40 percent of the subcontinent’s gross domestic product” and exported “strategic minerals throughout the world.”<sup>47</sup>

A few months later, the State Department official Johnnie Carson provided more emphasis. “By any standard, South Africa is one of the most important countries on the African continent,” Carson insisted. “Without a doubt, it is the continent’s economic locomotive.” In fact, Carson identified South Africa as one of the most important countries in the world. To make his case, Carson suggested that South Africa belonged among the BRIC countries, which U.S. investors had singled out for their growing economic power. “In 2001, Goldman Sachs coined the acronym 'BRIC' – B-R-I-C – to describe the four most important and rapidly growing emerging market countries – Brazil, Russia, India, and China,” Carson explained. The investment firm “should have added the letter S to make it the BRICS -- with the S for South Africa.”<sup>48</sup>

With the country playing an increasingly powerful role in the world, the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Donald Gips then provided one more key insight. After delivering a series of addresses in which he described the country as “the economic engine for Africa” and “the continent’s anchor,” Gips confirmed that U.S. officials

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47 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2008*, Part 1, 110th Cong., 1st sess., February 6; March 15, 20, 22, 29; April 17, 24; May 3, 17, 2007, 42.

48 Johnnie Carson, “Current Status of U.S.-South African Relations,” June 10, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2009/125095.htm>.

viewed South Africa as the starting point for their plans for Africa. “The U.S.-South African relationship is at the foundation of our relations with all of Africa,” Gips explained. Indeed, Gips placed South Africa at the core of U.S. policy for Africa.<sup>49</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States viewed South Africa as the key country in Africa. No matter what kind of government ruled the country, U.S. officials believed that South Africa could provide them with the most leverage over the rest of the continent. As a result, U.S. officials placed South Africa at the center of their efforts to maximize their influence in Africa.

### Embarrassing Matters

Of course, U.S. officials also faced a significant complication to their plans for South Africa. Not only had they alienated many South Africans by supporting the *apartheid* government during its time in power, but they had also created bitter feelings among many South Africans by classifying the country's African National Congress (ANC) as a terrorist group. Indeed, U.S. officials have portrayed the organization the led the liberation movement against *apartheid* as a terrorist organization.

During the 1980s, officials in administration of Ronald Reagan first began to identify the African National Congress as a terrorist organization. Although U.S. officials had turned against the ANC much earlier, even helping the *apartheid* regime capture the

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<sup>49</sup> Donald Gips, “Senate Hearing,” 7/21/09, [http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/amb\\_gips\\_remarks090621.html](http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/amb_gips_remarks090621.html); Donald Gips, “On presenting his credentials to President Jacob Zuma,” October 1, 2009, [http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/amb\\_gips\\_remarks20091001.html](http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/amb_gips_remarks20091001.html); Donald Gips, “Welcome Reception Remarks by Ambassador and Mrs Gips,” October 15, 2009, [http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/amb\\_gips\\_remarks20091015.html](http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/amb_gips_remarks20091015.html).

popular ANC leader Nelson Mandela in 1962, the Reagan administration made a special effort to discredit the liberation organization by branding it a terrorist organization.

Leading the way, President Reagan gave a major address in July 1986 in which he condemned what he called “the calculated terror by elements of the African National Congress.” Rather than supporting the ANC in its struggle against *apartheid*, Reagan portrayed members of the ANC as dangerous terrorists.<sup>50</sup>

Following Reagan's lead, the State Department leveled the same charges against the ANC. When it published its *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report for the year 1987, the State Department included the group in its list of organizations that engaged in terrorism. The ANC is primarily “a political and guerrilla organization, but in recent years has turned to urban terrorism,” the State Department reported.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, the Defense Department described the ANC as one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world. The ANC belongs among the world's “more notorious terrorist groups,” the Defense Departments declared in its report *Terrorist Group Profiles*.<sup>52</sup>

In the following years, many U.S. officials only maintained the same basic views of the ANC. Even after the people of South Africa had elected members of the ANC to lead the country during the post-*apartheid* period, a number of U.S. officials continued to insist that they had correctly identified the group as a dangerous terrorist organization.

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50 Ronald Reagan, “Remarks to Members of the World Affairs Council and the Foreign Policy Association,” July 22, 1986, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1986*, Book II – June 28 to December 31, 1986 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), 985.

51 U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1987*, August 1988, 65.

52 U.S. Department of Defense, *Terrorist Group Profiles*, November 1988, 2.

Notably, the vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney insisted in an interview in July 2000 that he had correctly opposed the ANC when he was a member of the U.S. Congress during the 1980s. “Well, the ANC was then viewed as a terrorist organization,” Cheney explained. Asked about his decision to vote against a congressional resolution that required the Reagan administration to call on the *apartheid* government to free political prisoners such as Nelson Mandela and recognize the ANC as the legitimate representative of the country's majority black population, Cheney repeated his point. “Well, but it’s one thing to call for the release of Nelson Mandela,” he remarked. “It’s a separate thing to formerly recognize what was then viewed as a terrorist organization.”<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, U.S. officials never stopped viewing the African National Congress as a terrorist organization. Although U.S. officials formed close relations with ANC officials during the post-*apartheid* period, even including ANC officials among their closest allies in Africa, U.S. officials continued to formally classify the ANC as a terrorist organization.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Bush administration brought the issue to light by including members of the ANC on its terrorist watch list. Although the administration did not publicize the approach, it revealed its decision when it prevented the former ANC member and prominent South African business magnate Tokyo Sexwale from entering the United States in May 2002 because of his inclusion on the terrorist watch list.<sup>54</sup>

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53 Dick Cheney, interview by Sam Donaldson, *This Week*, ABC, July 30, 2000, [http://www.abcnews.go.com/onair/thisweek/transcripts/tw000730\\_cheney\\_trans.html](http://www.abcnews.go.com/onair/thisweek/transcripts/tw000730_cheney_trans.html).

54 Christopher Munnion, “Row as US refuses visa to friend of Mandela,” *Daily Telegraph*, May 13, 2002; U.S. Congress, House, HR 5690 (IH), 110th Cong., 2nd sess., April 3, 2008, 3-4.

A few years later, the U.S. diplomats in South Africa then confirmed in one of their internal reports that the U.S. government included ANC members on its list of terrorists. “Many prominent ANC figures – including Nelson Mandela – remain on the official USG list of terrorists banned from travel to the States,” the diplomats explained.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, administration officials continued to enforce the policy. For example, administration officials prevented one of their closest colleagues from the ANC from traveling to the United States because of her inclusion on the terrorist watch list. “In 2007, Barbara Masekela, former South African Ambassador to the United States from 2003 to 2006, was denied a visa to enter the United States to visit her ill cousin due to her membership in the African National Congress,” members of the U.S. Congress confirmed. Consequently, “she was unable to obtain a waiver before her cousin’s death.”<sup>56</sup>

Only during the administration's final year in office did some administration officials begin to question the policy. For example, the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice raised some objections before a congressional committee in April 2008. “This is a country with which we now have excellent relations, South Africa, but it’s frankly rather embarrassing matters that I still have to waive in my own counterpart, the Foreign Minister of South Africa, not to mention the great leader Nelson Mandela,” Rice remarked. Indeed, Rice acknowledged that the policy created significant problems with the South African government.<sup>57</sup>

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55 Embassy Pretoria, “SOUTH AFRICA'S UN SECURITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES,” 06PRETORIA4790, November 21, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06PRETORIA4790.html>.

56 U.S. Congress, House, HR 5690 (IH), 110th Cong., 2nd sess., April 3, 2008, 4.

57 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, *State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2009*, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., March 4; April 9, 2008, 37.

Two months later, the U.S. diplomats in South Africa raised similar concerns. In an internal report, the diplomats explained that the policy created significant strains in bilateral relations. “Visa ineligibilities related to anti-apartheid activities pose a significant strain on the U.S.-S.A. bilateral relationship,” the diplomats explained. “South African leaders routinely raise the frustration and humiliation they associate with trying to travel to the U.S.”<sup>58</sup>

As they continued with their report, the diplomats also noted that the Bush administration undermined its global war against terrorism by classifying its allies in the South African government as terrorists. “Legislation which placed high-level officials and heroes of the anti-apartheid movement into the category of 'terrorist' undercuts our efforts to influence South African government policy on issues such as the designation of terrorist supporters and financiers at the United Nations Security Council,” the diplomats noted.<sup>59</sup>

After laying out their concerns, the diplomats then urged their colleagues in Washington to take a new approach. Federal officials must pass new legislation that “allows the flexibility to end visa ineligibilities for anti-apartheid activists whose only crime was fighting the odious apartheid regime,” the diplomats insisted.<sup>60</sup>

In fact, the leaders of the United States soon agreed to try something new. On July 1, 2008, federal officials created new legislation that removed “the African National Congress from treatment as a terrorist organization for certain acts or events.” They

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58 Embassy Pretoria, “SCENE-SETTER FOR CODEL BERMAN'S JULY 1-6 VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA,” 08PRETORIA1396, June 26, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/06/08PRETORIA1396.html>.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.



granted the executive branch the power to “provide relief for certain members of the African National Congress regarding admissibility.”<sup>61</sup>

When the State Department official Tom Casey described the new legislation, he confirmed that it provided the Bush administration with the power to remove members of the ANC from its terrorist watch list. Administration officials can now “decide that ANC members, African National Congress members like former President Mandela, will not automatically face a ineligibility for U.S. visas,” Casey explained. “And what it will do is, of course, make sure that there aren’t any extra hoops for either the distinguished individual, like former President Mandela, or other members of the African National Congress, to get a U.S. visa.”<sup>62</sup>

Taking advantage of the new legislation, the Bush administration then began to remove some ANC members from its terrorist watch list. “Exemptions for an initial list of seven individuals including Nelson Mandela and Jacob Zuma have been provisionally approved by working-level officials at State,” the U.S. diplomats in South Africa confirmed.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, the Bush administration left other members of the ANC on the terrorist watch list. Rather than using the legislation to declare once and for all that the U.S. government no longer classified members of the ANC as terrorists, the Bush administration used the legislation to remove some ANC members from its terrorist watch list while it continued to identify other ANC members as terrorists.

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61 Public Law 110-257, 110th Cong., July 1, 2008.

62 Tom Casey, “Daily Press Briefing,” July 1, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2008/july/106434.htm>.

63 Embassy Pretoria, “SCENE-SETTER FOR CODEL LEWIS' NOVEMBER 8-13, 2008 VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA,” 08PRETORIA2316, October 22, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/10/08PRETORIA2316.html>.

In fact, the subsequent Obama administration applied the law in the same way. Although the Obama administration could have easily used the legislation to remove the rest of the ANC members from the federal government's terrorist watch list, the new administration chose to take the same approach.

At times, the Obama administration even treated some of the very same anti-apartheid activists as terrorists. “In an embarrassing hangover from the apartheid era, former freedom fighter Tokyo Sexwale was detained because he was on America's terrorism watch list,” the *Los Angeles Times* reported.<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, the leaders of the United States maintained the same extreme view of ANC. Although they continued to work closely with ANC officials, even removing some prominent ANC officials from their list of terrorists, U.S. officials never forgave the organization for the way in which it successfully challenged the country's *apartheid* government. As a result, U.S. officials permanently tarnished many members of the anti-*apartheid* movement by identifying them as terrorists.

#### Nigeria: One of Africa's Most Pivotal Countries

As they knowingly undercut their own plans for South Africa, U.S. officials still found another way to reinforce their position in the continent. While they continued to view South Africa as the basic starting point for their strategy for the continent, U.S. officials found that they could gain additional advantages from Nigeria. By working

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<sup>64</sup> Robyn Dixon, “South Africa demands apology over U.S. detention of ex-official,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 2013, <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/oct/28/world/la-fg-south-africa-us-20131029>.

closely with the Nigerian government, U.S. officials worked to gain additional leverage over Africa.

During the early 1970s, U.S. officials first began to identify Nigeria as another one of the most important countries in Africa. Although the people of Nigeria had recently experienced the horrors of a horrific internal war that left at least a million people dead, U.S. officials began to imagine that they could transform the country into one of the most influential countries in the continent. The Nigerian “economy – bolstered by the burgeoning petroleum industry – could become the fastest growing and most powerful in Black Africa,” the Secretary of State William P. Rogers believed.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout the rest of the twentieth century, U.S. officials maintained the same expectations. Although they faced a number of challenges to their vision, they continued to believe that Nigeria could provide them with significant leverage over the rest of the continent. Ultimately, “a revitalized Nigeria can be the economic and political anchor of West Africa and the leader of the continent,” the U.S. President Bill Clinton explained at the end of the twentieth century.<sup>66</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, officials in the Bush administration then began to transform the vision into the reality. With the country playing an increasingly influential role in Africa, administration officials began to treat the country as one of their

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65 “Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon,” undated, in U.S. Department of State, *Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969-1972*, vol. E-5, Part 1 of *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005), Document 199. For the estimate of the number of deaths in the civil war, see Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 69. “The number of deaths, mostly of Easterners, was estimated at between 1 and 3 million, while another 3 million became displaced persons and refugees,” Osaghae reports (69).

66 William J. Clinton, “Remarks Following Discussions With President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and an Exchange With Reporters in Abuja, Nigeria,” August 26, 2000, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton, 2000-2001*, Book II – June 27 to October 11, 2000 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 1702.

primary anchors for continental engagement. The country is “an increasingly close and strategic bilateral and regional partner of the United States,” the State Department official Linda Thomas-Greenfield confirmed in May 2006.<sup>67</sup>

Later in 2006, Thomas-Greenfield then provided many of the reasons for the administration’s decision. After suggesting that “Nigeria is arguably our most important strategic partner in Africa,” Thomas-Greenfield explained that the country featured many advantages. “It is Africa’s most populous state as well as its second-largest economy,” Thomas-Greenfield explained. The country is also “our largest African trading partner” and “a growing key oil supplier to the United States.” In addition, Thomas-Greenfield explained that the country played an increasingly influential role in African affairs. “It is a crucial continental power broker in dealing with African institutions,” she explained. In many ways, the country “exerts great influence on African political, economic, and socio-cultural trends.” Indeed, Thomas-Greenfield insisted that Nigeria had emerged as one of the key players in Africa. “A prosperous Nigeria is vital to Africa’s growth and stability, and to projecting U.S. influence as a strategic partner,” she concluded.<sup>68</sup>

The following year, the State Department official Jendayi Frazer provided additional emphasis. Speaking before a congressional committee in June 2007, Frazer explained that Nigeria is “one of Africa’s most pivotal countries and one of our most important strategic partners.” To support her point, she specified that the country provided U.S. officials with significant advantages on virtually every matter of strategic

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67 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations of the Committee on International Relations, *Nigeria’s Struggle with Corruption*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., May 18, 2006, 10.

68 Linda Thomas-Greenfield, “Remarks on U.S. Assistance to Nigeria,” October 27, 2006, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2006/75336.htm>.

importance. “Nigeria remains vitally important to United States security, democracy, trade, and energy policy needs and objectives,” she noted. “Its government remains one of our most important, dependable allies on the continent on a wide array of diplomatic initiatives.”<sup>69</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials maintained the same views of Nigeria. For example, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Robin Renée Sanders identified Nigeria as a tremendously important country. “I want to state for the record that I think Nigeria has the potential to be one of the largest burgeoning emerging markets in the world,” Sanders stated in March 2009. At one point, Sanders even identified Nigeria as the most important country for U.S. strategy in Africa. People must understand “that Africa is key in our U.S. foreign policy and that Nigeria is the single most important country therein,” she remarked.<sup>70</sup>

In early 2010, the State Department official Johnnie Carson then provided some clarification. Speaking before a congressional committee, Carson specified that U.S. officials actually considered Nigeria to be one of the two most important countries for U.S. policy in Africa. Although he did not identify the other country, which he had identified as South Africa in other statements, Carson made it clear that “Nigeria is one of the two most important countries in sub-Saharan Africa and a country of great significance to the United States.”<sup>71</sup>

69 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Nigeria at a Crossroads: Elections, Legitimacy, and a Way Forward*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., June 7, 2007, 5, 6.

70 Robin Renée Sanders, “The Economic Hard Choices We All Need To Make For Our Nation,” March 3, 2009, [http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp\\_03032009.html](http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp_03032009.html); Robin Renée Sanders, “The ‘Elements of Democracy’ -- The Way Forward in the U.S.-Nigerian Bilateral Relationship,” November 19, 2009, [http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp\\_11192009.html](http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp_11192009.html).

71 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Examining the U.S.-Nigeria Relationship in a Time of Transition*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., February 23,

The day after he delivered his testimony, Carson then provided reasons. Speaking to the press, Carson explained that the country featured many advantages. “It is one of America’s most important trading partners,” he explained. “U.S. investment in Nigeria is larger than any other place in sub-Saharan Africa.” In addition, Carson highlighted the importance of the country's oil. “Nigeria supplies 12 percent of U.S. oil,” he noted. “It is the source of the largest amount of sweet crude oil.” Moreover, Carson noted that country played a critically important role in regional affairs. “Nigeria is an important regional player,” he noted. Altogether, Carson identified Nigeria as one of the key countries in Africa. “It’s a country that none of us can afford to dismiss or ignore and that’s why the United States seeks to have a strong and positive and productive relationship with Nigeria,” he concluded.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, the leaders of the United States viewed Nigeria as one of the most strategically important countries in Africa. Although they had historically identified South Africa as their starting point for the continent, U.S. officials quickly came to believe that they could achieve comparable advantages from Nigeria. As a result, U.S. officials began to approach Nigeria as another one of their primary anchors for engagement.

### Pervasive Corruption

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2010, 4.  
72 Johnnie Carson, “Assistant Secretary Carson's Recent Two Week Tour of Africa,” February 24, 2010, <http://fpc.state.gov/137225.htm>.

Of course, the leaders of the United States also recognized that Nigeria featured a more problematic characteristic. The entire time that they praised the country as a key regional anchor that provided them with numerous strategic advantages, U.S. officials understood that pervasive corruption affected every aspect of the Nigerian political system. Indeed, U.S. officials identified their strategic partner as one of the most corrupt regimes in the world.

During the opening years of the twenty-first century, the U.S. diplomats in Nigeria often called attention to the pervasive corruption in the country. “Corruption is endemic and pervasive in Nigeria,” the diplomats reported in September 2004. “Corruption drives and drives off course much of Nigerian politics.”<sup>73</sup>

Two years later, the diplomats made a comparable assessment. After noting that the organization Transparency International had ranked Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, the diplomats explained that corruption pervaded every aspect of Nigerian society. “Corruption remains widespread in Nigeria at all levels of the private and public sector,” the diplomats explained. The recent arrests of a few corrupt Nigerian politicians “have barely scratched the surface of the endemic corruption at the federal, state, and local level.”<sup>74</sup>

In fact, the diplomats suggested that many of the country's most powerful political leaders fueled the corruption. Since the Nigerian constitution “gives immunity from civil or criminal prosecution to the President, Vice President, Governors, and Deputy

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73 Embassy Abuja, “NIGERIA, CORRUPTION, AND US,” 04ABUJA1653, September 24, 2004, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2004/09/04ABUJA1653.html>.

74 Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2005*, 2005, [https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2005](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2005); Embassy Abuja, “CORRUPTION: NIGERIA 'IMPROVES' TO SIXTH-WORST IN THE WORLD... WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?” 06ABUJA483, February 28, 2006, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/02/06ABUJA483.html>.

Governors,” the diplomats found that “many holders of these offices have clearly taken advantage of this privilege.” Providing some examples, the diplomats implicated many of the country's top leaders in the corruption, including the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. “It is also widely believed that the President's inner circle also reaps hefty rewards with impunity,” they added.<sup>75</sup>

In early 2007, the diplomats provided more evidence of the high-level corruption. In an internal report, the diplomats explained that an official Nigerian investigative committee had implicated the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and the Nigerian Vice President Atiku Abubakar for their involvement in illegal activities. “The scope of institutional failures and the levels of malfeasance uncovered in the committee report are remarkable,” they noted. The investigation revealed “what is likely the most credible direct proof of blatant corruption” against the country's leaders. “Given the number of witnesses, their credibility and the overwhelming similarities in the testimonies given, the Committee could not easily overlook the illegal actions of both Atiku and Obasanjo,” the diplomats reported. In other words, the diplomats found that the investigation exposed corruption at the highest levels of the Nigerian government.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, U.S. officials found that little changed under the next set of government leaders. Although the subsequent Nigerian President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua repeatedly promised to address the problem of corruption, U.S. officials found that corruption remained a serious problem in the new government. “Corruption, especially systemic corruption, is among the most powerful forces undermining good governance

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Embassy Abuja, “PTDF - EXPOSING NIGERIA'S EXECUTIVE MALFEASANCE,” 07ABUJA417, March 6, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/03/07ABUJA417.html>.



and poverty alleviation in Nigeria,” the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Robin Reneé Sanders explained in April 2008.<sup>77</sup>

The following month, the U.S. diplomats in Nigeria pointed to the same trends. In their review of the early performance of President Yar'Adua, the diplomats found that the new president had quickly surrounded himself with many corrupt associates. Currently, “we know that with certain inner circle and cabinet people he has had to turn a political blind eye in order to get other things he wants done,” the diplomats explained. “We believe he must know, for example, that his Attorney General is a crook.” In addition, the diplomats accused the president of turning a blind eye to his wife's questionable activities. “The First Lady, we continue to hear, is a problem: likes to live well, is not the kindest person in the room, and takes advantage of illicit enrichment opportunities,” the diplomats reported. “It is impossible for President Yar'Adua not to know these things.” In short, the diplomats found that the new Nigerian president had created another corrupt regime.<sup>78</sup>

At the time, other officials pointed to additional problems. For example, U.S. intelligence analysts predicted that the pervasive corruption in the country might worsen. When they issued their National Intelligence Estimate for Nigeria, the analysts suggested that that economic, political, and social conditions in the country would worsen over the

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77 Robin Reneé Sanders, “Remarks of U.S. Ambassador Robin Reneé Sanders for Isaac Moghalu Foundation Leadership Lecture Series,” April 23, 2008, [http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp\\_04232008.html](http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp_04232008.html).

78 Embassy Abuja, “NIGERIA: YAR'ADUA GOVERNMENT'S REPORT CARD AT ONE YEAR AND A LOOK AHEAD,” 08ABUJA962, May 28, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/05/08ABUJA962.html>.

next five years as social conditions deteriorated and the Nigerian government engaged in more criminal behavior.<sup>79</sup>

Reviewing the National Intelligence Estimate, the U.S. consuls in Nigeria pointed to the same possibility. Although they tried to remain optimistic about the country's prospects, the consuls agreed that corruption would very likely remain a serious problem in the country. Ultimately, "corruption by the elite is still very endemic" and "corruption is still rampant," the consuls confirmed.<sup>80</sup>

After the Obama administration entered office, additional observers pointed to the same problems. In late January 2009, for example, the Shell Oil Company executive Ann Pickard informed the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Robin René Sanders that "corruption in the oil sector was worsening by the day." Asked by the ambassador to provide more details, Pickard explained that "oil buyers" kept bribing a number of powerful Nigerians to gain access to the country's oil. To support her point, Pickard singled out many powerful Nigerians for accepting bribes, including the head of the country's national oil company, the Nigerian president's chief economic advisor, and the Nigerian president's wife. All three of them receive "large bribes, millions of dollars per tanker, to lift oil," Pickard explained.<sup>81</sup>

Likewise, U.S. businesses played their own role in the practice. As the Justice Department confirmed in February 2009, the U.S. company Kellogg Brown & Root had spent many years bribing Nigerian officials to obtain contracts with the country's oil

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79 Consulate Lagos, "THE VIEW FROM NIGERIA ON THE NIE," 08LAGOS474, November 21, 2008, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/11/08LAGOS474.html>.

80 Ibid.

81 Embassy Abuja, "(C) NIGERIA: SHELL BRIEFS AMBASSADOR ON OIL GAS ISSUES, COMMENTS ON PRESIDENT'S HEALTH AND HIGH-LEVEL CORRUPTION," 09ABUJA259, February 10, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/02/09ABUJA259.html>.

industry. “Kellogg Brown & Root LLC (KBR), a global engineering, construction and services company based in Houston, pleaded guilty today to charges related to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) for its participation in a decade-long scheme to bribe Nigerian government officials to obtain engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contracts,” the Justice Department reported.<sup>82</sup>

Given the extent of the corruption, the U.S. diplomats in Nigeria even began to believe that things would never change. When they addressed the issue in one of their internal reports to the Secretary of State Hilliary Clinton, the diplomats pointed to few “prospects for progress on corruption, the area singled out by most observers as being at the heart of Nigeria's problems.” After all, previous attempts to prosecute “Nigerian 'big fish' have virtually ceased.” Moreover, the diplomats advised Clinton not to expect any major changes on the issue. “The closeness of some of the most notable corrupt figures to senior Presidency officials (former Governor Ibori reportedly stays at Villa guest facilities when in Abuja) is the clearest indicator that progress in the fight against corruption appears unlikely,” the diplomats reported.<sup>83</sup>

Early the following year, the U.S. consuls in Nigeria made a similar assessment. Although they found that Nigerian officials had taken some steps to address the corruption, they saw nothing that suggested that the extent of the corruption would

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82 U.S. Department of Justice, “Kellogg Brown & Root LLC Pleads Guilty to Foreign Bribery Charges and Agrees to Pay \$402 Million Criminal Fine,” February 11, 2009, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/kellogg-brown-root-llc-pleads-guilty-foreign-bribery-charges-and-agrees-pay-402-million>. Also see U.S. Department of Justice, “Former Officer and Director of Global Engineering and Construction Company Pleads Guilty to Foreign Bribery and Kickback Charges,” September 3, 2008, <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2008/September/08-crm-772.html>.

83 Embassy Abuja, “SCENESETTER FOR THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO NIGERIA,” 09ABUJA1411, August 3, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09ABUJA1411.html>.

diminish. In the end, “the enormity of systematic corruption in Nigeria – including oil bunkering – remains essentially unchanged,” the consuls reported.<sup>84</sup>

The following month, the State Department official Johnnie Carson then publicly confirmed the existence of extensive corruption in Nigeria. Speaking before a congressional committee, Carson explained that corruption remained a major problem in Nigeria. “Corruption is a pernicious cancer in many parts of Africa,” Carson explained. “It is particularly pernicious in Nigeria.” To emphasize his point, Carson asserted that corrupt Nigerian politicians had stolen the wealth of the nation. Over the years, “much of the country’s wealth has been squandered and/or stolen,” Carson remarked. “And it has been stolen by individuals mostly occupying government positions, both at the national level and at the state and local level.” Indeed, Carson blamed corrupt Nigerian officials for robbing the country of its tremendous material wealth and enriching themselves at the expense of the rest of the population. Ultimately, “corruption in Nigeria is a cancer and a curse,” he concluded.<sup>85</sup>

In short, U.S. officials knew perfectly well that the Nigerian government thrived on corruption. At the same time that they praised the country as an important anchor of continental order, U.S. officials saw their allies in the Nigerian government run a notoriously corrupt government. Consequently, U.S. officials remained well aware of the fact that they had formed a strategic alliance with one of the most corrupt regimes in the world.

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84 Consulate Lagos, “SCENESETTER FOR THE VISIT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO NIGERIA, JANUARY 12-13, 2010,” 10LAGOS13, January 11, 2010, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/01/10LAGOS13.html>.

85 U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Examining the U.S.-Nigeria Relationship in a Time of Transition*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., February 23, 2010, 12, 13, 14.

## Stealing the Nation

During their involvement in Nigeria, the leaders of the United States also watched their Nigerian counterparts commit another major crime against the people of Nigeria. In the time since the Nigerian government had made the transition from a dictatorship to electoral politics in 1999, U.S. officials repeatedly saw Nigerian politicians employ fraud and violence to acquire political power. Even as they praised their Nigerian counterparts for making the transition to a new system of electoral politics, U.S. officials recognized that their Nigerian counterparts continuously forced their way into office.

In fact, U.S. officials knew that Nigerian politicians committed one of the worst crimes possible to make their way into office. As the U.S. diplomats in Nigeria explained in a series of internal reports in April 2004, many Nigerian officials simply killed their way into office. “Many politicians at all levels, both inside and outside government, are involved in assassinating their enemies,” the diplomats explained. Indeed, the diplomats found that many Nigerian politicians relied on murder to acquire political power. “Political assassinations have been used to eliminate challengers both within parties (Dikibo, 2004) and from rival parties (Harry, 2003) as well as to silence critics (Yar'adua, 1996) and intimidate survivors (Kudirat Abiola, 1997),” they explained.<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore, the diplomats found the Nigerian politicians displayed a special talent for killing. As they noted in one of their internal reports, Nigerian politicians

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<sup>86</sup> Embassy Abuja, “POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS FROM A TO W -- WITH X, Y AND Z LIKELY,” 04ABUJA581, April 5, 2004, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2004/04/04ABUJA581.html>; Embassy Abuja, “THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS IN NIGERIA,” 04ABUJA582, April 5, 2004, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2004/04/04ABUJA582.html>.

skillfully employed many different methods to eliminate their opponents. “Nigerians have exhibited an ingenuity in carrying out political assassinations,” the diplomats explained. “Violent attacks appear to be the method of choice nowadays, but historically Nigerian assassins have utilized poison and mechanical failures too, in attempts to cover the killers' trails.”<sup>87</sup>

At the same time, the diplomats found that Nigerian officials employed many additional measures to secure their hold on power. As they considered the issue of how Nigerian officials dealt with the rest of the population, the diplomats found that Nigerian politicians used various forms of fraud and deceit to manipulate the country's electoral process. Nigerian officials have found that “rigging and violence were effective ways to maintain control of the political process,” the diplomats explained.<sup>88</sup>

At times, U.S. officials publicly acknowledged the problem. For example, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell explained in May 2006 that the Nigerian government typically failed to hold credible elections. “Serious obstacles remain to the realization of genuinely transparent and legitimate elections,” Campbell stated. “Nigeria's two previous democratic elections were marred by serious irregularities.”<sup>89</sup>

The U.S. diplomats in the country, who worked closely with Nigerian officials, identified the same problems. As the Nigerian government began preparing to hold a new round of elections for the following year, the diplomats explained that the Nigerian government displayed no willingness to hold credible elections. Currently, “we remain

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87 Embassy Abuja, “THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS IN NIGERIA,” 04ABUJA582, April 5, 2004, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2004/04/04ABUJA582.html>.

88 Ibid.

89 John Campbell, “Welcome Reception for NDI Pre-Election Mission to Nigeria,” May 8, 2006, [http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp\\_05082006.html](http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/sp_05082006.html).

deeply concerned that not enough progress has been made to ensure not just that credible elections occur, but that elections occur at all,” the diplomats warned.<sup>90</sup>

Later in the year, the diplomats cited more reasons to reinforce their doubts. In November 2006, the diplomats reported that the Nigerian government's electoral commission “is failing in its promise to make the process more efficient and transparent.” So far, “only an estimated one percent of the country's 65 million voters have actually registered, despite a December 15 deadline.” Indeed, the diplomats found that the Nigerian government was not registering the Nigerian people to vote. “UN Experts Say 'No Way' Voter Registration Will Meet Deadline,” they titled one of their reports. “Chiefs of Mission Agree Election Crisis Looming,” they titled another one.<sup>91</sup>

As they forecast the coming election crisis, the diplomats also pointed to another major problem. In a separate report, the diplomats explained that the wealthiest Nigerians were manipulating the electoral process to their advantage. “The manipulation of the process by the wealthy creates a cycle of corruption, especially at the state level, in which godfathers bankroll candidates who must repay their benefactors' largesse,” the diplomats explained. Indeed, the diplomats found that corrupt “godfathers” largely determined the outcome of elections. Corruption “provides the resources to maintain the system,” they added.<sup>92</sup>

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90 Embassy Abuja, “SCENESETTER FOR RADM GREENE'S AUGUST 2006 VISIT TO NIGERIA,” 06ABUJA2226, August 25, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/08/06ABUJA2226.html>.

91 Embassy Abuja, “SCENESETTER FOR GENERAL WARD'S NOVEMBER 2006 VISIT TO NIGERIA,” 06ABUJA2948, November 13, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06ABUJA2948.html>. ; Embassy Abuja, “UN EXPERTS SAY 'NO WAY' VOTER REGISTRATION WILL MEET DEADLINE,” 06ABUJA2975, November 14, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06ABUJA2975.html>; Embassy Abuja, “CHIEFS OF MISSION AGREE ELECTION CRISIS LOOMING,” 06ABUJA2984, November 16, 2006, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06ABUJA2984.html>.

92 Embassy Abuja, “NURTURING DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION,” 06ABUJA3040, November 24, 2006,

With the elections approaching, the diplomats highlighted the extent of the corruption. In January 2007, for example, the diplomats explained in a report titled “Buying National Assembly Elections” that many Nigerian politicians simply bought their way into office. During the primary process, “the common practice is for each of the candidates to pay every delegate and compete in a ‘bidding war’ for the vote,” the diplomats explained. Since the primary process required the “delegates to disclose to the candidates the amounts paid by their opponents,” the diplomats concluded that Nigerian officials had openly rigged the entire process. “In other words, the corruption is blatant, with no attempt to hide the activity,” the diplomats noted.<sup>93</sup>

When the Nigerian government moved forward the elections, the diplomats provided more direct confirmation of the blatant corruption. From the time the Nigerian government held its gubernatorial elections on April 14, 2007 to the time the Nigerian government held its presidential elections on April 21, 2007, the diplomats confirmed in numerous reports that Nigerian officials had manipulated the entire process. “April Elections: A Sham in Shambles,” the diplomats titled one of their reports. “Nigerian ‘Election’ A Charade,” they titled another one.<sup>94</sup>

Following the elections, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell then issued one of the most critical assessments of the charade. In an internal report, Campbell dismissed the entire electoral process as a massive exercise in fraud and deceit. “Nigeria's April 14 (governors and state legislators) and April 21 (the Presidency and the National

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<https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/11/06ABUJA3040.html>.

93 Embassy Abuja, “BUYING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS,” 07ABUJA163, January 25, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/01/07ABUJA163.html>.

94 Embassy Abuja, “APRIL ELECTIONS, A SHAM IN SHAMBLES,” 07ABUJA666, April 10, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/04/07ABUJA666.html>; Embassy Abuja, “NIGERIAN ‘ELECTION’ A CHARADE,” 07ABUJA766, April 23, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/04/07ABUJA766.html>.



Assembly) elections were characterized by logistical and procedural shortcomings and by fraud,” Campbell reported. “The announced results of the presidential, gubernatorial and Assembly races cannot be taken as the expression of the political choices of the Nigerian people.” With his assessment, Campbell insisted that the new Nigerian President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua had not fairly won the election. “The margin of Governor Yar'adua's purported presidential victory is so exaggerated as to be incredible,” Campbell commented.<sup>95</sup>

After presenting his findings, the ambassador then described at length how the Nigerian government had failed to hold credible elections. For starters, Campbell noted that the Nigerian government had not provided the proper voting facilities. “Failure to provide facilities for secret balloting was widespread,” he explained. In addition, Campbell noted that the Nigerian government had not maintained accurate lists of voters. “Voters lists were a shambles,” he explained. “There was little control of underage voting.” Furthermore, Campbell found that many people lacked the opportunity to vote altogether. “Voter intimidation, violence and sheer disorganization meant no elections at all in parts of the country,” Campbell noted. In all, Campbell found that many Nigerians simply did not have the opportunity to vote.<sup>96</sup>

Even in those cases where eligible voters could vote, Campbell expressed little trust in the official vote counts. Over the course of the elections, “the counting and tabulation of the ballots lacked transparency, and there is abundant evidence (and the widespread belief) that the results were manipulated by operatives of the ruling party,”

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95 Embassy Abuja, “AMBASSADOR'S ASSESSMENT OF THE 2007 NIGERIA ELECTIONS,” 07ABUJA786, April 25, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/04/07ABUJA786.html>.

96 Ibid.

Campbell explained. To support his point, Campbell noted that all of the major political groups had engaged in some form of vote rigging. “On the polling days, there is evidence that all of the parties indulged in competitive rigging at the polling station level,” he reported. In fact, Campbell even suggested the Nigerian president had participated in the fraud. “Clandestine reporting makes a convincing case that the President's operatives, and perhaps the President himself, manipulated the tabulation of ballots at consolidation centers,” Campbell noted.<sup>97</sup>

Finally, Campbell highlighted one more major problem with the elections. Turning to the issue of political violence, Campbell explained that many Nigerians had died during the elections. “How many died is tough to estimate, especially in a country where non-political levels of violence are high,” he commented. “Official figures, which usually understate casualties, are about sixty.” Still, “there are media and NGO estimates in the range of 300 and whispers that it could exceed 1,000.” In other words, Campbell found that the Nigerian people had encountered significant political violence during the elections. In the end, “the bottom line perception among the Mission's contacts is that the elections of 2007 were at least as bloody as those of 2003 and 1999,” the ambassador concluded.<sup>98</sup>

After Campbell filed his report, additional observers reached similar conclusions about the elections. As they took into consideration the evidence, most observers agreed that the Nigerian government had not conducted credible elections. Essentially, “international and domestic observers” have found that “the April elections took place in

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97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

a political environment of manipulation, bribery, intimidation and outright fraud,” the U.S. diplomats in Nigeria confirmed.<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, the diplomats drew a more direct conclusion. Given the extent of the fraud, deceit, and violence, the diplomats argued that Nigerian politicians had stolen “the nation through an election” in a “blatantly rigged process” for the whole world to see. Indeed, the diplomats blamed Nigerian officials for “the rigging of the 2007 elections.”<sup>100</sup>

Back in Washington, administration officials reached a similar conclusion. As much as they wanted to praise their Nigerian counterparts for their alleged dedication to freedom and democracy, administration officials found that the Nigerian government had not held credible elections. Clearly, “the elections of April 14th and 21st were seriously flawed,” the State Department official Jendayi Frazer acknowledged. During the elections, “there were credible reports of malfeasance, such as vote rigging, ballot box stuffing, and nontransparent accounting.” As a result, the elections will never “be able to tell us the true will of the Nigerian people.”<sup>101</sup>

By the time the Obama administration entered office, U.S. officials began to draw a new conclusion about the Nigerian government. Despite the fact that they continued to praise Nigerian officials for the simple matter of holding elections, a number of U.S. officials started to insist that the Nigerian government would never hold free and fair elections. Nothing indicates that “the next round of gubernatorial elections in 2011 will

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99 Embassy Abuja, “NIGERIA ELECTION AFTERMATH: FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR A WAY FORWARD,” 07ABUJA1012, May 22, 2007, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/05/07ABUJA1012.html>.

100 Ibid.

101 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health of the Committee on Foreign Relations, *Nigeria at a Crossroads: Elections, Legitimacy, and a Way Forward*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., June 7, 2007, 5, 12.

be more democratic than the last one, which was no better in most places than the Presidential elections a week later, which we judged to be 'massively fraudulent,'" the U.S. diplomats in Nigeria explained. After all, country's dominant political party and its electoral commission have "been shamelessly willing to rig the results."<sup>102</sup>

In another one of their reports, the diplomats also provided a very good reason to doubt the credibility of the Nigerian government. After citing "the train wreck we foresee now on the 2011 election," the diplomats explained that the country's dominant political party thrived on corruption. Certainly, "one must first understand the nature of that organization, which is essentially a coalition of networks of patrons (usually called godfathers) and clients working together to control the division of offices and oil revenue," the diplomats explained. As long as the corrosive mix of godfathers and politicians controlled the political process, the diplomats believed that the Nigerian government would never hold free and fair elections. Party leaders "care little about popular support," the diplomats noted. They only care about "maintaining the dominance of this delicate balance of godfather networks, which is its reason for being."<sup>103</sup>

In short, the leaders of the United States found that the Nigerian government cared little for democracy. No matter how many times they praised their Nigerian counterparts as important strategic partners that provided them with assistance on matters that ranged from security to democracy, U.S. officials repeatedly watched Nigerian officials turn to fraud and violence to seize political power. Indeed, U.S. officials knowingly aligned

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102 Embassy Abuja, "NIGERIA: STATE BATTLE LINES DRAWN FOR 2011 ELECTIONS," 09ABUJA845, May 13, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/05/09ABUJA845.html>.

103 Embassy Abuja, "WHITHER 2011 ELECTION: PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNING UNDERWAY, DEMOCRATIC PROGRESS UNCERTAIN," 09ABUJA983, June 8, 2009, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/06/09ABUJA983.html>.

themselves with corrupt politicians who ran the country as if it had never transitioned beyond a repressive dictatorship.

## Conclusion

In the end, the leaders of the United States remained far more focused on their strategic objectives for Africa. Rather than focusing on issues such as freedom and democracy, U.S. officials remained willing to work with any African regime that would keep the continent open to their influence on the periphery.

With Nigeria, U.S. officials mainly saw a country that could provide them with additional influence throughout Africa. By working closely with the Nigerian government, U.S. officials hoped to gain powerful leverage over the rest of the continent.

Likewise, U.S. officials sensed the same potential in South Africa. In spite of their complicated relationship with the post-*apartheid* South African government, U.S. officials sought to work with their South African counterparts to gain additional influence in the continent.

At the same time, U.S. officials played a direct role in shaping the continent's power structure. By projecting their power directly into the continent through AFRICOM, U.S. officials worked to impose their own system of internal order on the continent.

If they succeeded in their efforts, U.S. officials believed that they would gain significant material advantages from Africa. Not only did they view the continent as one of the last remaining frontier regions of the world, but they also believed that they could acquire tremendous wealth from the African continent.

As a result, the leaders of the United States applied an imperial strategy to Africa. Believing that the continent remained open for grabs, they employed their power to keep Africa open to their influence on the periphery of their global structure of imperialism.

## Conclusion

### The Global Structure of Imperialism in the Early Twenty-First Century

#### Chapter Breakdown:

- Introduction
- Empire
- Prospects
- Conclusion

#### Introduction

At the start of the twenty-first century, the leaders of the United States played a tremendously powerful role in the world. Taking advantage of their dominant position in the world, U.S. officials projected their power into every region of the world to uphold a global American empire.

Starting with a simple center-periphery model, U.S. officials worked to keep the international system organized around a dominant center and a subordinate periphery in a global structure of imperialism. While they certainly did not extend the boundaries of the United States across the rest of the world to create a formal empire, they employed a simple center-periphery model to impose a comparable system of imperial order on the world.

At the center of the international system, U.S. officials maintained a powerful trilateral structure as their base of power in the world. By working closely with their allies in both the Atlantic and Pacific regions, they kept a powerful but subordinate Germany-centered Europe and a powerful but subordinate Japan-centered Asia Pacific region positioned alongside the United States at the center of the international system.

At the same time, U.S. officials remained just as active throughout the periphery. While they certainly approached each region of the periphery with different motives in mind, U.S. officials ensured that Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa remained under their influence in a subordinate position on the periphery.

Through their efforts, officials in Washington began the twenty-first century by keeping a structure of imperialism imposed on the world. In short, they managed a global American empire.

## Empire

During the early twenty-first century, many influential observers even began to accept the reality of the global American empire. Although most U.S. officials refrained from publicly identifying the United States as an empire, a number of highly respected individuals spoke openly about the United States as an imperial power that played an imperial role in the world.<sup>1</sup>

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1 For more discussion, see the following sources: Thomas E. Ricks, "Empire or Not? A Quiet Debate Over U.S. Role," *Washington Post*, August 21, 2001; Patrick E. Tyler, "In Washington, a Struggle to Define the Next Fight," *New York Times*, December 2, 2001; Kevin Bacon, "American Imperialism, Embraced," *New York Times*, December 9, 2001; Emily Eakin, "All Roads Lead to D.C.," *New York Times*, March 31, 2002; John Bellamy Foster, "The Rediscovery of Imperialism," *Monthly Review* 54, no. 6 (November 2002): 1-16; Dan Morgan, "A Debate Over U.S. 'Empire' Builds in Unexpected



Leading the way, the U.S. strategist Richard Haass portrayed the United States as a powerful empire. Shortly before he joined the Bush administration as its first Director of Policy Planning, Haass developed an imperial grand strategy in which he described the United States as an imperial power that enforced a system of global order. “To be sure, there is always the risk that a great power will exhaust itself by doing too much,” Haass conceded. “The greater risk facing the United States at this juncture, however, is that it will squander the opportunity to bring about a world supportive of its core interests by doing too little.” Indeed, Haass insisted that the United States must seize the opportunity to shape the main contours of world order by projecting its power into the world as an imperial power. “Imperial understretch, not overstretch, appears the greater danger of the two,” he explained.<sup>2</sup>

Once the Bush administration entered office, many members of the foreign policy establishment embraced similar objectives. Reaching an agreement that the United States should play an imperial role in the world, they began talking about the United States as an empire. “There is talk of a new American empire,” the *New York Times* confirmed.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, one of the leading advocates of empire insisted that the United States had already emerged as an empire. In his book *The Savage Wars of Peace* (2002), the writer Max Boot identified the United States as a global empire. “The inner core of the American empire – North America, Western Europe, Northeast Asia – remains for the most part stable and prosperous,” Boot asserted. The rest constitutes “the periphery.”

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Circles,” *Washington Post*, August 10, 2003; Andrew Bacevich, ed., *The Imperial Tense: Prospects and Problems of American Empire* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003).

2 Richard N. Haass, “Imperial America,” November 11, 2000, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/haass/2000imperial.htm>.

3 Patrick E. Tyler, “In Washington, a Struggle to Define the Next Fight,” *New York Times*, December 2, 2001.

Indeed, Boot used the center-periphery model to identify a global structure of imperialism as the basic form of the global American empire.<sup>4</sup>

In the hope that U.S. officials would succeed in maintaining their global structure of imperialism, Boot also provided U.S. officials with some telling advice. In a separate article, Boot argued that U.S. officials could most effectively manage their global American empire by avoiding terms such as empire and imperialism. “Given the historical baggage that 'imperialism' carries, there's no need for the U.S. government to embrace the term,” Boot explained. “But it should definitely embrace the practice.”<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, other prominent advocates of the global American empire agreed that it made more sense for the leaders of the United States to avoid the imperial terminology. For example, the scholar Niall Ferguson argued in July 2003 that the Bush administration had done the right thing by implementing an imperial foreign policy without calling the United States an empire. Starting “from a political point of view, of course I'm not advocating an explicit use of the word 'empire' by President Bush or anybody else in the administration, and I applaud their ability to disclaim imperial ambitions in all of their public pronouncements,” Ferguson explained. “That is precisely the right way to play it. The United States should constantly deny that it's an empire.” At the same time, Ferguson insisted that the administration officials should remain well aware of the deception. “The key thing is not to mean these things,” he explained. Indeed, Ferguson argued that the

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4 Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), xx.

5 Max Boot, “American imperialism? No need to run away from label,” *USA Today*, May 5, 2003, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2003-05-05-boot\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2003-05-05-boot_x.htm).

administration should implement an imperial foreign policy while it publicly denied its imperial ambitions.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, Ferguson provided an additional insight. While he certainly felt that it made more sense for the leaders of the United States to lie about their imperial ambitions to the public, Ferguson concluded that the many different people who participated in the foreign policy establishment could still speak openly about an American empire. In the end, “we can call things by their real names and understand their true functions, and then leave and revert to the euphemisms to which we've all grown accustomed,” he explained. Indeed, Ferguson felt that scholars and strategists could embrace the reality of the American empire.<sup>7</sup>

Whether or not everyone agreed with Ferguson's approach, many scholars still approached a consensus on one of his key points. Given the way in which the United States shaped the main contours of world order, many of the most influential U.S. scholars of U.S. foreign relations agreed to define the United States as an empire. For instance, the prominent diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis informed the *New York Times* in July 2004 that the United States had always been an empire. “Does the United States Have an Empire?” the *New York Times* asked. “Of course,” Gaddis answered. “We've always had an empire.” To emphasize his point, Gaddis traced the origins of the empire straight back to the founding of the United States. “The thinking of the founding fathers was we were going to be an empire,” Gaddis explained. “Empire is as American as apple pie in that sense.”<sup>8</sup>

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6 American Enterprise Institute, “The United States Is, and Should Be, an Empire,” July 17, 2003, <http://www.aei.org/events/filter..eventID.428/transcript.asp>.

7 Ibid.

8 “Kill the Empire! (Or Not),” *New York Times*, July 25, 2004.

The following year, the influential diplomatic historian Lloyd C. Gardner provided additional emphasis. In an essay that he wrote for his co-edited volume *The New American Empire* (2005), Gardner argued that the overwhelming majority of evidence all pointed to the existence of an American empire. Today, “it is no longer even a question about whether we are an empire,” Gardner explained. “That matter is settled.”<sup>9</sup>

In short, many influential observers both inside and outside of Washington began the twenty-first century by identifying the United States as an empire. Despite the fact the leaders of the United States often followed the advice of their supporters and refrained from calling the United States an empire, many of the most influential commentators from across the political spectrum agreed to call things by their proper name and identify the United States as an empire. As a result, many observers began the twenty-first century by openly describing the United States as an empire.

## Prospects

In spite of the widespread agreement on the existence of an American empire, many observers still believed that the United States could not sustain its powerful hold over the world. With so many forces constantly working to create alternative forms of global relations, many observers began the new century by predicting that the future world would look very different. Consequently, many observers began the twenty-first

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9 Lloyd C. Gardner, “Present at the Culmination: An Empire of Righteousness?” in *The New American Empire: A 21st Century Teach-In on U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young (New York: The New Press, 2005), 24.

century by imagining a future world that no longer featured the same kind of global American empire.

During the final months of the Bush administration's time in office, the National Intelligence Council issued one of the most dramatic predictions. Pointing to some of the latest changes in the international system, the National Intelligence Council forecast a major break for the future. "The international system – as constructed following the Second World War – will be almost unrecognizable by 2025," the National Intelligence Council asserted. Providing more details, the National Intelligence Council specified that the growing number of rising powers on the periphery would soon transition to the center of the international system to create a new multipolar world order. "The most salient characteristics of the 'new order' will be the shift from a unipolar world dominated by the United States to a relatively unstructured hierarchy of old powers and rising nations, and the diffusion of power from state to nonstate actors," the National Intelligence Council predicted. In short, the National Intelligence Council envisioned a future world that featured many poles of power.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, the National Intelligence Council also added a significant qualification to its prediction. While it may have certainly envisioned an almost unrecognizable new world order for the future, the National Intelligence Council still expected many things to remain the same. In the first place, the National Intelligence Council indicated that the United States would continue to play a dominant role in the international system. "By 2025, the United States will find itself in the position of being one of a number of

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10 National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*, November 2008, 1. Available online at <http://www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends>.

important actors on the world stage, albeit still the most powerful one,” the National Intelligence Council reported. In addition, the National Intelligence Council indicated that none of the rising powers on the periphery would ever accumulate enough power to prevent the United States from shaping the main contours of global order. Currently, “there appears little chance of an alternative bloc forming among them to directly confront the more established Western order,” the National Intelligence Council noted. As a result, the National Intelligence Council suggested that the main features of the new world order would largely resemble the main features of the existing world order.<sup>11</sup>

With its assessment, the National Intelligence Council also revealed an important aspect of the global structure of imperialism. By noting that the system of “Western order” would remain in place, the National Intelligence Council indicated that the rising powers on the periphery could only transition to the center of the international system in a way that kept the world divided between a dominant center and subordinate periphery in hierarchical system of global order. In other words, the National Intelligence indicated that the international system would remain a global structure of imperialism.

Moreover, the National Intelligence Council suggested that any new system of global relations would require a more fundamental break. When it considered some other scenarios for the future, the National Intelligence Council proposed that a new system of global relations would have to begin with an alternative to the interstate system. Essentially, “a new world” begins when “nation-states are not in charge of setting the international agenda,” the National Intelligence Council reported.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 29, 82.

Continuing with its analysis, the National Intelligence Council then suggested how the change could take place. Rather than considering nation-states as the creators of the new world, the National Intelligence Council proposed that real change would begin when social movements found some way to dismantle the interstate system and organize new forms of global relations. To achieve a “dispersion of power and authority away from nation-states,” social movements have to create new forms of global relations “in which global cooperation is more than a 'conspiracy' among elites but bubbles up from the grassroots across historic national and cultural divides,” the National Intelligence Council explained. In short, the National Intelligence Council suggested that social movements would have to play the key role in creating a new system of global relations.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, many observers who worked outside of the halls of power felt the same way about the possibilities for change. While they recognized the same potential for change at the center of the international system, many influential observers agreed that a more fundamental change to the hierarchical system of global order would have to begin at the grassroots level. For example, many scholars argued that transformative social change typically began with social movements. Whether they pointed to the reformist achievements of social movements or the more substantive changes of social revolutions, a number of scholars found that local movements of people have repeatedly laid the basis for transformative social changes. “Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can quietly become a power no government can suppress, a power that can transform the world,” the social historian Howard Zinn insisted.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 89, 90.

<sup>13</sup> Howard Zinn, *A Power Governments Cannot Suppress* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2007), 270.

Furthermore, many of the scholars who have spent their lives calling attention to the global structure of imperialism similarly believed that comparable movements of people could achieve the same kind of transformative change on a global scale. In a number of works, they argued that social movements featured the ability to create enough momentum to create a new system of global relations.<sup>14</sup>

At the start of the twenty-first century, many social movements around the world even began a major new effort to create an alternative to the interstate system. At the newly organized World Social Forum, a number of social organizations began meeting on an annual basis to begin the process of building a new system of global cooperation. Participants “are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the Earth,” the participants explained in their Charter of Principles. Indeed, the participants committed themselves to laying the foundation for a new system of global cooperation. Whether or not they could fulfill their belief that “another world is possible,” they contributed to the growing belief that the future world could look very different.<sup>15</sup>

In short, many people began the twenty-first century by imagining a very different world for the future. Although they certainly harbored very different visions for the future, they all shared the same basic belief that the many different forces at work in the world could reshape the international system in some dramatic ways. As a result, a

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14 For some examples, see the following sources: Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Modern World-System in Crisis: Bifurcation, Chaos, and Choices,” in *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 76-90; David Harvey, “What is to be Done? And Who is Going to Do It?” in *The Enigma of Capital: and the Crises of Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 215-260; Noam Chomsky, *Power Systems: Conversations on Global Democratic Uprisings and the New Challenges to U.S. Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2013).

15 World Social Forum, *Charter of Principles*, 2001.



number of people began the twenty-first century by predicting that the future would bring some major changes to the global American empire.

## Conclusion

Whatever forces gained momentum in the world, officials in Washington still harbored their own ambitions for the world. In the face of mounting challenges, officials in Washington remained determined to keep their system of imperial order imposed on the world.

In fact, officials in Washington largely succeeded in their efforts. Over the course of the opening decade of the twenty-first century, U.S. officials successfully enforced their global structure of imperialism.

In the first place, U.S. officials succeeded in keeping a disproportionate amount of wealth and power concentrated in the United States. While a number of countries around the world may have certainly added to their overall share of global wealth, no country in the world came close to accumulating enough wealth and power to successfully rival the United States.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, officials in Washington kept the trilateral center positioned as the most dominant force in the international system. Despite the fact that some countries on the periphery demonstrated the potential to transition to the center, U.S. officials kept

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16 For the quantitative evidence, see the following sources: Branko Milanovic, *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); James B. Davies, Susanna Sandström, Anthony Shorrocks, and Edward N. Wolff, "The World Distribution of Household Wealth," in *Personal Wealth From a Global Perspective*, ed. James B. Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 395-418; The World Bank, *The Changing Wealth of Nations: Measuring Sustainable Development in the New Millennium* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2011).

a Germany-centered Europe and a Japan-centered Asia Pacific region positioned alongside the United States at the center of the international system.<sup>17</sup>

With their achievement, officials in Washington sent a powerful message to the world. By successfully keeping their structure of imperialism imposed on the world, they indicated that the people of the world should expect something very familiar for the future.

Specifically, U.S. officials signaled that the people of the world should expect to live in a future world that looked very much the same as the present world. No matter how many observers imagined a future world that featured a much less powerful United States in a different kind of international system, officials in Washington made it clear that they intended to maintain the same kind of global system of imperial order.

Furthermore, U.S. officials provided a vision of a future world that remained under the control of a powerful empire. While they may not have harbored any intentions to extend the boundaries of the United States across the rest of the world, they maintained their imperial goal of controlling the structure of the international system.

Finally, the actions of the leaders of the United States left one additional imprint on the world. As they implemented their imperial grand strategy, U.S. officials guaranteed that the great majority of the world's population would continue to experience the challenges of living under a system of imperial rule. Unless the various social organizations around the world accelerated their efforts to create a new system of global relations, then it appeared all too likely that the leaders of the United States would

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

succeed in making the global structure of imperialism the everyday reality for much of the world's population.

If anything, the actions of the Bush and Obama administrations left the final impression that the leaders of the United States would do everything in their power to ensure that their global structure of imperialism remained a fact of life. Indeed, officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations committed themselves to upholding a global American empire.

## A Note on the Sources

Most of the sources that I have used in this study are available online. Although I have provided the links to my online sources in my footnotes, I must call attention to a couple of important issues. In the first place, I have only cited the print material for many of the print sources that are available online. In addition, I expect that many of the online materials will be removed from the internet at some point. As a result, I believe that the following information will be useful to anyone who wants to locate my source material on the internet.

1) Many old websites are still available online.

In the case that a link in one of my footnotes does not work, the link will most likely be available at the Internet Archive, which archives the internet. Go to <https://archive.org/> and type the link into the Wayback Machine to view snapshots of the webpage from the past.

2) Many of my print sources are available online. They include:

### The Foreign Relations of the United States

- Website 1: <https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS/>

- Website 2: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>.

## The Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States

- Website 1: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppotpus/>
- Website 2: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=PPP>

## Transcripts of Congressional Hearings

- Website: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/search/home.action>
- In the case that the transcripts are not available from the website of the U.S. Government Publishing Office (formerly known as the U.S. Government Printing Office), there are some more options to try. Often, transcripts are available on the websites of congressional committees, such as the website of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (<https://www.foreign.senate.gov/>) and the website of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs (<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>).

Old Books (and many other print materials, including all of the aforementioned sources)

- Website: <https://www.hathitrust.org/>

3) Many organizations feature many useful online sources. They include:

## The State Department

- Website 1: <http://www.state.gov/index.htm>

- Website 2: <http://2001-2009.state.gov/>
- Website 3: <http://1997-2001.state.gov/>

#### U.S. Embassies, Consulates, and Diplomatic Missions

- Website: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

#### The Defense Department

- Website: <http://www.defense.gov/>

#### The White House

- Website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/>

#### The Congressional Research Service

- Website 1: <http://fpc.state.gov/c18185.htm>
- Website 2: <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/index.html>

#### The Freedom of Information Act

- Website: <http://www.foia.gov/>
- Different federal agencies post documents to their own websites. For example, the State Department posts its documents at <https://foia.state.gov/>.

#### The National Security Archive

- Website: <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/>

#### WikiLeaks

- Website: <https://wikileaks.org/>

- To search through millions of diplomatic cables, go to  
<https://search.wikileaks.org/plusd/>.

#### The Snowden Archive

- Website: <https://www.eff.org/nsa-spying/nsadocs>

4) Public libraries provide access to many online databases of government documents and government resources.

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