

A Balanced Foreign Policy

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The United States has a broad range of interests in the world, including (1) protecting the U.S. homeland from attack, (2) promoting the U.S. economy by encouraging economic globalization, (3) supporting close allies who need our protection, and (4) encouraging the spread of democracy and human rights around the world. These are worthy goals, and the United States has pursued them for decades.

Unfortunately, America's current foreign policy pursues these goals with the wrong mix of tools. A successful foreign policy should employ a balance of economic, diplomatic, and military tools to reach its goals, but the current policy relies too heavily on military force.

The results have been disastrous. Costly military campaigns and irresponsible fiscal policies threaten the long-term strength of our economy. Precious freedoms have been curtailed at home. Human rights abuses committed abroad have tarnished America's image, even in the eyes of longtime allies.

We propose a balanced foreign policy. It employs military force when necessary—e.g., against terrorist groups or countries seeking to attack America. But it uses non-military means where they are more effective: e.g., spreading democracy, promoting human rights, and even slowing the spread of WMD.

The foreign policy we propose is ideally suited to the new international environment in the twenty-first century. America's principal enemies are no longer powerful countries with large armies poised to conquer U.S. allies. Instead, today's adversaries are weak countries and terrorist groups. Furthermore, modern technology allows the United States to project military power around the globe more rapidly than ever before. These two profound changes mean that the United States can protect its key interests—with decisive military force if necessary—without peacetime U.S. military deployments in hostile regions.

In its simplest form, a balanced foreign policy has four core elements:

- Use military force to deter and defeat adversaries who attack the U.S. or key allies.
- Use non-military tools to accomplish all other key foreign policy goals.
- Allow democracy and free markets to continue to spread around the world, propelled by their broad global appeal.
- Withdraw U.S. forces from hostile regions—particularly the Persian Gulf—and defend key U.S. interests with “over the horizon” military power.

The benefits of a balanced foreign policy are enormous. The United States can achieve its foreign policy goals at a fraction of the cost of the current policy. The savings can be directed to other pressing needs such as bolstering Social Security, reducing the deficit, investing in education and expanding health coverage. The other savings are greater: fewer Americans will die in wars, and the U.S. will again have a foreign policy that Americans and our allies can be proud to support.

IMPLEMENTING A BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY: KEY POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

Defeat terrorism:

1. Relentlessly pursue Al Qaeda—and all terrorist groups *who harbor the intent to attack the United States*—using every means available, including military force.
 - *Intensify* efforts against Al-Qaeda by avoiding unnecessary wars; they sap U.S. military and intelligence resources and strain relations with key allies in war on terror.
2. Terrorist groups who are *not* targeting America should be opposed, but not with military force.
 - Using military force against every rebel group diverts U.S. resources from our most dangerous foes, and embroils America in new disputes.
 - Combat these groups by sharing intelligence, freezing terrorists’ assets, and discrediting their violent methods and ideologies.

3. Reduce terrorism by addressing the problems that drive recruits to support radical Islamists.
 - U.S. polices in the Persian Gulf have even turned moderate Muslims against America.
 - Stop trying to spread democracy by force; end peacetime military presence in Persian Gulf.
4. Rebuild strained relations with key allies in war on terror.
 - Effective counter-terrorism requires international cooperation on intelligence.
 - Currently, even our closest European allies are reticent to cooperate publicly with the U.S.
 - Improve international reputation to maximize international assistance.
5. Enhance homeland security.
 - Improve security for airports, seaports, domestic nuclear and chemical facilities, high-profile subways, bridges, and tunnels, and computer networks.
 - Improve U.S. capability to respond to attacks by increasing investments in public health measures—such as vaccines and antibiotics against potential biological weapons—and by exercising existing response plans.

Withdraw from Iraq:

1. Withdraw U.S. military forces from Iraq within two years.
 - Each month of war weakens the U.S. military, drains the U.S. treasury, ties up resources needed to fight Al Qaeda, alienates important allies in the war on terror, and rallies new recruits to the cause of terrorism.
 - The United States has given the Iraqi people a chance to build a better society for themselves. Doing so will be difficult because of the sectarian divisions within Iraq. But it is now the responsibility of Iraqis to surmount their divisions, reach the power-sharing compromises necessary to build a unified Iraq, and chase out foreign terrorists.

- Allow Iraq to govern itself, provided it does not support terrorism or attack its neighbors.

Reduce U.S. role in the Persian Gulf region/promote energy independence:

1. The U.S. is currently dependent on Persian Gulf oil. There is a single global market for oil, so disruptions in the Middle East affect all oil consumers, even those who buy their oil elsewhere.
2. Ensuring U.S. access to oil does *not* require a peacetime U.S. military presence in the region: the U.S. can protect its energy interests with “over the horizon” military forces.
 - Major threats to U.S. access to Persian Gulf oil are: conquest of oil producing countries, closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and an Islamist revolution in a major oil producer.
 - U.S. military forces can prevent the first two threats without being stationed in the region. Beefed up naval forces in the Indian Ocean can prevent conquest or closure of the Strait.
 - The third threat—the risk of Islamist revolution (e.g., in Saudi Arabia)—is *exacerbated* by the U.S. military presence in the region.
3. The U.S. should strive to reduce long-term dependence on the Persian Gulf by encouraging investment in research and technology that could reduce U.S. reliance on fossil fuels.

Prevent the spread of WMD:

1. Weapons of mass destruction pose a critical threat to America.
2. The U.S. should work to slow—and hopefully prevent—the spread of WMD.
 - Help Russia secure its stockpiles of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.
 - Cooperate with other countries and use international institutions to detect WMD programs, intercept the illicit trade in WMD technology, and impose sanctions where necessary.
3. When WMD proliferation occurs, respond with deterrence and sanctions, not preventive war.

- In most cases, military attacks against proliferators will fail. Locating and destroying WMD facilities is extremely difficult because adversaries hide, disperse, and bury them.
- If an adversary acquires WMD, the U.S. must deter the use or transfer of these weapons.
- National leaders—even North Korean recluses, Chinese communists, and Iranian clerics—fear the loss of political power and America’s vast retaliatory capabilities. The U.S. must issue a warning: misuse these weapons and you will be overthrown, conquered, or worse.

Manage China’s rise:

1. The United States should encourage China to become a friendly, cooperative member of the existing international order, and hedge against the possibility that China becomes a military rival.
 - Encourage China to become a partner by integrating Beijing into key international institutions and encouraging trade and investment.
 - Guard against the danger of a hostile China by husbanding U.S. economic resources, maintaining America’s edge in advanced military technologies, and building cooperative relationships with other Asian nations.
 - If China becomes aggressive despite U.S. efforts to integrate Beijing into the current international order, it will be easy to strengthen U.S. alliances in Asia because others in the region will then see China as a threat.

Maintain the world’s most powerful military:

1. The United States should continued to field the world’s most powerful military.
 - The U.S. can afford the current defense budget, and it is sufficient to preserve America’s lead across all dimensions of military power.
 - Major savings can still be achieved by foregoing costly U.S. military operations, which have cost in excess of \$1 trillion. (on top of the defense budget).

- Recent operations have also stretched the active forces too thin and over-taxed the National Guard and Reserves.
- The best way to maintain U.S. military preeminence is a well-funded military that is used sparingly.

Promote American values abroad:

1. Democracy and free markets are spreading on their own because of their broad appeal.
 - Using force to spread democracy usually fails: the U.S. success rate is less than 25%.
 - Using force to spread democracy is counter-productive: it creates unnecessary enemies and discredits local advocates of U.S. values.
 - The U.S. should promote freedom abroad by vigilantly guarding U.S. freedoms at home.
 - The United States can inexpensively support those countries that are working to build their own democracy, develop a market economy, and protect human rights.
2. The U.S. should help alleviate human suffering in the poorest parts of the world.
 - Military interventions in times of humanitarian crises are expensive and usually ineffective.
 - There are better and less expensive ways to improve life for the world's neediest people: vaccine programs, water treatment projects, and other global health initiatives are inexpensive and can have enormous near-term benefits.

Promote free markets:

1. The United States should promote the expansion of free markets within and between countries.
 - Free markets help the U.S. economy. When competition is free and fair, American businesses are highly competitive. American interests are threatened when markets are unfree—e.g., when cartels distort markets or countries enact unfair trade barriers.
 - Free markets give the U.S. diplomatic leverage since foreign nations seek access to U.S. markets.

- Free markets promote other U.S. values since economic freedom often opens the door to political freedom.
2. The U.S. should help developing countries establish the domestic infrastructure and policies necessary for markets to operate.

Protect the global environment and health:

1. Environmental degradation and pandemics pose the gravest long-term dangers to the U.S.
2. These threats can only be countered by intensive cooperation with other states and through advancements in the areas of clean energy and bio-medical technologies.
 - Current policies have alienated potential partners in these international efforts and have failed to encourage the research needed to develop new sources of energy or new medical treatments for epidemics like the avian flu and SARS.
3. The U.S. must begin a major initiative to encourage these technological breakthroughs. Doing so will not only protect us from global warming and global pandemics, it will strengthen our economy by maintaining the U.S. lead in science and technology.

In sum, America's current foreign policy relies too heavily on military force to promote U.S. interests. Although military force is sometimes necessary, U.S. policy should be balanced and rely more on America's other tools of foreign policy—e.g., our unrivaled economy, and the global appeal of our values. Through a balanced foreign policy, the United States can achieve its important foreign policy goals, while reestablishing our country as a beacon of freedom and human rights, at a fraction of the costs of the current policy.

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