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Far from being a nation in decline, I believe that America’s standing in the world remains strong and our ability to lead the international community is unmatched.
The mission of the Wheatley Institution is to enhance the academic climate and scholarly reputation of BYU, and to enrich faculty and student experiences, by contributing recognized scholarship that lifts society by preserving and strengthening its core institutions. The following lectures were sponsored by the Wheatley Institution for this purpose.

For full recordings of these abridged lectures, please visit wheatley.byu.edu.

*General Jordan’s and Dr. Nagl’s lectures are not available online.

The opinions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of the speaker and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Wheatley Institution, Brigham Young University or its sponsoring institution—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Wheatley Institution recognizes student editor Kristen Cardon for her work on this issue of the Observer.

The mission of the Wheatley Institution is to foster scholarly work and insightful discourse on important issues that have impact on the core institutions of our society. The international standing and strength of our nation is certainly at the very heart of the viability and security of our society and those institutions that sustain it. This first issue of the Wheatley Observer is devoted to analysis of the position and role of the United States in the international community. These digest versions of speeches delivered at the Wheatley Institution provide an informative and compelling introduction to some of the crucial issues facing our nation and its role in the twenty-first century. This remarkable group of scholar-public servants offers illuminating insights into the major domestic and international forces that have shaped the world and the realities which our nation now faces. Their analysis provides an important perspective on both current challenges and current opportunities.

Dr. James Schlesinger provides insight into the major shift in international affairs that has taken place since the end of the Cold War period. The role of America as a power and influence in the world is necessarily shifting as nations decline or develop, and as relations among nations evolve. Even if American dominance is not as clear as in the recent past, America will retain a position of leadership well into the future. The shape and form of that leadership is the topic of this speech. Dr. Amos Jordan, Senior Fellow in International Affairs at the Wheatley Institution, outlines the major challenges in international affairs facing America in these early decades of the twenty-first century, and suggests how we must respond. Dr. John Nagl draws on his experience as a military commander, and as a scholar, to identify and articulate the international context America will face in the foreseeable future, and points to the shift of emphasis toward an ascending Asia and to the importance of being nimble as a nation in order to respond to present rather than past challenges. Dr. Harold Brown and Former Philippine President Fidel Ramos treat specifically the Asia-Pacific region of the world, the increased global importance of that region, and the challenges and opportunities America faces. Colonel Cindy Jebb places American foreign policy in the larger context of concern for what has come to be called “personal security.” She then offers ten principles that can help the military in foreign affairs. Former Secretary Michèle Flournoy brings
the state of American international affairs clearly into focus as she outlines the pressing international issues that the President of the United States will face in the immediate future and shows how international and domestic policies and issues are necessarily linked.

Together these condensed essays provide a primer for those interested in international affairs. I personally found them to very informative and provocative. I am confident that any reader will find in them much food for thought, as well as enhanced sophistication and understanding of America’s position the world.

Richard N. Williams
Director, The Wheatley Institution
FACING OLD AND NEW DEFENSE CHALLENGES

Though the projections are that our long period of dominance must necessarily come to an end, it is not all that bad just being the leading power in the world. A lecture by former U.S. Secretary of Defense Dr. James Schlesinger.

In 1840, Alexis de Tocqueville in Democracy in America wrote, “As for myself, I do not hesitate to say that it is especially in the conduct of their foreign relations that democracies appear to me decidedly inferior to other governments…A democracy can only with great difficulty regulate the details of an important undertaking, persevere in a fixed design, and work out its execution in spite of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy or await their consequences with patience.” What the Cold War history has proved is that the United States did indeed persevere in its objectives and awaited the outcome with great patience. A question that will cross your minds is whether that same kind of stability can be demonstrated as we deal with current challenges to the United States.

In the middle of the last century Henry Luce, publisher of Time and Life, referred to the twentieth century as the American Century. It was so primarily because we came through the World War II unscathed. At the close of World War II the United States had about fifty-five percent of the world’s manufacturing capacity and about fifty percent of the world’s income. Other countries were scrambling for dollars, which we were rather generous in distributing in order to help them through the post-war period.

Then the Cold War started. The nations of Europe in particular, but other nations as well, felt that they needed the protection of the United States, and as a consequence they rallied around us. The United States was the dominant power in that period, a dominance in part in reaction to the Soviet Union. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States became almost alone in terms of world power. There are today those who think that China is rising as a potential challenger. But, from the period 1991 until after the fall of Baghdad in 2003, there was no question of U.S. dominance in the world. The question that I want to put before you tonight is whether that dominance can continue.

Here is a quotation from the National Intelligence Council, which works for the Director of National Intelligence: “Although the United States is likely to remain the world’s most powerful actor, the United States’ relative strength even in the military realm will decline and U.S. leverage will become more constrained. The United States will remain the single most powerful country but
will be less dominant. Shrinking economic and military capabilities may force the United States into a difficult set of tradeoffs between domestic versus foreign policy priorities.” The point to bear in mind is that this is not intended to be a declinist view of the world. The United States will still be the world’s leading power, but our period of dominance will be coming to an end.

There are a number of reasons; the first is the rise of Asia. Power has been moving from Western Europe to the Pacific increasingly over the course of the last several decades. If you want to use a particular date to indicate that Asian take off, it was when Deng Xiaoping introduced his reforms in China in 1978. Since that time, we have seen a spectacular rise in Chinese strength, such that by the year 2030 we can expect to see China overtake the United States in terms of gross domestic product. Not in terms of per capita income—Chinese people will be quite constrained in what they have—but it will be a degree of economic strength that is slowly spilling into military capabilities.

Meanwhile, as Asia rises, Europe is in decline, some might say absolutely in decline as well. Europe has lost much of its appetite, which it once exhibited worldwide, for power politics. The upshot is that since the European allies are our principal allies, any relative decline in Europe compared to those in the western Pacific will reduce America’s role in the world, relatively speaking.

We must take a look at the world as it will be, not as it has been. We have had this long period of dominance, but that is going to come to an end. It is not all that bad; we will remain the leading world power in the future. Others will have to consult us. But it will require a greater degree of nation cohesion and national stamina in dealing with something like what the pentagon calls “the Long War” against terrorism. This is a much more subtle thing, harder to grasp than the threat that the Soviet Union represented or that Nazi Germany represented decades earlier.

Democracies have worked best for relatively brief periods of time: Get into World War II, win the war, demobilize the forces, and come back home. It was with great difficulty that we moved divisions to Europe after the Communist invasion of Korea simply because of the reluctance of the public to get involved once again. We like to move decisively and then end it. The problem was that it was not easy to do so.

Even though the projections are that our long period of dominance must necessarily come to an end, it is not all that bad just being the leading power in the world, which we will continue to be for the foreseeable future. I think that the future looks generally bright in terms of avoiding major conflict. Neither Russia nor China, which are the best armed countries in the world, now has any temptation to strike at the United States directly.

The threat from China, which is probably more significant today than the threat from Russia, is more of a political-economic nature. The collapse of our financial system in 2008 has given great credence to the Chinese model of authoritarian state-controlled economy. So the proclivity that earlier existed in
much of the world to be drawn to the American model has come, if not to an end, at least to a major interruption. Countries in Africa and Latin America are tending to turn more toward the Chinese model.

Angola is a most notable example. Angola is repaying loans from the Chinese that were given some years ago with the oil revenues that they have subsequently developed. But in these countries (in Africa in particular, which have been the principal targets of China for developing political support), they have given assistance directly and quickly when our own assistance tends to take two or three years in the bureaucracy before it emerges. These countries begin to see the possibilities of swift action on the part of the Chinese government and slow action on the part of the American government, which they take to represent the American model.

These countries find that the seemingly Chinese model is very attractive because of the rapid economic growth that China has represented while maintaining authority in the state without having to deal with the problems of democracy. There are twenty nations around the world that have benefited from the Chinese embrace, and I suspect in the years to come, given the Chinese holdings of vast currency reserves, there will be more of them. You can take the attitude, “Do we really care whether Zimbabwe is democratic or not?” That has not been the American tradition in the past, but it is a question that will likely be raised with increasing frequency as the years go by and as China becomes a larger and larger presence in the international environment.

That is now more the threat from China—even though we must hedge against the possibility of a future serious clash between ourselves and China.

The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University on February 9, 2010. It was co-sponsored by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies.

For the full lecture, please click here.
Nine Threats to National Security

I, in my own mind, have absolutely no doubt that if China were the international hegemon, we would all feel the consequences of that rather rapidly. A lecture by former president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies General Amos A. Jordan.

Our real number one national security challenge right now is Iran. Iran seems hell bent on developing nuclear weapons. There is no question that they intend to be the regional hegemon in the Middle East. The question is at what point in [the] waiting period is Israel likely to decide to try to take out those nuclear missiles, which of course could lead to a significant conflict in the area, which because of our identification with Israel may well spill over to U.S. bases in the region, certainly U.S. allies in the region, and perhaps even sleeper cells of terrorists in the United States.

Our number two worry is probably North Korea. As you know, North Korea for some years has had nuclear weapons, probably at this point fifty or more. They are capable of touching off a Korean War. I think it has to be counted now as a threat to our allies in North Eastern Asia. But North Koreans have weapons that can reach Alaska as well as Allied territory.

My third major concern is China. I do not think China is foolish enough to initiate [nuclear war]. I do not think that they would contemplate it because of the kind of devastation that would occur. What they want to do is to make sure that they are not surrounded by potentially hostile powers. They view the American fleet from the Western Pacific as threatening that kind of encirclement. The question is whether they are going to embark seriously on this challenge of driving us out of the Western Pacific or if they are going to simply exist to intimidate their Asian neighbors.

The fourth threat is terrorism. You all know, of course, about how terrorism captured our attention with the World Trade Towers. But earlier [some] had indulged in terrorist activities against us around the world, particularly in Southeast Asia and in Saudi Arabia. We can cut the head off the snake in one place, [but that] does not mean that it dies. It is out there in other places. Terrorism is a long-term challenge. The question will be how to limit it and minimize the danger from it, recognizing that it is going to be around.

The danger of space is a new theater that has opened up. We are so heavily dependent on satellites that we can be rendered really helpless if our satellites go out. It’s reconnaissance. It’s intelligence. It’s communications. We are dependent on satellites to the extent that when the Chinese wanted to warn us that they are to be taken seriously, they decided to shoot down one of their own.
satellites. That is a major danger, that our space assets can be compromised—a danger to our society and our economy as well as to our military.

Then we come to cyberspace. William Lynn, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, said not so long ago that the United States security establishment had been attacked more than 100 times by foreign states. The Russians used cyber-attacks against Georgia when it invaded Georgia a few years ago. There is no doubt that the Russians, the Chinese, and others are prepared to use cyber-attacks against us.

I want to talk about nuclear proliferation. If Iran builds a nuclear weapon, the surrounding Arab states, the Sunni states, are going to try very hard to get a nuclear weapon, probably in Saudi Arabia which has the resources for that. The raw material is still far from being under adequate control and out of the hands of possible terrorists and rogue states.

This problem of failed states is one that we have to put forward. Robert Gates, not long before he retired as Secretary of Defense, said our principal danger comes not from strong states but from failed states. Pakistan is in real danger of becoming a failed state. That is a massive, massive challenge.

Finally, I would say the loss of American soft power is also a major threat. That ability to attract, to persuade, to set the agenda—that soft power—has been dissipated because of globalization but also because of our deepening economic problems at home. There is a note of triumphalism in Chinese pronouncements, in Chinese diplomatic ventures. They sense that they can not only be a regional hegemon, but that they can replace the United States as the international hegemon.

We had that status as an international hegemon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, you will recall, but we never tried to exploit that in ways that were injurious to the international system. But I, in my own mind, have absolutely no doubt that if China were the international hegemon, we would all feel the consequences of that rather rapidly.

The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University on October 27, 2011. It was co-sponsored by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies.
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE PRESENT DAY

Important as they’ve been to us, the rise and fall of Al Qaeda, the War in Iraq, and the War in Afghanistan are unlikely to draw analysis in history books. The things they will be paying most attention to are the revolts across the Middle East that move toward democracy. A lecture by senior fellow of the Center for a New American Security Dr. John Nagl.

As a graduate student in international relations, I studied German as my language and fully expected that the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, which had been the dominant feature of international relations for the preceding two generations, was going to endure. I thought my career was going to be as a part of the Cold War national security mechanism that General Jordan did so much to set up and establish. I suppose it’s possible to be more wrong than I was, but you have to try real hard.

While I was studying international relations at Oxford just out of West Point, the Soviet Union came to an end when the Berlin Wall collapsed. We got to see that event in international relations in the making. Then when I left Oxford in the summer of 1990, I got to be even more directly a part of international relations. I joined the First Cavalry Division and became a tank platoon leader in the fight to expel Saddam Hussein from Iraq.

I became convinced by the juxtaposition of those two things—the end of the Cold War and the very rapid defeat of what we thought was going to be a pretty tough enemy—that I was in the midst of a paradigm shift. I decided to look at a different kind of war: insurgency and terrorism. I got to do research firsthand at Al Anbar from 2003 to 2004. It was a very, very tough year. The important lessons from that experience were that the Army was unprepared for the war that it had to fight because we had not drawn the right conclusions, learned the right lessons, and thought through the implications of what was happening in the world around us. That’s something that I hope that you do better than we did back then.

I think we’re looking through another inflection point in international relations, and I think it’s the most important one since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Important as they’ve been to us, to me personally, and to our military in the last decade, the rise and fall of Al Qaeda, the War in Iraq, and the War in Afghanistan are unlikely to be things that draw pages and pages of analysis in the history books that will be written a century from now.

Instead, I think the things they will be paying most attention to are the things that are happening right under our noses but without the involvement of so many Americans. This is the Arab Spring, the revolts across the Middle
East that move toward democracy and away from autocratic governments, and not necessarily always for the better. It’s worth remembering that Hitler was democratically elected. Democracy by itself does not guarantee a favorable outcome, does not guarantee freedom. That takes strong institutions, and those, in many cases, take generations to develop.

The other big revolution that’s ongoing is the shift toward Asia. Without a doubt, absolutely without a doubt, the big international relations story of the twenty years following the fall of the Soviet Union and the twenty years afterwards is going to be the rise of China and the extraordinary implications of the rise of a true great power in Asia. It is a country that is going to exceed the gross domestic product of the United States here in the next five years, that is going to be the most powerful economy in the world.

On military power, traditionally viewed as hard power, the United States is the most significant player on the board by a long stretch and is going to be for a long time. On the economic chessboard, China is soon going to surpass us in terms of gross domestic product, but not by anything close to a per capita basis. Nobody—nobody—on the planet is more concerned about the Arab Spring than China. China has bought off the political subjugation of its people by giving them the extraordinary economic growth it has for the last few decades, roughly 10% a year. That 10% a year is going to slow down; there are signs that it already is.

It’s a fascinating time to be studying international relations. I hope you come to better conclusions than my generation did when we were young. I’m encouraging people to study Chinese and economics and energy policy, because those are the things that are going to be for you and your generation what Cold War studies were for General Jordan and what counterinsurgency studies were for mine.

The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley International Affairs Conference for undergraduate students on March 14, 2012. It was co-sponsored by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies.
In January 1980, I was the first U.S. Secretary of Defense to visit the People’s Republic of China. That trip came almost exactly a year after normalization of relations with that country, which had taken place January 1, 1979. In the initiation of military to military talks, which began with my trip, we further established a strategic relationship, which has since evolved and moved back and forth between cordiality and less cordiality.

The process had begun in the early 1970s, when the Nixon administration, concerned about the position of the U.S. in the Cold War, took advantage of the split between the Soviets and Chinese to open a dialogue and establish a U.S. mission in China. Considered reason enough for them was the need to end a thirty-year unnatural lack of normal relations with a major power. At the time, the U.S. State Department objected to my going to China. They argued that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance should go instead, and that he should focus on easing any dangers that the P.R.C.-U.S. rapprochement might pose to the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Those relations between the U.S. and the Soviets were already troubled by the Soviet actions in the third world and strained by the belated discovery of a Soviet brigade in Cuba. Despite State Department opposition, President Carter approved my trip. Incidentally, the week before I left, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, and that was an action that they clearly had planned for some time before. That invasion heightened the strategic aspects of my visit.

We and the Chinese saw things the same way then. Things have changed. At that time, the Chinese used our shared concern to try to press me to transfer weapons technologies and military equipment to them as had been agreed within the Carter administration. I listened, but I did not make any firm commitments. I urged patience. At that time, the Chinese military really was far behind. China’s civilian economy was equally backward. The P.R.C. had a long way to go to become a modern, prosperous, militarily up-to-date nation, but my meetings with Deng Xiaoping suggested that the P.R.C. leadership had sensible ideas for how to emerge from its backwards stance.

Thirty years later, the success of those ideas and the amazing rise of China are not only evident but, in retrospect, have been the most important international development of those years. The relationship between the U.S. and the
P.R.C. is likely to be the most important factor in international affairs during the next thirty years, eclipsing even the effects of developments in the Islamic world.

During the past thirty-two years from 1980 to 2012, China has experienced economic growth at least as rapid as . . . earlier examples of the U.S., Germany, and Japan. The P.R.C. presents an alternative model of economic performance and of governance that challenges the Western model. If we look at some past challenges, we note that the Soviet challenge and its system failed. The Japanese economic challenge, which during the 1980s was seen by many as possibly replacing the U.S. model, also failed to displace American leadership.

How competition for world primacy will play out during the next few decades is likely to characterize much of the twenty-first century. Competition between the U.S. and China is inevitable. But how likely is it to become adversarial or even violent?

We in the United States are used to preeminence after enjoying it for more than sixty years. China does not yet overtly challenge that role as an aspiring replacement, but it is serving notice that it does not passively accept our status. The P.R.C. leadership and the Chinese public want to regain a position that China actually held for a thousand years. Like leaderships in other authoritarian states, it sees its retention of power as critical to the well-being of the state. To that end, unlike the Western model, it prohibits political dissent, and it justifies its suppressive approach by pointing to the destructive history of rebellion in China. To maintain political control, the leadership relies on economic growth and nationalism. However, its use of nationalism sometimes threatens to get out of hand and makes the leadership nervous.

So far, China’s increased influence has not been matched by an acceptance of responsibility for maintaining the international system, which, of course, the Chinese note, was established without their participation, and so it does not reflect their interests, as they think of it.

The P.R.C. is flourishing in economic growth rate, accumulation of financial assets, acquisition of titled natural resources across the globe, political influence, and military and technological strength. Meanwhile, as we all know, the U.S. slogs through what we hope is only a bad patch. But we in the U.S. also have a long history of recovery from troubled—even desperate—situations, profiting from the flexibility of our democratic institutions.

The P.R.C. faces internal strains that make it more fragile than is generally understood, and that will not be easy to resolve. Transition to domestic-led growth will intensify frictions internally and with the rest of the world. Existing wide-spread unrest at various levels of size and violence has been managed by a combination of repression and adjustment, and by the central government essentially directing the unrest toward the local governments. But whether that model of governance can be sustained or evolve over time in a stable way remains to be seen.
What about the future? Assuming, for the moment, that before 2030 the world doesn’t blow up, nor become so hot that the oceans boil. Rising powers have historically engaged in conflict, usually in warfare, with leading states, status quo powers. That history of past transitions should worry us.

There are some countervailing factors, however. The existence of nuclear weapons, while it threatens mutual destruction, inhibits direct military conflict as it did during the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Political theorists have often suggested that close economic relations—and we have close economic relations with China—tend to reduce the chances of political and especially military conflict. But the imbalances in trade and related policies have exacerbated U.S.-China tensions, and, in the short run, seem as likely to worsen as to ease them.

Traditionally, countries in the neighborhood of a rising power fear its growing influence, and China’s neighbors are correspondingly apprehensive about the prospect of P.R.C. domination. Accordingly, most of them look to the U.S. to provide an offset to that prospect, but at the same time, they fear a U.S.-P.R.C. conflict of which they could be the occasion, or into which they could be drawn, with inevitable damage. It would be a case of the elephants fighting and damaging the grass.

U.S. actions will be taken by many in the P.R.C., and likely by its leadership, as evidence of an attempt at containment. In turn, the Chinese push for economic and political leadership, and perhaps military dominance in East Asia and the Western Pacific, will likely be seen in the U.S. as potentially aggressive and threatening. You put those attitudes together and there is a real risk of a self-reinforcing, downward cycle.

The U.S. economy may be of roughly equal size with the P.R.C., which has two-and-a-half times the U.S. population but only 40–50% of the U.S. per capita gross domestic product. Both are sure to have continuing internal problems. That is probably the most certain of any sentence that I have spoken in this talk.

The military balance is likely to remain favorable to the U.S. for at least another fifteen years. Chinese attention to asymmetric warfare, cyber war, anti-satellite capability, and anti-ship ballistic missiles can undercut U.S. advantages. While the total destruction that would characterize a nuclear exchange acts as a strong deterrent, there are other sorts of damaging conflicts, short of armed combat, that could still take place if the relationship becomes adversarial enough. Examples are cyber-attack on infrastructure, perhaps combined with a malicious attack on the economy.

The P.R.C. leadership is not visionary, but it has managed its country effectively. We need to get our economy and governance in order, and the P.R.C. needs to accept more international responsibilities. Unless the U.S. gets its act together and Chinese leadership shows more international statesmanship, the respective national characters and histories suggest trouble ahead.
The principal risk over this decade and the next is an economic and resource competition that would create political and strategic conflict between the two nations. Getting to 2030 without a major confrontation will be an important, major achievement, if we do it. By then, we are likely to have mutual challenges we do not now anticipate. But there already exist several major threats to the well-being of both countries that require cooperation between the U.S. and China, if they are to be managed. Examples are the proliferation of nuclear weapons, global climate change, and Islamic extremism. Working on these together, difficult as it will be, is one of the best ways to avoid the road to confrontation. Conceivably, if those work, we could move on to a discussion of the strategic military balance. That is going to be very hard to get to with the Chinese.

Some sort of grand bargain is unrealistic at this stage. Accordingly, U.S. policy should include preventing successive adversarial incidents and adversarial actions that could set relations on the wrong track for a long while. We need to find a combination of accommodation to P.R.C. legitimacy aspirations and resistance to hegemonic claims that avoids the escalation of the historic causes of armed conflict. A seriously adversarial relationship risking conflict between the U.S. and China is not inevitable. Avoiding it will require skill on the part of both sides, perhaps more skill than has in recent years been shown by either side.

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The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley Institution at Brigham Young University on January 19, 2012. It was co-sponsored by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies.

For the full lecture, please click here.
The Rise of Asia and America’s Role in the Emerging Power Balance

Today, no single state, no matter how powerful, can act unilaterally. A lecture by former President of the Philippines Fidel Valdez Ramos.

Geopolitical Shift in Global Power

For the first time in modern history, we have a multi-polar—even a multi-civilizational—global balance of power. This is an epochal change, because power balances since the Napoleonic Wars of 1800-1815 up to the two World Wars have always been made up entirely of “Western” powers, which share a common culture.

We also have a rearranged hierarchy of global power. The new “Big Three” are the U.S., the E.U., and China. History has consigned the Communist Soviet Union to the dustbin. Similarly, the Muslims continue to be inward-looking, ultra-conservative, and largely unable to cope with the modern secular world. And though India has in recent years grown substantially, it still has many years to go to reach the status of China in state efficiency and economic performance. It is still the United States that wields the strongest influence on global affairs—whether politically, militarily, economically, or culturally. But even America now cannot act unilaterally.

Meanwhile, China has been growing much faster than the world has thought possible. The E.U. sees itself as the global balancer between the U.S. and China. But already, the E.U.’s supra-national kind of governance has proven very vulnerable to recession problems. For other countries, like us in the Philippines, the imperative is to keep the strategic balance and not fall into any of the great powers’ sphere of dominance.

The revolution in computer, information, communications, and transportation technologies is integrating economies—and cultures—through the increased flow across national boundaries of goods and services, capital, labor, and especially ideas. This unprecedented connectivity favors those economies that are agile enough to seize on the opportunities offered by heightened cross-border trade; the manufacture, assembly, and marketing of goods and services across geographic regions; and the increased global demand for oil, minerals, and other resources.

This international flow of ideas, knowledge, and opportunities, the intermingling of cultures, the rise of global society, and the force of environmental and human rights movements are all part of this dynamism called globaliza-
tion. And, already, this new openness to cross-border influences has helped ease global poverty. While the world’s population has doubled since 1960, the percentage living in poverty has been cut in half.

Not just the U.S., the European Union, and Japan but also China, India, Brazil, Indonesia, South Korea, and Russia—no less than Argentina, Mexico, and South Africa—are being embedded in dense economic, political, and security networks that serve their mutual interests and are raising them to power status. More and more, the “East-West divide” has become obsolete, because the knowledge revolution is configuring the world in a new way. More and more, the world is dividing in terms of those states that have adopted globalization and those that have not.

The “functioning core” of this new world order is deemed to be made up of all those nations that are actively integrating their individual economies into the emerging global order, subscribing to the rules of the new game, and enhancing their cultural connectivity.

The Rival Poles of the New Power Balance

Tensions and rivalries between China and the U.S. were dissipated during that brief period of goodwill following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. That goodwill may be declining. Their erstwhile rapport has been replaced by a “climate of strategic mistrust,” although not yet of outright “strategic antagonism.”

The Pentagon has been shifting the weight of overseas deployments from Eastern Europe to the Pacific. China itself has been redeploying its forces away from the Russian border. Even more significantly, China, which is a land power since the fifteenth century, makes no secret of its ambition to build a “blue-water” navy. Fortunately, one potential flashpoint, the Taiwan independence movement, seems to be declining because of the Mainland’s closer brotherly embrace since 2008.

Meanwhile, China’s strategic reach is growing. Beijing is cutting deals worldwide to tie down foreign raw materials and investment opportunities and even coddling “dictatorial” states like Iran, Venezuela, and Sudan, which are resource-rich. In Asia, China is already at the center of an emerging growth triangle: Japan-India-Australia. In East Asia, China is the driving force of the ASEAN plus China, ASEAN plus Japan, and ASEAN plus South Korea free trade area, otherwise known as the APT combine. Tokyo’s ruling politicians may regard China as a strategic rival, but Japanese business people regard it as a valued economic partner. Australia’s continued boom it owes to the export of mineral and energy resources to China.

Between the United States and China, bilateral skirmishes are being fought on virtually all fronts. Financially, the Americans are pressing the Chinese to revalue their currency. Militarily, the two are in an undeclared arms build-up. How will China use this fast-rising comprehensive power in global
economic competition, in military muscle, in day-to-day diplomacy? After what it terms “150 years of humiliation at the hands of the great Western powers,” a resurgent China is aggressive, self-confident, and full of pride in its new wealth, show case achievements, and global influence.

Let me now turn to America’s role in the emerging power balance. Since the end of World War II, the United States has been the fulcrum of the East Asian power balance. Over these last 40 years, the Pax Americana (American peace) has given the East Asian states [a] breathing spell to put their houses in order, in the same way that the American market has enabled them to expand their economies at the world’s fastest rate. We East Asians expect the U.S.—which has regarded itself as an Asia-Pacific power since the 1890s—to continue asserting its security interests in our home-region.

How will the U.S.-China relationship resolve itself? The answer could never be as plain, or as easy to foretell, as older historical rivalries. The truth is, China is not just reshaping the global economy. The global economy is also re-shaping China. Already China is moving—even if by fits and starts—toward an economic structure based on the rule of law and universal standards. In short, China’s stake is growing in the rules-based global market system that the U.S. has done the most to promote over these last 50 years. Hence, the two powers, U.S. and China, have a stake in each other’s prosperity and stability.

For the states of the East Asian hemisphere, the imperative is to avoid having to choose between Beijing and Washington. Even U.S. allies in Asia increasingly see their problem as balancing in between the two great powers, neither of whom they would want to antagonize.

The Foreseeable Future

Over the foreseeable future, we in East Asia must live with a China driving for great-power status, a Japan nurturing a resurgent nationalism, and an America asserting its Asia-Pacific role. Of all these facts of Asia-Pacific life, the future of the U.S.-China relationship is the most crucial. The real race may no longer be military and coercive but economic and intellectual. And the ultimate winner would be the life-system, the government system, that ordinary people would judge to be the best for them.

Cultural globalization has become even more widespread than economic connectedness. This is why “cultural nationalism” is a rising clamor among poor-country leaders. A wariness of “corrupting foreign” (read “American” or “Western”) influence is widespread. This kind of cultural nationalism is most pronounced in the Arab World.

In global politics, the tensions in the new countries are likely to continue between democracy and authoritarianism and their roles in our future world. From a democratic political center, we cannot expect the kind of focus, the teamwork, and the energy that an authoritarian system could sometimes raise
in a developing country. However, democracy has a key advantage in that it can easily grow political stability of the kind the authoritarian regime can never approximate. Free elections and the rule of law make possible tremendous safety valves against political discontent.

In my view, the real threat to democracy in this new time is not so much the restoration of blatant authoritarian repression in many places as it is the loss of purpose and meaning of democracy.

In another 10 years, we may expect regional integration to become the global norm. Among these regional groupings, an East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG) could become the greatest, since it would have vigorous growth engines, China and Japan, plus upcoming South Korea and Indonesia. Over the foreseeable future, the task for our statesmen would be to replace the American peace, or Pax Americana, that has enforced stability in our mega-region with a Pax Asia-Pacifica, or Asia-Pacific peace. Unlike the Pax Americana—which, at bottom, is based on U.S. military might—an Asia-Pacifica peace would be the peace of virtual equals, because Pax Asia-Pacifica will involve security cooperation for regional peace based not on the balance of power but on the balance of mutual benefit.

A constructive Chinese role in organizing the Asia-Pacific peace would demonstrate China’s commitment to becoming the “responsible stakeholder” that Washington has challenged Beijing to become. Today, no single state, no matter how powerful, can act unilaterally. In a world more interconnected than it has ever been, nations large and small are virtually equal in the restraints that the world community places on their behavior. The strategic challenge will be for all our countries to ensure that the spirit of cooperation to prosper is always stronger than the competitive impulse to dominate.

The lecture abridged here was originally delivered at the Wheatley International Affairs Conference for undergraduate students on October 13, 2010. It was co-sponsored by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies.

For the full lecture, please click here.
Though Clausewitz’ basic premise, that “war is a continuation of politics by other means,” remains a choice of action at the disposal of states, it is also the case that war can be the remedy of only a few of the security challenges in today’s world. Thus, notwithstanding Clausewitz’ enduring principle, we really do need a more comprehensive security paradigm that will help guide our own national security in a very dangerous world.

I have two major points that I’d like you to consider. First, how do we nurture strategic thinking? That is, thinking that is holistic, critical, creative, systematic, empathetic, and forward leading, not just for the military but across the government and the private sector, among host nation and allied partners. Second, how do we make sure that we do not lose the hard-earned lessons of the past decade? It is unfortunate the army had to relearn counterinsurgency. We didn’t want to fight another Vietnam, so we squelched all what we learned about counterinsurgency, especially from the army and its doctrine. Now that the country and the military are perhaps a little bit fatigued from Iraq and Afghanistan, how do we ensure that we do not lose all that we have learned?

I’d like to begin by exploring some of the concepts embedded in our National Security Strategy. In the spirit of Clausewitz’s understanding of war as a continuation of politics, democracy has been at the forefront of how we think about, articulate, and craft strategy. But, I would ask, is democracy necessary as long as you have legitimate, functioning states?

Let’s shift a little bit to the problem of terrorism. How should the members of the international community address terrorism, and how do policy makers know which terrorist organizations to address and how best to address them? While we might agree that groups that target innocent civilians are terrorists, we might also agree to note that their political motivations may have roots in real grievances. This is not to say that real grievances justify indiscriminate violence, but it does provide some space to make gains to either delegitimize terrorist groups or legitimize state actions that address real grievances.
The first step in understanding the contextual basis of legitimacy is understanding security from the individual’s point of view. This human security perspective opens up the security aperture in very important ways. The U.N. just a few years ago presented aggregate data. I’ll give you some figures: one billion people lack access to clean water, two billion people lack access to clean sanitation, three million people die from water-related diseases, and 14 million die from hunger annually. As we’ve witnessed in our increasingly global world, these insecurities frequently have diffuse, global effects such as migrations, reverberations in diaspora communities, environmental impacts, and even the exportation of terrorism.

The human security paradigm reminds us to approach issues holistically and empathetically, with painstaking analysis, patience, and tenacity. It’s imperative that we do that to each, understand what realistic outcomes might be, and understand tradeoffs, risks, and possible opportunities. In baseball, you don’t win by the homerun. You win by the singles, the bunts, the stolen bases, that type of thing. It’s the same type of thing here. To address these kinds of issues, it takes tenacity and perseverance. Small changes over time make a difference. You can’t expect overnight changes.

I went to Niger after the famine, or “food crisis.” Let me give you a glimpse of what we saw there, trying to look at it through the human security paradigm. It’s very hard to measure the effects when you start thinking about all the second- and third-order effects of such a situation. Malnourishment or chronic hunger leaves people susceptible to disease. Siblings are left home when moms are taking their kids to a treatment center. When large numbers of sick children come to the treatment center, there’s a rise of infection. With human insecurities, there are also cross-border issues. There’s a phrase, “When Nigeria catches a cold, Niger sneezes.” In Chad, there was a spillover from the Darfur crisis.

At the end of the day, is there a terrorism threat in Chad? in Niger? According to the International Crisis Group, “The Sahel is not a hotbed of terrorist activity. A misconceived and heavy handed approach could tip the scale in the wrong way.” What’s critical to understand is that terrorism is not monolithic. It’s critical to understand what’s happening on the ground, and it’s very hard to sort out. What’s the difference between terrorist attacks and bandits and smuggling?

The ideas and concepts of human security were really first thought of in the context of Africa. I soon began to realize why it’s important in Iraq and Afghanistan. I’m going to offer ten guiding principles that I think might help the military in terms of a way forward, using or informed by human security.

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First, the human security helps us determine realistic outcomes. While these outcomes will vary in time and place, failing to establish realistic, achievable ends will result in unfocused policies and perhaps a loss of political will. In Afghanistan, there will be a victory, but it won’t be a victory that smells, tastes, or feels like what we would consider a victory.

Second, the first step in determining whether to intervene anywhere is to diagnose the problem. For example, while international terrorism may be a U.S. priority, local terrorism may not be the most pressing security problem for the host nation people. In many areas that are suffering from grave human insecurities, there are far more pressing issues that affect daily survival.

Guiding principle number three is that you’ve got to be self-aware. In the fight against Al Qaeda or any other terrorist group, we must also acknowledge that we may inadvertently be acting as the antibiotic and creating resistant strains of bacteria. Disrespectful treatment of local people may fuel insurgents or terrorist groups.

The fourth is very, very hard. You have to acknowledge the difficulty of assessing progress. The complex, uncertain, and unstructured environments present a very challenging landscape to assess progress. Al Qaeda is very diverse, which allows it to adapt to changing circumstances. It actually has been a big tent that allows different viewpoints and different groups of people to enter the Al Qaeda network.

Fifth, you have to capitalize on opportunities. It’s very easy, when you’re only looking for threats, to miss opportunities. Empowering people through economics has come to the forefront in conflict-prone societies. What we’ve also found, from our expeditionary economics work and other research, is that women do need to be empowered. It cannot be an afterthought, and that’s usually how it’s discussed.

Sixth, at the end of the day, there are real tradeoffs and risks that must be determined. It is easier to operate unilaterally. The tradeoff, however, depending on the situation, is the legitimacy of those actions.

Seventh, there needs to be a resizing of the paradigm. By seeing this environment more comprehensively in its multidimensional nature, it’s imperative that we start reassessing the roles and missions of militaries. No one nation can address the challenges that, quite frankly, face all of humanity, so the human security approach calls for the sharing of intelligence, of knowledge and of perspective in order to facilitate an integrated policy.

Eighth, the military must be ready for full-spectrum operations in any situation, even within a short span of distance. The imperative for being able to conduct operations, for example, full-spectrum under very uncertain conditions requires a diverse set of talents that must be valued. So ninth, we must continually professionalize ourselves and assist with professionalizing other militaries. We must ensure that members continue to have experiences, education, and training required to successfully face complex challenges.
Tenth, we must continue to prepare future leaders, both at home and abroad. The challenges facing future leaders require strategic thinkers who, for the military, embrace the warrior ethos and are guided by moral and ethical principles. In short, the United States and its allies require leaders of character.

I truly believe that one of the greatest assets our country has is the mutual trust between the military and the society it serves. I salute you for taking on the challenges that are before us and welcome you to the responsibility that freedom incurs.

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For the full lecture, please click here.
When the next president is sworn in, he will be sworn in at a very consequential and challenging moment in our history. He will face a daunting trio of challenges that will profoundly affect our national security.

The first challenge is the international environment itself. It is extremely complex, dynamic, and volatile. The second part of the trio is that the next president will have to address these challenges in an era of budgetary austerity. The third is that he must address all of this in an era of unprecedented political polarization; polarization that has essentially brought governance in this country to a virtual standstill.

Beyond the negative impacts here at home, this situation has actually generated what I would say is a very pernicious narrative abroad, and that is the narrative of U.S. decline. I strongly disagree with the basis of this narrative. Far from being a nation in decline, I believe that America’s standing in the world remains strong and our ability to lead the international community is unmatched. No other nation compares to our power and influence, whether you are talking militarily, economically or in terms of soft power.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the reports of America’s demise are greatly exaggerated, but that is not to say that sustaining our unique leadership position will be a given. It will require tough choices to revitalize the foundation of our national security: our economy, including bringing government spending and revenues into balance, controlling healthcare and entitlement costs, and increasing long term investment in the drivers of our economic competitiveness. It is in this context that the next president will have to give priority to five key challenges to advance our national security.

The first is breaking the domestic and political gridlock and getting to a budget deal that unleashes our economic growth. If we believe that our economic strength is the foundation of our national security, then this is a national security imperative as much as a domestic one. The Australian prime minister recently said, “The United States is just one budget deal away from restoring its global preeminence.” I would agree.
The second challenge that the next president will face in terms of urgency is preventing Iran’s acquisition of a nuclear weapon. Even if some element of nuclear deterrence could be established with Iran, the broader negative effects of a nuclear Iran could not be adequately contained. There is the potential for others in the region to feel compelled to also pursue a nuclear weapons option in response, creating a cascade of proliferation in the most volatile region of the world. Meanwhile, we have to try to do our best to continue to reassure our ally Israel that the U.S. has an unshakable commitment to its security. Striking Iranian nuclear facilities would, in the end, only be a delay. The only ultimate resolution is to get them to actually agree to some constraints.

The third challenge on the next president’s plate is ending the war in Afghanistan responsibly while continuing to sustain our focus on Al Qaeda. We are now on the path to transition with the Afghan stepping into the lead for security across the country by 2014. A small residual force will stay in place. We have put a huge amount of effort into creating a better security situation in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the various elements of Afghan leadership and society have not used that time and space as effectively as they might have to make political progress. If it does not change, it will increase the level of risk associated for sustaining our gains after 2014.

We need to stay focused on our strategic objective of denying Afghanistan as a future safe haven for terrorists. Beyond Afghanistan, we need to evolve our counterterrorism strategy as Al Qaeda evolves as an organization. We also need to continue partnered counterterrorism operations wherever possible, with a host nation in the lead. There will almost certainly be times in the future where unilateral U.S. operations against eminent threats are necessary when our partners are either unable or unwilling to take care of the threat for us.

I want to pause for a moment and share an anecdote that makes some of this real. I had the opportunity to witness this president work through the decision of whether or not to launch the raid against Osama bin Laden. While it may, in retrospect, seem like it was a no-brainer presidential decision, it was not at all clear at the time. There was no direct, hard evidence that bin Laden was actually there. If you take this as a case of presidential decision making, we know that the next president will have to make similar tough calls of one kind or another, calls that will require leadership, judgment, fortitude, and a very strong moral compass.

The fourth challenge that the next president will have to deal with is protecting our interests in the Middle East in this period of revolutionary change. The U.S. has many vital interests in this region, from ensuring the free flow of oil to international markets to ensuring our own access to critical trade routes and international waterways. The only path to stability, in my view, is through further political and economic reform. I think the U.S. chose to be on the right side of history when we chose to support these revolutions. In Libya, we led an international coalition to prevent civilian massacre of tens of thousands
of Libyans by their own government. In Egypt, we called for Mubarak to step down. We have been providing humanitarian assistance to the parts of Syria that are now free and out from under Assad’s control.

As these revolutions unfold, we have to be very careful that, as we support the democratic process, it does not bring non-democratic elements into power. In Libya and Egypt for example, we have to continue to work to shape the decisions of new leaders there and help them understand that U.S. assistance and international assistance depend on their willingness to abide by their international obligations (such as the Egyptians’ commitment to the peace accords with Israel) and to international norms (such as protection for their own minority populations).

The fifth and final challenge for the next president is rebalancing more of our attention and resources toward Asia-Pacific. As you think about our long term future, no region in the world will be more important to U.S. economic prosperity and growth than Asia-Pacific. It accounts for half the world’s population and GDP and nearly half of the global trade. Rebalancing does not mean turning our back on the Middle East or walking away from our NATO allies. What it does mean is putting relatively more emphasis on Asia diplomatically. Economically, it means bolstering our bilateral investment and trade with these countries. Militarily, it means adjusting our posture so that a little bit more of our naval and air forces are rotating through the region, providing more presence, more access, more training and exercising with our partners in the region while also ensuring that we protect investment in the very capabilities that will ensure our freedom of action in the increasing congested and contested global commons.

One of the reasons why I believe that we will see ultimately a sustained period of American leadership is that throughout our history, when we have encountered times of difficulty, times of challenge as a nation, we as a people come together. When the congress passed the Budget Control Act of 2011, they told the Pentagon to find $487 billion of cuts over ten years. Normally when that kind of direction comes from the Congress, it is like pouring lighter fluid on the fire of inter-service rivalry. What was extraordinary this last time around was that that did not happen. They worked iteratively for many hours and came up with a strategy that is now the strategic guidance of the United States. The fact that that could happen in these circumstances gives me hope that we can actually be our best selves in these very challenging times.

Can the Congress and the next administration rise to the occasion, given the polarization and parochialism that has so dominated our recent political discourse? Protecting this nation’s security in these consequential and challenging times will require all of us to look beyond [the] narrow interests of any particular office or department or party or state or region or service or special interest group. We must transcend the partisan and the parochial to protect our national security for the future.
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