



EXTENDING AMERICAN POWER

**Strategies to Expand U.S. Engagement
in a Competitive World Order**

Paper Signatories

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Richard Fontaine, Stephen J. Hadley,
Robert Kagan (Co-chairman), James P. Rubin (Co-chairman),
Julianne Smith, James Steinberg, and Robert Zoellick

About the “Extending American Power” Project

Over the course of the last year, a group of current and former government officials, strategists, and scholars spanning the political spectrum met for a monthly dinner series through the Center for a New American Security’s “Extending American Power” project, co-chaired by Dr. Robert Kagan and the Hon. James P. Rubin. The goal of the series was to bring together a bipartisan group to help shape the national conversation on America’s role in the world during the run-up to the presidential election in November 2016. The group convened multiple times to discuss a range of regional and functional issues from the Middle East to Asia to the international economy. At a time when partisanship in the American political establishment has reached unprecedented heights, CNAS believes it is more important than ever to rebuild the national consensus on America’s role in the world. This project promotes the idea that American leadership is critical to preserving and strengthening the bedrock of today’s international order, which is being shaken by a variety of forces. The final report comes at a critical time, as U.S. allies are calling for increased U.S. engagement, and the American public is debating a greater international role.

Paper Signatories

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Cover Photo

Going forward, American leadership will be needed more than ever to ensure the continued strength and stability of the global order. (Jake Ingle/Unsplash)

Foreword

Robert Kagan and James P. Rubin

Over the past year, the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) brought together an extraordinary group of scholars, practitioners, and journalists to consider how a new administration should respond to the complex challenges confronting the United States and the established international order.

With a mandate to examine the degree to which the United States can and should play a leadership role internationally, and with an eye toward policymaking in a new administration, the “Extending American Power” (EAP) working group met formally over a series of six working dinners.

At the first session, University of Virginia Professor Melvyn Leffler, a diplomatic historian, and Columbia University Professor Stephen Sestanovich analyzed the recurring swings from retrenchment to activism and back again that has marked the U.S. approach to international leadership since the end of World War II. In addition to a look back, the EAP series also examined: international economic policy, developments in Europe and Russia, the consequences of a rising China for U.S. policy toward East Asia, and U.S. defense policy. A full list of each session’s speakers, including administration officials and outside experts, is contained in the report’s appendix.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the presentations were of the highest caliber possible at each session. For instance, the discussion of the Iran agreement and the conflicts raging across the Greater Middle East began with reflections from Dennis Ross, special envoy to the region for three presidents; Elliot Abrams, Deputy National Security Advisor to President George W. Bush; renowned Middle East scholar Dr. Vali Nasr; and Martin Indyk, a top diplomat to the region for more than twenty years.

As co-chairs of the series, we are particularly delighted that eight of our colleagues – Kurt Campbell, Eric Edelman, Michèle Flournoy, Richard Fontaine, Steve Hadley, Julianne Smith, James Steinberg, and Robert Zoellick – have agreed to endorse this report. We can only hope that the spirit of collegiality, determination, and bipartisanship they have demonstrated will carry forward into relations between Congress and the president after this November’s elections.

Finally, we are indebted to CNAS and its Chief Executive Officer, Michèle Flournoy; its Chair of the Board of Directors, Kurt Campbell; Program Director and Senior Fellow, Julianne Smith; and former Bacevich Fellow, Jacob Stokes for all their work and leadership over the past year.

Robert Kagan and James P. Rubin are Chairmen of the Extending American Power Working Group.

Introduction

The world order created in the aftermath of World War II has produced immense benefits for peoples across the planet. The past 70 years have seen an unprecedented growth in global prosperity, lifting billions out of poverty. Democratic government, once rare, has spread to over 100 nations. Above all, for 70 years there have been no cataclysmic wars among great powers of the kind that devastated Europe and Asia in the first half of the 20th century.

It is easy for Americans to take the benefits of this international order for granted without fully appreciating the critical leadership role the U.S. government has played in creating and sustaining this economic, political, and security system. American military power, the dynamism of the U.S. economy, and the great number of close alliances and friendships the United States enjoys with other powers and peoples have provided the critical architecture in which this liberal order has flourished.

To preserve and strengthen this order will require a renewal of American leadership in the international system. Today, the very bedrock of this order is being shaken by a variety of forces – powerful and ambitious authoritarian governments like Russia and China, radical Islamic terrorist movements, long-term shifts in the global economy, the rise of non-state actors, the challenges of cyberspace, and changes in our physical environment.

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Many around the world who once decried American overseas involvement as “hegemonic” now seek greater American engagement in international affairs and worry more about American retrenchment. This view is especially strongly held in the three regions where the United States has carried the main burden of providing security since World War II: East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. In all three, as well as in Latin America and Africa, American allies and partners seek more involvement by the United States not less.

The greatest challenge to the preservation of this order today may be here in the United States. The bipartisan consensus that has long supported America’s engagement with the world is under attack by detractors in both parties. Responsible political leaders need to explain to a new generation of Americans how important this world order is to their well-being and how vital America’s role is in sustaining it.

Fashioning a Bipartisan Consensus on Core Principles

Americans have always supported U.S. leadership when there was bipartisan consensus on the need for such a role. Bipartisanship in foreign policy is more often praised than practiced. But in recent years, an especially bitter partisanship has often stood in the way of effective policymaking.

We believe that may now be changing as the challenges faced by the United States and the world order it supports grow more and more obvious, as do the requirements of meeting those challenges.

The EAP working group – a bipartisan group of former government officials, strategists, and scholars – met over the last year to examine different strategies Washington may adopt in response to the competitive and increasingly unstable order a new administration coming into office in January 2017 is likely to face. What follows is the product of those discussions. It is necessarily an amalgam of differing views, requiring significant compromises on the part of all participants. Not all members of the group would adhere to every formulation or argument. However, every member of the group does agree emphatically with the core principles informing this report. In particular, we all agree that a new U.S. approach should be based on the following fundamental assumptions:

1. The best way to ensure the longevity of a rules-based international system favorable to U.S. interests is not to retreat behind two oceans, lower American standards, or raise the tolerance level for risk. The proper course is to extend American power and U.S. leadership in Asia, Europe, and the Greater Middle East – regions where threats to the international order are greatest and where either new approaches or more consistent application of time-honored approaches are most urgently needed.
2. Achieving this critical objective will require strengthening all the elements of American power:



The foundation of the international order created after World War II is being shaken by a number of forces, from Russia and China to radical Islam and shifts in the global economy. Preserving this order requires a renewal of American leadership. (Gabby Orcutt/Unsplash)

diplomatic, economic, and military. An urgent first step is to significantly increase U.S. national security and defense spending and eliminate the budgetary strait-jacket of the Budget Control Act. A second and related step is to formulate policies that take advantage of the substantial military, economic, and diplomatic power Washington has available but has been reluctant to deploy in recent years.

3. Despite all the predictions of decline in the West and the rise of the rest, America's economy has proven to be the most dynamic and the most resilient in the face of financial and other recent shocks. As a result, a substantial increase in spending on military, international economic, and diplomatic capabilities is well within our means.
4. All of which provides the basis for our strong belief that the United States still has the military, economic, and political power to play the leading role in protecting a stable rules-based international order. For the next president then, the question is not whether America has the wherewithal to provide more active international leadership, but whether America's government has the will. And if it does have the power and the will to lead, the relevant question for the United States is how to do so in a manner that reflects reasonable ambitions as well as necessary limits?

It should be noted that this report is not intended to be a comprehensive look at all the challenges facing U.S. policymakers. On the contrary, the group only examined in depth three key regions – Asia, Europe, and the Greater Middle East. Consideration of U.S. policy toward these three regions did, however, benefit from extraordinary presentations by outside experts and scholars regarding broader trends in international economics and national defense, and a look back at the historic decisions taken by the Truman administration. In light of this regional focus, it is worth pointing out that judgments regarding key transnational threats and challenges, for example, the important issue of climate change, are beyond the scope of this report.

Nonetheless, the work of this group shows that broad areas of agreement can be achieved across political and ideological lines. What follows is a rough blueprint for several crucial aspects of American foreign policy, which we believe the next occupant of the White House should adopt no matter what party he or she represents, and which we are convinced can receive bipartisan support. It should be noted again that while all of us support and endorse the report's recommendations in broad terms, the language of the report does not necessarily reflect the precise views of every single member of the group.



The Truman administration's achievements required bipartisanship, willingness to compromise, and hard work across party lines. In this photograph, Harry S. Truman takes the oath of office as president of the United States in the Cabinet Room of the White House. (National Archives and Records Administration, Office of Presidential Libraries/Abbie Rowe)

A Look Back

The EAP group began with a look at President Truman's administration, often heralded as the golden age of U.S. leadership. The years between 1946 and 1949 saw the creation of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the NATO alliance, and the reintegration and reconstruction of Germany and Japan.

Today, few appreciate the hurdles the Truman administration faced. Not only was the domestic political climate hostile – the president's approval ratings hovered around 30 percent – but questions of international affairs barely registered as the American public turned its attention from war to the home front. Foreign policy didn't feature prominently on the broader political agenda, and the American people, after a costly world war, were in no mood to continue sacrificing precious lives and resources on overseas commitments.

Although little remembered now, Truman's achievements were the fulfillment of a grand strategy based on the idea that no adversary should be allowed to gain control of the preponderant resources of Europe or Asia in peacetime or wartime. Following through on this goal meant accepting key tradeoffs. For example, the economic reconstruction of Germany and Western Europe would antagonize the Soviet Union, thus

foregoing the possibility of negotiating a near-term settlement with Moscow and leading to a divided Europe. All of which meant that despite the prevailing political winds, the United States had to accept the burden of guaranteeing the security of Western Europe.

The administration's historic achievements also required hard work across party lines and willingness to compromise. At the time, the Republican Party had just won control of the House and Senate for the first time in two decades, and it was much more interested in domestic matters. Truman compromised on several aspects of his program to gain their support and spent countless hours building personal relationships. The president did the same with important U.S. allies who were essential to the formation of a liberal core of the new international order.

Important lessons from the Truman era have relevance in our time. Then, too, the American people had to overcome a natural yearning for retrenchment and accept their role as upholder and defender of the liberal world order. Then, as now, success is more likely to come if the president and the cabinet develop and articulate a strategy, outline priorities, accept tradeoffs, work to build wide support, and remain sensitive to partners' concerns.

Economics and Energy

America became the central hub of economic and financial power in the world starting in the early 20th century when it produced and financed the war matériel for Britain and France as they fought in World War I. Created in the aftermath of World War II, the Bretton Woods system and the Marshall Plan then reaffirmed and institutionalized that power, which has lasted to the present day. But growing challenges to U.S. economic and financial power will make exercising that power more difficult in the years ahead.

The United States may be the only nation in history whose core strategy since World War II has been to build up successful economic competitors as a way of strengthening the foundations of the liberal economic order from which the American people so greatly benefit. And this strategy has succeeded. Decades of U.S. policies intended to promote a stable, open economic order have indeed fostered the rise of alternative economic powers. America helped Europe rebuild from the rubble of World War II into the present-day European Union; it fostered the rise of China's economy; and it facilitated growth in other developing economies such as Korea, Indonesia, Brazil, and India. While the growth of these economies has provided major benefits to the United States, it has also bred a desire among newly wealthy powers for greater say in international economic governance.

Moreover, the worldwide financial crisis in 2008, which began in the United States, and the subsequent great recession, emboldened advocates for alternative growth models. Calls to move away from the Anglo-American "Washington Consensus" toward systems with greater state influence have since grown louder. Some competitors, like Russia, seek to dilute U.S. influence over the global financial system. China, meanwhile, aims to build alternative institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and has sought to internationalize its currency. While still at an early stage, such initiatives are picking up momentum, with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) recently deciding to include the Renminbi as a reserve currency.

Washington's response to such challenges has ranged from constructive to ambivalent to counterproductive. The United States negotiated a much-needed reform package for the IMF to give rising powers like China a greater role, and after a lengthy and embarrassing delay, we are pleased that Congress has now approved the reform package.

However, yearly threats to shut down the U.S. government and default on American debt have needlessly eroded confidence in U.S. economic stewardship. One



Worldwide energy markets have dramatically evolved over the last decade. A large driver behind that change has been the energy revolution within the United States, facilitated by hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling. In this Kern County, California, field, pumpjacks extract oil. (Christopher Halloran / Shutterstock.com)

bright spot is that the current administration has completed negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and is working toward the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), both of which are sure to generate significant controversy. In that regard, we urge Congress to take up, consider, and approve the TPP as soon as possible. And while the 2015 debt package offers reason for optimism, much work remains to be done to achieve a comprehensive accord on the budget.

Worldwide energy markets are changing dramatically as well. The energy revolution in the United States brought about by the use of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing of oil and gas has altered the fundamental dynamics of the industry. Whereas energy had previously been a strategic liability for the United States since the early 1970s, today, increasingly, energy constitutes an area of strategic advantage. Additional supply allows the United States to act as a swing producer (and if permitted, an exporter too) when global supplies are tight. Cheaper gas supplies fuel industry and reduce carbon emissions compared to coal. All in all, these changes in energy markets offer significant strategic advantage that can help extend American power.

International economic trends are, of course, inextricably linked to the U.S. domestic economy. Herein lies one of America's greatest strengths. The adaptability, resilience, and innovation of the U.S. economic system are not only crucial in their own right (the United States bounced back from the financial crisis much more quickly than others), but they are also a source of strength and influence because other nations respect this inherent dynamism. Shared prosperity at

home also increases political support for engagement overseas. History has shown the U.S. public's willingness to support robust global engagement rises during times of economic growth. It is no accident that the post-World War II consensus on internationalism happened at the same time as the American economy grew at breakneck speed and the benefits spread to every level of society. An additional benefit of a growing economy, of course, is the availability of additional resources to strengthen America's military, economic, and diplomatic capabilities.

Ensuring that the domestic economy is lifting up the average American is still the best way to ensure support for global engagement and also contribute to a stronger, more influential America.

The U.S. economy has some significant and enduring advantages – in particular deep financial markets, an innovative technology sector, and world-class universities. But remaining the world's leading economy requires dealing with areas where progress has lagged. An agenda for shoring up the U.S. domestic economy includes improving primary and secondary education, rebuilding aging infrastructure, balancing taxes and entitlements to put U.S. debt on a more sustainable trajectory, and fixing a broken immigration system to ensure, among other things, that the United States continues to attract innovative, creative talent from around the world. There is much to be said for leaders explaining to the American people the importance of U.S. global engagement – a task that is and will continue to be essential. But ensuring that the domestic economy is lifting up the average American is still the best way to ensure support for global engagement and also contribute to a stronger, more influential America.

The interplay between security and prosperity at home and abroad has never been more relevant. An agenda for American leadership on issues of trade, finance, economics, and energy must, therefore, be part of a program to enhance U.S. international leadership.

Asia

With its growing population, expanding economic power, and dynamic geopolitical challenges, Asia is destined to take up an ever-larger share of American foreign policy attention in the years ahead. Fortunately, as a consequence of the region's unique receptiveness to America and American leadership, U.S. engagement not only ensures continued stability but also advances democratic values and growing prosperity. Therefore, we believe the comprehensive set of diplomatic, economic, and security initiatives designed to reflect this new Asian ascendancy – known as the “rebalance” or “pivot” – should be extended for the foreseeable future.

U.S. leadership has been indispensable in ensuring a stable balance of power in Asia the past 70 years. Washington's unprecedented alliances with Japan and South Korea, its demonstrated commitment to maintaining open sea lanes, open trade, state sovereignty and freedom of navigation, and its other regional alliances and relationships, have together made possible generations of historic peace and prosperity.

More recently, the rise of India and the U.S. outreach to the world's largest democracy has led to a strategic partnership of significant benefit to the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. With steady statecraft in Washington and New Delhi, remaining historical, cultural, and geographic differences can and should be overcome. This will allow for more effective great-power diplomacy, enhanced security cooperation, and a deeper sense of common purpose. Such steps will put the United States and India in a far better position to work together to confront and resolve future conflicts in the region and broader international challenges.

Since China's spectacular economic growth and its increased military spending will have a profound impact on the Asian region, there is no doubt that the management of the U.S.-China relationship is the single most consequential challenge for U.S. foreign policy. The stakes have been raised further by the emergence of President Xi Jinping, Beijing's most powerful leader since Deng Xiaoping, and Xi's increasingly assertive approach to international affairs, especially his claim that security in Asia is a matter for Asians, i.e., not the United States.

Both China's breakneck island construction in the South China Sea and its declaration of an air defense identification zone in the East China Sea undermine long-standing principles of freedom of navigation. Along with China's surging military spending on capabilities directed squarely against American power projection platforms and its persistent cyber attacks on U.S.



Going forward, the Asia-Pacific region will continue to garner increased attention from the United States. Here, the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier the USS George Washington (CVN 73) prepares to anchor in Victoria Harbor, Hong Kong. (U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Beverly J. Lesonik)

government and private sector systems, these provocative moves represent a significant threat to the regional security that U.S. power has underwritten for decades.

But the China challenge is not limited to the security field. With its successful establishment of a new AIIB, Beijing has shown that in the absence of careful U.S. diplomacy, it can muster economic and diplomatic strength to create China-centric institutions that parallel existing forums. Washington's response was a classic example of how a leading nation should not respond. Not only was U.S. opposition to the bank perceived by Beijing as confirmation that Washington has adopted a policy of containment, but the fact that U.S. diplomacy failed so spectacularly was regarded as a sign of weakness in China and proof of poor judgment by U.S. friends and allies in Asia.

That is one reason approval of the TPP is so important. Whatever compromises may have been made on specific issues with other nations, passage of the agreement by Congress will signal renewed American resolve to remain engaged in East Asia, politically, strategically, and economically. The flip-side is also true: Failure to pass the TPP will send a message to Asia and the world that the United States is simply too internally divided

and inward looking to appreciate the value of such a vast regional trade arrangement. In the case of failure, China would also have a much freer hand in writing economic rules of the road in Asia. Over the longer term, a successful the TPP will serve as a standard-setter to encourage reform throughout the region.

In general, the United States should do more to leverage its dramatic advantage in allies and regional security relationships. In that regard, a new diplomatic strategy of coordinating Asia policies with long-standing U.S. allies in Europe should be instituted. Such an approach plays to U.S. strengths and will add to perceptions of U.S. power.

Recent talk of a "Thucydides trap," i.e., the inevitable clash between a rising power and the established leading power, is overblown. Conflict between the two powers can be avoided if Washington strengthens its military deterrent and deepens and broadens its growing array of regional alliances and security partnerships. History suggests that rising powers challenge the status quo militarily when they believe the odds of victory are reasonably good. Precisely how much U.S. military power and resolve will be necessary to deter a more confident and capable China must still be calculated. Suffice it

to say that the Xi era has ushered in a more assertive China with greater military capability. Therefore, the United States must increase its capabilities and extend its military posture accordingly, for that is the best way to demonstrate its determination to continue enforcing a rules-based order in the Asia-Pacific region.

More broadly, there is no reason for a fundamental adjustment in the approach the last eight administrations – Republican and Democratic – have taken to China. Promoting the peaceful rise of a China that is increasingly integrated into the rules and traditions of the liberal international order remains a sound strategy for the United States.

The near-term challenge lies in the South China Sea, where the current policy of demanding that Beijing halt its construction of islands is failing. It may be wiser to impose regional costs for Chinese actions. These costs could include new defense partnerships with the Philippines or Vietnam aimed at strengthening regional security, consistent region-wide condemnation of Chinese actions, and commensurate economic penalties to slow Chinese dominance of the regional economy.

Even as the United States strengthens its capabilities and resolve in the security sphere, it makes sense to facilitate China's continued integration with the international economy so as to blunt its historical fears of 'containment.'

But even as the United States strengthens its capabilities and resolve in the security sphere, it makes sense to facilitate China's continued integration with the international economy so as to blunt its historical fears of "containment." For example, reforms in the investment and capital market sectors (where U.S. expertise is unique) could be made a priority in bilateral discussions.

The United States surely has the capabilities – military, economic, and diplomatic – to respond to the new and unprecedented challenge from a rising increasingly assertive China. But Asian allies and friends worry Washington does not have the will. That must now be demonstrated anew.

Europe

Even in a world of shifting economic and political power, the transatlantic community remains both the foundation and the core of the liberal world order. This remains true even as Asia rises in strategic significance. Historically, most major U.S. foreign policy achievements have been pursued in partnership with our closest allies in Europe.

Many policymakers tend to forget the centrality of the transatlantic world, strategically, politically, and economically, because for so long the story in Europe had been one of remarkable success. Through the Cold War and then in the two decades that followed the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Europe has been a region of expanding peace and security, growing prosperity, and increasing democracy.

To a greater extent than many realize, this success is being threatened now. Strategically it is threatened by growing Russian ambition and willingness to use force, including the invasion of neighboring countries. It is also threatened by British strategic retrenchment, French economic weakness, and historic German strategic ambivalence in the security sphere.

Germany's emergence as *primus inter pares* in Europe offers both opportunities and challenges. Chancellor Angela Merkel should be applauded for her leadership in dealing with the migration crisis and the question of Greece's financial system, and also for helping to hold together the European sanctions regime in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, Germany has in recent years been less willing to engage in military operations, even those, such as Libya, which have been approved by the U.N. Security Council. The Germans have continued to play some role in Afghanistan and Iraq, holdovers from an earlier phase of greater German participation. But, the political consensus in Germany has shifted in ways that raise questions about the future.

Politically, there has been backsliding on democratic values and the rule of law in Hungary and Poland. The Syrian refugee crisis has put unprecedented pressure on European institutions, and this, combined with further terrorist attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other radical Islamic groups, has strengthened right-wing parties across the continent, many of them funded by Russia. Add the danger of British departure from the European Union (EU) and the migration crisis and one can imagine significant ruptures in Europe that would have a very severe effect on the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the transatlantic community.

The terrorist assault on Paris this past November and on Brussels in March were stark and painful reminders of



Over the past year, the European continent has faced a migration crisis unseen since World War II. In this photo, Syrian and Iraqi refugees arrive by boat to the Greek island of Lesbos after a dangerous trek across the Mediterranean Sea. (Wikimedia Commons/Georgios Giannopoulos)

the many ways instability in the Greater Middle East can come home to countries in Europe. The mass shooting in California in early December 2015 also demonstrates why ISIS potentially poses a greater threat to the United States and its allies and partners than al Qaeda. With so many ISIS-inspired terrorists holding Western passports, counterterrorism has become significantly more difficult. Nor can one discount the possibility that just as ISIS has emerged to compete with al Qaeda for leadership of the jihadi forces, there will be other groups seeking to take the mantle.

All these factors will require a significant re-engagement by the United States to prevent further erosion and begin to reverse the present trends. The United States should prioritize the following key components of this re-engagement strategy:

Act together with Europe to address the crisis in Syria and destroy ISIS and other dangerous groups. Europe has been shaken by the crisis that has spilled over from Syria and the Greater Middle East. No strengthening of Europe, and of the transatlantic relationship, can occur if these problems are not addressed. This topic is covered in the Middle East section in greater detail. However, these crises have posed a key test of the

cohesion and durability of the alliance that has long been the core of the liberal world order. Failure to meet these crises in a cooperative fashion could have a significant deleterious effect on the health and stability of that order.

In the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut, Sinai, and San Bernadino, Europe and the United States will have to strengthen their counterterrorism cooperation. The two sides of the Atlantic have significantly enhanced their work in this area since 9/11, but work remains. They need to strengthen their law enforcement cooperation, enhance intelligence sharing, address border security issues, and come to grips with the roots of radicalization.

Stabilize Ukraine and anchor it in Europe. The United States must provide Ukrainian armed forces with the training and equipment necessary to resist Russian-backed forces and Russian forces operating on Ukrainian territory. (That is not to suggest that Ukraine will ever be able to stand up to the full Russian military.) Just as critically, the United States and the EU need to provide sufficient economic assistance, both directly and through international lending institutions, to keep the Ukrainian economy afloat while simultaneously pressing the government to reduce corruption and waste. Putin's strategy is to keep Ukraine in a constant state of instability in

the hopes that it will eventually fall under Russia's sway once more. The strategy of the United States and Europe must be to help Ukraine achieve political and economic stability, anchored in the West. Firmness and resolve on Ukraine will have the added benefit of deterring Russia from aggressive actions against other European nations, including those with which the United States has Article 5 commitments.

Underwrite credible security guarantees to NATO allies on the frontlines with Russia. Given recent Russian behavior, it is no longer possible to ignore the possible challenge to NATO countries that border Russia. The Baltics in particular are vulnerable to both direct attack and the more complicated "hybrid" warfare that Russia has displayed in Ukraine. To provide reassurance to U.S. allies and also to deter Russian efforts to destabilize these nations, it is necessary to build upon the European Reassurance Initiative and establish a more robust U.S. force presence in appropriate central and eastern Europe countries, which should include a mix of permanently stationed forces, rotationally deployed forces, prepositioned equipment, access arrangements and a more robust schedule of military training and exercises. Such measures should not be seen as inconsistent with international law. On the contrary, they should be regarded as a fully justified, appropriate, and proportionate response to Russia's violation of the purpose of the NATO-Russia Founding Act. The United States should also work with both NATO and the EU to counter Russian influence-peddling and subversion using corruption and illegal financial manipulation.

Strengthen and modernize economic and resource cooperation. For all of Europe, west, east, and south, it is essential to pursue greater transatlantic economic integration and cooperation. Europe's continuing energy dependence on Russia is a particular vulnerability. It will take time to reduce that independence, but that is all the more reason serious efforts should begin now. With this in mind, it is essential that the TTIP be successfully negotiated and approved both by the U.S. Congress and by the European Union. Right now, progress toward an agreement has stalled. The next president, rather than regarding TTIP as one of the "hard" issues that might be best put off, needs to make it a top executive and congressional priority from the outset. In addition, both the United States and Europe need to build the necessary infrastructure to supply Europe with access to growing American liquefied natural gas supplies and oil. Meanwhile, it is necessary to move forward with and complete the non-Russian gas and oil pipelines (from Bulgaria to Greece, etc.).

Restore capacity for European strategic leadership and cooperation. Europe has always functioned best when the three or four leading European powers worked together cooperatively, in partnership with the United States. In recent years, the traditional "troika" of Great Britain, Germany, and France has weakened considerably. British foreign and defense policies have weakened its leadership role in Europe and the world more generally. Germany has been left in the uncomfortable position of providing not only economic but also political and strategic leadership in Europe. The United States should work to pull this "troika" back together, with the addition of Poland (assuming of course that its government demonstrates respect for the highest standards of democratic governance), to provide strategic leadership within the European Union. For all that institution's shortcomings, the United States has an interest in the preservation and health of the EU.

A strong and united Europe remains just as important today as it was in the aftermath of World War II when Dean Acheson worked so brilliantly to bring the European countries together. The United States has a particular interest in Britain remaining a strong and active player within the EU. A British departure would weaken Britain, Europe, and the transatlantic community. Among Britain's strengths, and one aspect of its value as an ally, has been its ability to play a leadership role in Europe, providing a transatlantic perspective that can sometimes be absent from European councils. A strong Britain in a strong Europe is a key American interest. American diplomacy must strive to do the hard work of maintaining not only an alliance but a vibrant, cohesive, and powerful transatlantic community. That means increasing the level and frequency of U.S. participation in high-level meetings even when a crisis does not exist.

Such increased transatlantic dialogue should encompass the whole range of global strategic challenges. Whether or not Europe has a critical role to play or is threatened by every global crisis, it will help all of us if Europe and the United States share perspectives, knowledge, and consideration of the moral and strategic challenges they face around the world. If the two sides of the Atlantic hope to share responsibility for defending the liberal world order, they ought to have, as much as possible, a common understanding of what that entails.

The Greater Middle East

Despite recent American misjudgments and failures in the Middle East, for which all recent administrations, including the present one, bear some responsibility, and despite the apparent intractability of many of the problems in the region, the United States has no choice but to engage itself fully in a determined, multi-year effort to find an acceptable resolution to the many crises tearing the region apart. The key point is that the dangers emanating from the Middle East, including both terrorism and the massive flow of refugees, are not containable. They must be addressed at the source, over many years, using a combination of local actors and American power and influence.

ISIS

With the attack on Paris, the Islamic State has now proven both its desire and its capability to carry out a large and complex terrorist attack in a major Western city, in a nation with one of the world's best police and counter-terror organizations. The idea that a dozen or more major American cities, as well as other European cities, can be protected simply by good intelligence and policing, without putting substantial additional pressure on ISIS and taking away the territory it controls, strains credulity.

Despite well more than a year of coalition military efforts against ISIS, that terrorist organization still holds sway over substantial regions of Iraq and Syria, where the perpetrators of the Paris attacks were evidently trained and further radicalized. It has also established new footholds in a number of other countries, most significantly in Libya. We strongly believe that there is no alternative but to deny ISIS a safe sanctuary from which to operate.

It is imperative that the international effort against ISIS is scaled up substantially. The United States should be prepared to lead such an effort, the aim of which should be to uproot ISIS from its sanctuary.

It is imperative, therefore, that the international effort against ISIS is scaled up substantially. The United States should be prepared to lead such an effort, the aim of which should be to uproot ISIS from its sanctuary. The anti-ISIS alliance should have a global strategy that

synchronizes military, intelligence, law enforcement, financial, and diplomatic operations. It should involve other major powers from around the world, and as many local and regional forces on the ground as possible.

The United States should show a new resolve by increasing significantly its military contribution across the board, including providing more unique air assets, additional intelligence assets and a larger contingent of special operation forces capable of identifying and destroying high value and other critical ISIS targets.

Syria

The crisis in Syria, which has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, is now spilling over that country's borders in a dramatic way, destabilizing neighboring countries in the Middle East and threatening the security and stability of Europe. The massive flows of refugees, measured in the millions, will become even more unmanageable if a political solution to the civil war ravaging Syria is not found sometime soon. Any such political solution must include the departure of Bashar al-Assad (but not necessarily all members of the ruling regime), since it is Assad's brutal repression of Syria's majority Sunni population that has created both the massive exodus and the increase in support for jihadist groups like ISIS.

In our view, there can be no political solution to the Syrian civil war so long as the military balance continues to convince Assad he can remain in power. And as a result of Iran's shock troops and military equipment deployed to Syria, and the modern aircraft and other conventional forces Russia has now deployed, the military balance tilts heavily in favor of the Assad regime. Recent successes by the Southern Front along the Jordanian border and with Kurdish and Arab partners along the northern border with Turkey, while encouraging, do not change the overall picture. Indeed, Syrian government forces have regained considerable territory and momentum especially in and around Aleppo, primarily as a result of coordinated Russian-Syrian-Iranian operations backed by heavy and often indiscriminate Russian bombardment from the air. At a minimum, the inadequate efforts hitherto to arm, train, and protect a substantial Syrian opposition force must be completely overhauled and made a much higher priority.

In the meantime, and in light of this grim reality, the United States, together with France and other allies, must employ the necessary military power, including an appropriately designed no-fly zone, to create a safe space in which Syrians can relocate without fear of being killed by Assad's forces and where moderate opposition



Over the last five years, the crisis in Syria has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced millions. The war has spilled over Syria's borders causing increased instability in the Greater Middle East. In October 2014, a coalition airstrike targets ISIS forces in the Syrian city of Kobane. (Orlok / Shutterstock.com)

militias can arm, train, and organize. The United States can spearhead the necessary assistance and protection for this safe space in much the same way that it did for the Kurds in Northern Iraq after the first Gulf War. To complement these and other efforts, it is also essential to assist in the formation of a Sunni alternative to ISIS and the Assad regime.

Taken together, some or all of these steps should make it possible over time to establish a more stable military balance, which in turn will enhance the prospect for diplomatic progress as well as improve EU security by stemming the exodus of refugees.

Iran and Security in the Persian Gulf

Implementation of the nuclear agreement between Iran and the United States, the European Union, Russia, and China has started. Past disagreements notwithstanding, the wisest course is to adopt a hard-nosed enforcement strategy to ensure the maximum benefit possible from the agreement and to minimize any shortcomings. Such a strategy should combine rigorous enforcement of the nuclear accord with stronger efforts to counter Iran's destabilizing activities throughout the region, from its support to terrorist groups like Hezbollah to its efforts to sow instability in the Sunni Arab states.

As a starting point, Iran's continued effort to modernize its ballistic missile capabilities should not proceed without consequences. Existing law calls for sanctioning those responsible for modernization activities specifically prohibited by U.N. Security Council resolutions. The administration should demonstrate its resolve by continuing to impose such sanctions as necessary regardless of Iranian threats to unravel the nuclear accord.

In recent years, Iran, working with local Shiite allies, has gained significant influence in several Middle East countries. It is the primary backer of Bashar Assad in Syria, where it now deploys substantial military forces; it maintains strong ties with the Shiite-led government in Iraq; it provides weapons and support to Houthi rebels in Yemen; and it exercises substantial power in Lebanon through Hezbollah. With Russia's recent military intervention alongside Iran in support of the Assad regime in Damascus, Tehran's power has only increased further.

In light of these destabilizing developments, the United States must adopt as a matter of policy the goal of defeating Iran's determined effort to dominate the Greater Middle East. To respond to this regional challenge and to ensure an effective enforcement strategy for the nuclear agreement, the United States must strengthen its policy in several respects.

First, Tehran should understand that Washington is not expecting the nuclear agreement to lead to a changed relationship with the government of Iran. The nuclear agreement should not be linked to Tehran's expectation of some kind of détente or broader opening to the United States. If Iran chooses to change its dangerous policies toward the region, Washington will welcome such changes. But that is not part of the accord, and the prospect of such change will not affect U.S. determination to guard against any violation of the agreement, large or small.

Second, Washington's declaratory policy should reflect the fact that the United States is now, and will always be, determined to deter Iran from becoming a full-fledged nuclear weapon state. This is not a partisan matter. Whether Republican or Democrat, the next president of the United States will not hesitate to respond with military power should Iran attempt to obtain a nuclear weapon.

Third, the United States should adopt a comprehensive strategy, employing an appropriate mix of military, economic, and diplomatic resources, to undermine and defeat Iran's hegemonic ambitions in the Greater Middle East. Whether in Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, or Bahrain, Tehran's advances and longer-term ambitions should be regarded as a threat to stability that it is in the U.S. interest to counter and deter.

The next administration must make abundantly clear that it has no interest in pursuing an off-shore balancing strategy, such as the "new equilibrium" some have suggested, which envisages a significant U.S. military drawdown from the region. On the contrary, the Persian Gulf should be deemed a region of vital interest to the security of the United States. As such, U.S. military forces in the region should be sufficient to ensure the security of Gulf allies and the Strait of Hormuz against potential Iranian aggression. At the same time, Gulf allies should have access to sufficient defense articles and services to deter Tehran even if U.S. forces are not present or immediately available to assist.

We also reject Iran's attempt to blame others for regional tensions it is aggravating, as well as its public campaign to demonize the government of Saudi Arabia. That is not to excuse past activities of key allies like Saudi Arabia that have facilitated the rise of jihadi terrorist organizations and their supporters. On the contrary, as a consequence of their financing of efforts to spread Wahhabism to mosques and madrassas all over the Islamic world, Saudi elites, official and private, bear much responsibility for the growth of extremist ideologies that promote intolerance and Jihadi terrorism.

While we applaud the Saudi law enforcement and intelligence work that has been directed against ISIS, al Qaeda, and others in recent years, the Saudi leadership should nevertheless devote equivalent efforts and resources to counter all the groups its support helped to radicalize in the first place.

Fourth, it is important for a new administration to make absolutely clear that the U.S. commitment to the security of the State of Israel is unshakeable now and in the future. In light of Iran's growing influence and the increase in regional tensions, it is necessary and appropriate to support the most modern ballistic missile defense systems for Israel as well as to provide other defense and intelligence capabilities to ensure Israel's qualitative edge in conventional arms.

With respect to U.S. diplomatic efforts, we continue to believe that a two-state solution remains the best and safest outcome for both Israelis and Palestinians – and also the best hope for greater stability in the region. The United States can play an important role in assisting the two parties to move forward toward such an agreement, but only when both sides are ready, willing, and able to negotiate in good faith and to make and abide by the necessary compromises.

Fifth, several of the major Arab nations are suffering crises of governance and legitimacy. The Egyptian government's broad crackdown on all opponents, journalists, and dissenting voices is a recipe for significant instability and violence. Its failure to open and liberalize the economy only compounds the risk. Other mostly Sunni Muslim states in the region are also showing an inability to adjust to a new reality in which individuals, increasingly connected with each other and with the wider world, are demanding greater respect for their autonomy and dignity. The forces that generated the Arab Awakening are still churning. Whether those forces are channeled into the healthy and productive growth of freer societies or into rising radicalism and violence depends in large part on the effectiveness and openness of governance. Therefore, the United States must do more to encourage the governments in the region to respect their people, including in particular the rights of women, and to provide the basic foundations for more open economies that offer hope and opportunity.

The Military, National Security, and Defense Spending

The U.S. military provides the strategic foundation of the international order, preserving peace, keeping international waterways and trade routes open, defending international rules on the use of and access to space, and deterring aggression. The United States remains the primary provider of security in three regions of the world, Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East, and this is not going to change. Therefore, the resources we devote to the nation's defense must be sufficient to meet these requirements. If there are better and cheaper ways to accomplish these objectives, we should adapt. But even if we were able to implement the most far-reaching defense reforms that have been proposed, we are not likely to free up sufficient resources within current budget proposals to meet the challenges we face. Nor should the United States solve the resource challenges by moving to a strategy of "off-shore balancing," as some suggest. That is a recipe for uncertainty, miscalculation and ultimately more conflict and considerably more expense.

Although the U.S. military has no peer in the world today, a number of pressing challenges threaten America's ability to maintain its military superiority in the future. Funding uncertainty rooted in the Budget Control Act of 2011, which resulted in defense spending caps and an over-reliance on continuing resolutions to fund the Department of Defense, has been a focal point of defense debates for the last several years. At times, the outcry about austerity has eclipsed the need for a rational conversation about how to deal with its implications. Still, it remains essential to strike a bipartisan budget deal that permanently removes the sequester mechanism, provides predictability and a return to the normal budget process, and a substantially higher budget top-line that is moving in the direction of the recommendations contained in the 2014 bipartisan National Defense Panel report.

Bipartisan budget agreements in 2013 and 2015 have provided some breathing room as well as the hope of returning to a more normal budgeting process. It is possible, but by no means guaranteed, that the overall size of the budget could begin to grow modestly in the next administration. However, budgetary fixes alone cannot ensure that the U.S. military remains the best fighting force in the world – policymakers must also address a number of other challenges whether or not the budget grows.

Above all, the United States needs to ensure that it can deter and fight the wars of today and tomorrow. From a resurgent Russia to a rising China that is challenging the rules-based international order to chaos and the struggle for power in the Middle East, the United States needs a force that can flex across several different mission sets and prevail. U.S. partners and allies around the world are also seeking reassurance, often in the form of military engagement and assistance. Again, addressing budget challenges is key. But the military must also explore new ideas for overseas posture, rotational deployments, and basing to deploy existing forces more effectively and sustain them for longer. Working with allied and partner nations to improve their militaries and enable them to shoulder a greater portion of the burden, while hardly a panacea, should also be a key part of a comprehensive strategy for dealing with shared security challenges.

Addressing budget challenges is key. But the military must also explore new ideas for overseas posture, rotational deployments, and basing to deploy existing forces more effectively and sustain them for longer.

The proliferation of advanced technologies and anti-access, area denial (A2/AD) strategies, combined with a willingness to utilize "gray zone" and hybrid tactics, enables China and Russia to pose increasingly potent challenges to U.S. security interests. The defense budgets of both nations are significantly smaller than America's. But U.S. interests require the American military to be deployed globally rather than generally concentrated in one region like the militaries of China and Russia. The adversary's job of countering intervention is also easier than the U.S. task of projecting power half a world away.

Maintaining the U.S. advantage over peer adversaries will require innovative approaches to defense strategy and disciplined execution of the defense program. The goal should be a balanced force capable of operating decisively across all domains: land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace. The Department of Defense's third offset strategy may provide some answers, but greater clarity for how those plans and investments translate into reality is needed. DoD needs to prioritize investments today

that can deliver cutting-edge technologies a decade from now. DoD must also reform the procurement process so that new technologies can be bought in the numbers and at the speed required to meet contingencies across the globe – in short, quality must be balanced with quantity. Meeting the security challenge from advanced military opponents will also require innovation in operational concepts and tactical approaches. Institutional momentum alone will not be enough to generate a future force capable of defeating adversaries whose strategies seek to undermine U.S. strengths and exploit current weaknesses.

People are the U.S. military's greatest asset, and building a force ready to fight the wars of today and tomorrow will require revamping a personnel system that in many ways remains locked in a bygone era. Changes to the personnel system should create compensation and retirement packages that reward talent while also providing additional flexibility beyond the current “20-years-or-nothing” retirement system for military personnel. In addition to retaining talent while reforming ballooning personnel costs, new career paths and professional development opportunities should ensure the military can recruit and retain service members with the skills necessary for a technologically advanced fighting force.

Building a DoD and military services that can meet these challenges cannot be done without fundamentally reforming the defense enterprise. This reality applies even if budget caps are lifted or eliminated and defense spending grows. Slimming headquarters and overhead, reforming acquisition processes, and adopting cutting-edge business practices will allow for more effective support to the warfighter. It will also rebalance the “tooth-to-tail” ratio. Undertaking these reforms could free up several billion dollars. And it will slow the cost growth in areas that are currently consuming funds urgently needed elsewhere. Business as usual will mean the buying power of defense dollars will continue to erode rapidly.

Forging a common vision for the role the U.S. military plays today, and the role it will need to play in the future, will be essential to bolstering American power in the years ahead. The foundation for that vision should be a recognition that the military tool has many uses – not only kinetic actions such as conducting airstrikes, but also activities and deployments calculated to bolster deterrence, signal resolve, or otherwise underwrite U.S. diplomacy.

The use of force by the United States since the Cold War, largely unchallenged by near-peer competitor

states, has allowed our familiarity with signaling and deterrence to atrophy. Force does not replace diplomacy, but can usefully supplement it. Another foundational notion is the need to nest the military among all the tools of American power along with diplomacy, development, intelligence, economics, and soft power. These tools have suffered from inadequate resources, too. Their cost is comparably minimal while the benefits they bring are often significant. A strong military, combined with these other tools, cannot solve international problems in isolation, but it remains the *sine qua non* if the United States is to play its vital role in supporting and furthering the present liberal international order.

Improving the Efficiency of the Foreign Policy Apparatus for a Complex World

As the recommendations of this group demonstrate, the modern world has generated a set of demands for stepped-up U.S. involvement in a large number of urgent crises, many of which will require Washington to take on an indispensable, leading role if success is to be assured. Similarly, a successful strategy to preserve and strengthen the liberal international order will also entail subtle management of critical relationships with a rising and increasingly influential China, as well as historic allies in Asia and Europe, and other key international partners.

The EAP working group consists of former officials from Republican and Democratic administrations, all of whom are struck by the rising demands on Washington's foreign policy apparatus. To implement even a few of the elements of this report will only increase such pressures. Unfortunately, the tendency of recent administrations to concentrate decisionmaking authority in fewer and fewer hands, and increasingly in the White House and away from the major foreign policy agencies, has made this problem especially acute.

Ever since President John F. Kennedy first elevated and empowered the assistant for national security affairs with the appointment of McGeorge Bundy in 1961, most presidents have delegated a larger and larger share of decisionmaking power to their White House staff. In recent years, the size and importance of the National Security Council staff have grown to the point that the recommendations of this report would founder on the altar of White House time pressure long before the policies were tested internationally.

As long as power continues to be centralized in this way, an across-the-board strategy of extending

American power to Europe, Asia, and the Greater Middle East along the lines suggested in this report will be extremely difficult to achieve, especially as new crises and unexpected events are sure to arise. Managing a more assertive China, strengthening deterrence in Europe, and formulating and executing an enforcement strategy for the nuclear deal with Iran, while simultaneously working to defeat Tehran's regional ambitions, just to name a few of the necessary tasks, is beyond the capabilities of any small number of men and women, no matter how capable.

The modern world has generated a set of demands for stepped-up U.S. involvement in a large number of urgent crises, many of which will require Washington to take on an indispensable, leading role if success is to be assured.

To address this bureaucratic “bandwidth” problem, the next president should work with his or her national security advisor to distribute power and responsibility to the agencies charged with carrying out foreign and defense policy. He or she must choose for secretaries of state, treasury and defense people he or she trusts to make and execute policies. Within these departments, moreover, policymakers at the appropriate levels below the secretary must be empowered to formulate and carry out policies under the overall guidance of the president and his or her cabinet officers.

At the State Department, in particular, the regional assistant secretaries of state need to be given the power and authority necessary so that when they travel overseas they are regarded as the key administration policymakers and spokespeople for their regions. This will help address the problem that has become acute in recent years, namely the demand in all three major regions of the world, as well as in Latin America and Africa, for more “face time” with U.S. officials. Neither the president nor the secretaries of state and defense can be in four places at once, attending all the many diplomatic and security meetings held every year in Asia, for instance, while also maintaining the ongoing critical relationships with allies in Europe and the Middle East and elsewhere.

Bipartisanship: Present and Future

The recent bipartisan agreement to reform the International Financial Institutions and to re-authorize the Export-Import Bank provides encouraging evidence that the executive branch and Congress, even if led by different political parties, can agree on actions to extend America's power and advance widely shared foreign policy goals. Indeed, when Congress, in particular the leadership of key congressional committees (Intelligence, Foreign Relations, and Armed Services), chooses to work together, the overall effect is a markedly stronger America on the international stage.

The perception of a united American leadership also serves as a powerful deterrent to U.S. adversaries and a source of assurance and admiration to friends and allies. This broader effect should not be underestimated, and one can only hope for more such bipartisan moments in the coming years, once the presidential election is behind us. Despite the difficulty and the likelihood of substantive disagreements between the branches, it is worthwhile and wise for the executive branch to seek bipartisan compromises reflecting the will of Congress on major policy issues.

In that regard, one important area of U.S. foreign policy in which bipartisanship has been the rule, rather than the exception, is the strategic outreach toward India following the Cold War, which has yielded a growing and valuable partnership. That effort, begun by President George H. W. Bush, expanded by President Bill Clinton, extended further by President George W. Bush, and continued to the present day by President Barack Obama, is noteworthy not only for the bipartisanship it entails but for the benefits it has accrued to American security interests in South Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region.

Another strategy with the potential for sustained bipartisan support lies in North America. As articulated by Robert Zoellick and General David Petraeus in a 2014 *Foreign Affairs* article, the three democracies that make up North America should be seen as a “continental base” whose strengthening would be beneficial in its own right and also enable a significant extension of American power around the world.

We see substantial merit in their suggested approach, which would tap into the demographic, geo-economic and geo-strategic advantages of a more formal arrangement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. In particular, the proposed strategic investments in North American energy, infrastructure, and border controls would appear to be highly beneficial.

Policymakers have spent much of the last 10 years understandably focused on the conflicts and challenges arising out of U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although we have no doubt that greater efforts are needed to ensure the security and stability of both Iraq and Afghanistan, we have chosen to focus on other high priority areas that have not been given as much attention in recent times.

In addition, and despite the manifest importance to the United States of continued stability, prosperity, and democracy in Latin America and the recent explosion of economic and political opportunity in Africa, this report's recommendations are directed toward other urgent policy challenges. Specifically, we are convinced that an opportunity exists for building bipartisan support for new, more effective and comprehensive approaches to U.S. policy in Asia, Europe, and the Greater Middle East.

As former government officials from both parties, we are aware that achieving success in foreign policy is no easy task. The historical record, for the United States as for all great powers, has included many failures, and even the successes are often only partial. This is the nature of international affairs. Not only are solutions to problems elusive, but solving one set of problems generally leads to a new set of problems. Even the great victory in World War II led to the division of Europe and four decades of Cold War. The peaceful end of the Cold War, which brought an end to international communism and gave new life to democracies, has now given birth in turn to a new era of geopolitical competition and the rise of international terrorism.

The United States must now again summon the will to lead, to extend American power with ambition tempered by the wisdom of experience and the limits of our resources.

There has been a recurrent tendency among Americans, including American political leaders and policymakers, to believe that the end of a crisis or a war or the solution of some international problem ought to bring an end to the need for extensive engagement by the United States. On the contrary, the task of preserving a world order is both difficult and never-ending. Success, when it comes, is rarely permanent but must be reinforced and built upon. Failures will be frequent, but



In today's complex security environment, U.S. citizens are debating American engagement and leadership overseas. Here, audience members wave flags from the National Mall during the 57th Presidential Inauguration in Washington on January 21, 2013. (U.S. Marine Corps/Staff Sgt. Mark Fayloga)

the right response is not to retreat. Instead, we should learn, retool, and prepare to do a better job with the next challenge. To engage in foreign policymaking is to learn to exercise humility.

But there is also much for Americans to be proud of. For all the failures, partial successes, uncertain outcomes, and mixed results, the overall accomplishments of American foreign policy these past seven decades have been remarkable. That is why the United States must now again summon the will to lead, to extend American power with ambition tempered by the wisdom of experience and the limits of our resources.

The international order the United States played the leading role in creating has been, for all its flaws, without parallel in the history of humankind. The great task of our time is therefore to preserve, adapt and extend that order as best we can, taking account of the limits to our resources and our wisdom, but above all, understanding the high price we will all pay if we fail to sustain a leading role in this enduring struggle.

Appendix

DINNER ONE, HISTORY, JANUARY 13, 2015

Melvyn Leffler, Edward Stettinius Professor of History, University of Virginia

Stephen Sestanovich, George F. Kennan Fellow for Russian and Eurasian Relations, Council on Foreign Relations

DINNER TWO, EUROPE, MARCH 2, 2015

Constanze Stelzenmüller, Robert Bosch Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

Craig Kennedy, Former President, German Marshall Fund of the United States

Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State

DINNER THREE, ASIA, APRIL 27, 2015

Robert Zoellick, Senior Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Kurt Campbell, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, The Asia Group, LLC; Co-Founder and Chairman, Board of Directors, Center for a New American Security

Ely Ratner, Deputy National Security Advisor to Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Office of the Vice President*

DINNER FOUR, INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY, MAY 15, 2015

Ian Bremmer, President, Eurasia Group

Lael Brainard, Member, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

Caroline Atkinson, Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics, National Security Council*

DINNER FIVE, MIDDLE EAST, JULY 20, 2015

Martin Indyk, Executive Vice President, The Brookings Institution

Elliott Abrams, Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Vali Nasr, Dean, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Dennis Ross, Counselor and William Davidson Distinguished Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

DINNER SIX, DEFENSE POLICY, OCTOBER 26, 2015

Eric Edelman, Counselor, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

Admiral James “Sandy” Winnefeld, Jr., USN (Ret.), Former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Department of Defense

Michèle Flournoy, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Center for a New American Security

Chris Brose, Staff Director, U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee

*Reflects this individual's title and affiliation at the time of the dinner.

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CNAS is located in Washington, and was established in February 2007 by co-founders Kurt M. Campbell and Michèle A. Flournoy.

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