Foreign Policy

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Introduction.

This essay is designed to provide a conceptual framework for understanding the ramifications of the 2012 election results in regard to foreign policy. I have tried to contrast the different ideologies separating the Republican and Democratic approach to foreign policy regarding the use of military force. The parties are not uniform within their ranks of course, but the Obama and Romney campaign positions presented a sharp contrast. In order to limit the scope of the paper, I have focused my discussion on three hot topics: Israel, Iran, and terrorism. I could not do justice to the complexity of these issues, so feel free to point out where you think I have misrepresented either Obama's or Romney's foreign policy ideologies. Insofar as possible, I would hope that our classroom discussion will focus, in a dispassionate manner, on objective differences in ideology. We can agree to disagree on the validity of these differences. I will also distribute several articles as attachments to e-mails, starting on 1 February.

Approaches to U.S. foreign, from the founding of the Republic, have always involved a struggle between those who seek a tough "muscular militaristic" posture (hawks) vs. those who prefer a soft diplomatic emphasis (doves). There are complex reasons why leaders prefer one or the other, but I will focus on what I see as the two contrasting views of the two parties today, especially the two approaches presented by the two candidates and the Republican congressional leaders. As I will explain, we can only speculate as to what Romney would have actually done, but we know what Obama did the past four years and what he is now doing in his selection of his top advisors (Especially Kerry and Hagel) and his speeches. We have to look to the Republican leaders in the Senate for the Republican side of the issue. The Hagel hearings on 31 January provided a clear contrast.

Theoretical Background.

How best to protect U.S. interests in the international system is a complex question. Too often, it is framed as "hawks" versus "doves," which reflects our tendency to think of national security in terms of military power. This typology implies that hawks are "tough-minded" and doves are "tender-minded." The term "patriotism" is most often used to refer to sacrifices made in wartime. Our national anthem is a "war" symbol, with "bombs bursting in air", as opposed to America the Beautiful, which is focused on internal "brotherhood." Conservatives *tend* to be hawks and emphasize the use of military power; liberals *tend* to favor diplomacy and moral suasion in foreign affairs. Conservatives tend to favor greater military spending; liberals favor domestic spending for doing "nation-building" at home to create a sense of *"brotherhood from sea to shining sea."* Conservatives tend to favor unilateral action; liberals tend to favor multilateralism.

That model is, of course, grossly over-simplified. It was a Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, who favored an aggressive foreign policy to make the world "free for democracy". This became known as "Wilsonian Idealism," although it did not necessarily involve a militaristic Pax Americana. Rather, Wilson advocated an international institution (League of Nations) that would ensure peace through the rule of international law, based on moral standards and collective

action (Multilateralism). In a sense, it was based implicitly on the belief that American values—democracy and free markets—were the appropriate institutions for the world—what is often referred to as "American exceptionalism." The U.S. Senate refused to ratify the League of Nations.

Foreign policy based on idealism can be contrasted with a policy based on a "pragmatic" (sometimes called "realpolitik") approach. According to this theory of foreign policy, a nation has no permanent friends, or permanent enemies—only permanent interests. Some argue that exporting our values is in fact "pragmatic" and use that argument to legitimize a Pax Americana policy. A belief in "American exceptionalism" justifies any policy that advances our use of whatever means is necessary to advance our interests—which are benevolent and in the real interests of the rest of the world. Exporting "Wilsonian Idealism," even through the barrel of a gun, is morally justified. Criticism of such policies is branded as "blaming America first."

Other advocates of realpolitik subscribe to the pragmatic elements of the theory, but reject the "exceptionalism" element that justifies the export of our values, especially through the barrel of a gun. As Kissinger said at a conference on China a couple of years ago:

> *"Now, we are living in a world in which both China and the United States have to get used to the fact that they're not the dominant country, and that they have to deal with each other and with other countries on the basis of creating an international system. There has to be some equilibrium, there has to be some principle of order, and that has to arise not out of confrontation, but out of possible partnership."*
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> *"I do not believe we have the capacity to make every country in the world democratic. I think we have the capacity to make our views known on human rights and we should use our influence on human rights. There may be decisions in which we can contribute to democracy. But I do not think that the objective of American foreign policy with respect to China should be to involve itself in the domestic affairs of China, in the domestic evolution of China. But when there are unjust treatments of individuals, we can and should express our view with respect to those issues.*
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> *The relationship between China and the United States has become really the key single element for international stability."*

Many Republicans from the Bush I administration, e.g., James Baker and Brent Scowcroft, argued against the Iraq war based on those same principles. As a senator, Chuck Hagel made the same argument. In essence, they prefer stability in the area rather than the uncertainty of "democracy." (It should be noted that both Baker and Scowcroft, Republicans, have strongly endorsed Hagel for defense secretary). One must judge from what is occurring in the region today as the result of the "Arab Spring" whether the pragmatist school is more prescient. Both Kerry and Hagel have expressed the "pragmatic" approach to foreign policy and Hagel in particular has come under attack for his emphasis on diplomacy to resolve conflict. Hawks consider this to be inappropriate for a defense secretary.

Pragmatism does not imply that a nation should refrain from the use of military force, or that it should ignore morality in foreign affairs, to include international norms that govern conduct among nations. But it does require that policymakers take into consideration the *pragmatic effects of ignoring international norms.* As for the use of military force, the UN Charter distinguishes between pre-emptive wars (permitted) and preventive wars (not permitted).

The first category is the condition where attack from an adversary is imminent; one must not sit by and let it happen. The second category is a situation when one nation acts to prevent another nation from acquiring the capability to use military force. For example, some Americans advocated that we attack Russia after WWII to prevent Russia from developing nuclear weapons (preventive war). Other situations are more ambiguous. It can be argued that LBJ concocted the Tonkin Gulf incidence to justify going into Vietnam (NVN started it). Bush maintained that Iraq possessed WMDs and had the capability to use them against the U.S. Thus, invading Iraq was a pre-emptive war. Other than England, no other major country accepted that definition. Netanyahu is currently making that argument about Iran, that is, it would be a pre-emptive war, not a preventive war.

Who decides when an international norm (moral rule) applies, and when does a nation feel obliged to comply with that norm? Those who hold to a policy of unilateralism find an easy answer: We do what is in our interest regardless of what the UN and other countries believe. As VP Cheney said in justifying unilateral action in going to war in Iraq in 1993, we don't have to go to the UN to ask permission to protect our national interests. The decision to ignore international norms is made easier if one operates on the belief in American exceptionalism; our superior universal values and purity of motives justifies ignoring international norms. From that perspective, there is no such thing as "moral relevancy." International institutions should be used when they support national interests, ignored when they do not.

This roughly corresponds to a "might makes right" approach to the conduct of international relations. Proponents of this approach are not willing to give up any national sovereignty to international institutions or international law. This amounts to a policy of unilateralism except for temporary coalitions that last only as long as the coalitions are useful to support national interests. Advocates of this approach often consider themselves to be tough-minded realists as opposed to what they consider the tender-minded idealists who advocate an approach based on multilateralism and diplomacy that considers international norms. While proponents of this approach may consider the moral factor, it is more for appearance rather than substance, that is, they pay lip service to morality because of the utility value.

Others argue that enduring world order will come only when nations adhere to some common values and rules of conduct that settle differences in a peaceful manner. This, of course, requires that nations be willing to surrender some of their sovereignty to those rules and to international institutions such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and the World Court. Most proponents of this approach do not insist that a nation surrender all its sovereignty or that it avoid all instances of unilateral action when the vital interests of the nation are at stake. Rather, the idea is that every effort should be made to strengthen moral conduct of nations, the rule of international institutions, and the rule of law. Moreover, the proponents of this approach argue that even if one adopts an amoral view, it is in the *national self-interest* to be viewed as holding to moral principles. One ethicist wrote an essay, *The Norm is Mightier than the Sword* , which argued that the United Nations and its rules should be the best way to ensure world order. (Michael N. Barnett. *Ethics & International Affairs,* 1995, Vol. 9). While this is not an iron-clad dictum, it has a lot of truth to support it. Hardliners tend to under estimate the value of holding the moral high ground and too often debase the United Nations.

Most governments recognize the value of being viewed as moral in their policies and actions; rarely does a nation act with force without cloaking its action in moralistic terms. This is for the benefit of both the domestic audience as well as the international community. Such masking of national self-interest in the rhetoric of morality was certainly effective in Germany

and Japan during WWII as well as the Allied nations. It is usually effective for domestic audiences when the government has an effective information/propaganda program, even in a democracy such as the United States.

To base foreign policy on moral principles is quite different than going on a moral crusade to promote one's own version of what is good for the entire world. As Hans Morgenthau (He was influential when I was at the National War College in 1973-74. John McCain was a classmate, but he and I didn't get the same message) observed:

> *"Nations no longer oppose each other...within a framework of shared beliefs and common values, which imposes effective limitations on the needs and means of their struggle for power. They oppose each other now as the standard bearers of ethical systems, each of them of national origin and each of them claiming and aspiring to provide a supranational framework of moral standards which all the other nations ought to accept and within which their foreign policies ought to operate. The moral code of one nation flings the challenge of its universal claim with messianic fervor into the face of another, which reciprocates in kind. Compromise, the virtue of the old diplomacy, becomes the treason of the new; for the mutual accommodation of conflicting claims, possible or legitimate within a common framework of moral standards, amounts to surrender when the moral standards themselves are the stakes of the conflict. Thus the stage is set for a contest among nations whose stakes are no longer their relative positions within a political and moral system accepted by all, but the ability to impose upon the other contestants a new universal political and moral system recreated in the image of the victorious nation's political and moral convictions."* <u>Politics Among Nations</u>*, New York, Knopf, 1978.*

Working toward international moral order based on shared values requires a great deal of patience. The fight against terrorism is one of the most frustrating cases. It is difficult to achieve agreement on other than abstract values and rules that lend themselves to a wide variety of interpretations. What constitutes "terrorism" is a good example. When violence against civilians is defined in terms of the justness of the cause, one person's "terrorist" is another person's "freedom fighter". "Human rights" and Genocide are nebulous terms open to a wide range of interpretations. The effectiveness of these moral concepts depends to a large measure on the voluntary response to world opinion, usually expressed through the international institutions involved. Few of these institutions have the ability to enforce their judgments. In the case of the U.N., the Security Council must take action, and each of the permanent members has veto authority. When one of these five permanent members vetoes a resolution passed overwhelmingly by the body, it implies a rejection of moral consensus. Used sparingly when one's vital interests are involved is understandable; flagrant use of the veto reflects disdain for multilateral approaches to world order and an arrogance of power.

One can make the case that it is in the long-term interest of all nations—even the powerful—to build world order based on moral consensus. In the short term, a nation may serve its national interests by ignoring the moral dimension of foreign policy. This builds resentment among other nations, however, and promotes retaliation. In the long term, this can destroy the effectiveness of the moral dimension of world order and lead to reliance on "might makes right". History shows that no nation stays on top forever. The time to strengthen international moral order is when one is on top. Henry Kissinger comments at the end of his 2001 book, *Does*

America Need a Foreign Policy: "America's ultimate challenge is to transfer its power into a moral consensus, promoting its values not by imposition, but by their willing acceptance." He makes the same point in his recent comments on working with China, cited above.

It is quite natural for people to believe their values are the true values for the entire world and to judge others negatively when they reject those values (American exceptionalism). This reaches the most intense level when those values are religious beliefs, but this tendency applies also to secular values, such as democracy and free market economies. The problem comes when nations try to impose their values on others. In his classic article *Morality in Foreign Policy*, Foreign Affairs, 1985, George Kennan warned the United States against demanding that the world adopt our version of democracy and economic systems as we understand them. According to Kennan, these are not necessarily the future of all mankind, nor is it the duty of the United States to assure that they become that. Moreover, he says much of our foreign policy is the result of pressures from politically influential special interest elements within the society. He warns against:

> *"…what might be called the histrionics of moralism at the expense of its substance. By that is meant the projection of attitudes, poses, and rhetoric that cause us to appear noble and altruistic in the mirror of our own vanity, but lack substance when related to the realities of international life."*

Kennan argued that where the United States has real interests in intervening in the internal affairs of another country, actions—and the reasons therefore—the intervention "should be carried forward frankly for what they are, and not allowed to masquerade under the mantle of moral principle."

How far a nation goes in considering morality in the conduct of foreign affairs is a difficult boundary to draw, especially in the area of economics. The Bretton Woods economic system was dictated by the U.S. after WWII. While it provided stability and an orderly global system, it was clearly based on our notion of the classical free market theory of economics. Many believe it is time to change that basis, claiming that the "Washington/London consensus" is passé.

All moral theories include some concept of distributive justice, which includes the distribution of economic benefits. How far does a wealthy nation such as the United States go in sharing its wealth with less fortunate countries? In addition to foreign aid, trade policies affect the distribution of wealth. There is little consensus on what is just and unjust in these matters. Some argue that the duty of government is to meet the needs of its citizens without regard for the fate of others. Here again, one need not chose all or nothing in considering the moral dimension. Most would agree that the "Marshall Plan" at the end of WWII was not only a moral thing to do, but that it was a practical policy that was in the long-term interest of the United States. Currently, the U.S. ranks at the bottom of industrial nations in the percentage of its GDP that goes to foreign aid. And even that small amount goes largely to two recipients, Israel and Egypt—chosen for their strategic importance rather than on economic need. Other issues, e.g., global warming, pollution, are more controversial.

The fact that nations and other groups attempt to mask their actions in moral righteousness indicates recognition of the importance of being perceived as basing one's action on moral principles. Undoubtedly, many leaders sincerely believe they have the moral high ground; too often, however, this is no more than a ploy to rally faithful followers to a cause since citizens need to believe they are supporting a just and moral effort. In a rare moment of candor at a press conference in 1990, Secretary of State James Baker said we were preparing for the Gulf War to

protect our access to oil. The outcry caused the administration to focus on demonizing Saddam Hussein as another Hitler. Interest in oil was not cited thereafter as a principal motive; rather, it became a moral crusade—and it worked. Some argue the ploy worked too well—when Saddam Hussein was not deposed, President Bush I's approval ratings dropped precipitously.

Many view the Bush II National Security Policy as, in essence, a policy of *Pax Americana* justified by our dominant military and economic power and the moral belief that our value system represents "the end of history," as Francis Fukuyama argued in *The End of History."* We are morally justified in imposing our political, economic, and social systems on the rest of the world because we believe these values are best for the entire world. We have also endorsed assassination of heads of State and preemptive strikes against suspected threats. These have important consequences for international law. Romney has many of the authors of this policy as his advisors.

Contrast between Romney and Obama Foreign Policy.

We cannot say for certainty what foreign policy would have been under a president Romney; all I can do is analyze his campaign rhetoric and look at his key advisors. Based on his rhetoric and several of his principal advisors (Senor, Bolton, Williamson), Romney clearly adopted a *Pax Americana* ideology with military power as the main element of national power. Although one can never predict how one will govern, I believe the evidence points to a hawkish, unilateralist foreign policy emphasizing the primacy of military power. (I will distribute an op-ed by Les Gelb, *The Battle for Mitt Romney's Mind,* which argues otherwise). This is a repeat of the Bush II foreign policies, especially as advocated by VP Cheney and the neoconservatives. Romney's proposed budget would have significantly increased the military force structure and defense budget.

In contrast to the Romney approach, Obama's record is one that has emphasized diplomacy and a multilateral approach. He has drawn down the military component of the Iraq effort and is doing the same in Afghanistan. His budget calls for the reduction in Army and Marine ground forces and a gradual reduction in defense spending as projected in the out years. He has sought a working relation with China and Russia, two countries in Romney's crosshairs. His commitment to diplomacy in handling the Iran nuclear issue contrasts with Romney's bellicose language during the campaign. Obama reflects a "tender-minded" approach to conflict management. While some call this "soft power," others call it "smart power." His selection of John Kerry as his Secretary of State, and Chuck Hagel as Defense Secretary solidifies my assessment. Both their testimonies at their confirmation hearings reflect that.

If there is a common element between the Romney and Obama, it appears that both believe that pluralistic democracy is an appropriate political model for the world. Both have embraced political universalism. I'm less sure about the "free market" ideology. In regard to the latter, I am convinced that Romney is a firm supporter; I am less sure about Obama. It is politically unwise to question that pillar of the American ethos. But both seem to subscribe to "Wilsonian Idealism" as it pertains to democracy; the implementation differs. Romney seems to endorse "American exceptionalism," whereas Obama tends to downplay this. This has led to charges that Obama "apologizes" for American values when he acknowledges that adversaries have some legitimate criticisms of U.S. policy.

U.S./Israel Relations.

This issue has to be high on any list of controversial policies. It is key to the Senate confirmation of Chuck Hagel. Depending on which "lens" is used, the most critical issue in the main terrorist threat is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The subject is too complex to cover here, but opinion polls around the world show that the world perceives the U.S. to be biased in providing unqualified support for Israel. U.N. resolutions, e.g., 242 and 338, calling for Israel to return to the 1967 borders, have repeatedly been ignored. In the eyes of most of the world, not only has the U.S. supported the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it has indirectly financed them. This secular foreign policy has now merged with religion. Fundamentalist[1] Christian and Jewish groups have allied to support a "Greater Israel" of biblical prophecy. The late Jerry Falwell once called the Prophet Mohammed a "terrorist"; Pat Robertson called him a "wild-eyed Fanatic, robber, and brigand". Franklin Graham branded Islam "evil". These fundamentalists call for the "Greater Israel" so that biblical prophecy can be fulfilled to prepare for the "Second Coming".

Some in the Bush II administration seemed to endorse the concept of a "Greater Israel". Secretary Rumsfeld declared that he was tired of hearing about the so-called "occupied West Bank", asserting that it belonged to Israel. Tom Delay, the de facto leader of the House of Representatives, referred to Judea and Samaria as Israel's. He told a Texas Baptist audience that God had made George Bush president to "promote a biblical worldview". From his own admission, Bush is a fundamentalist and some believe he held these views.

Thomas Friedman, noted author and widely acknowledged expert on Middle East affairs, has this to say:

> **"American Jewish leaders, fundamentalist Christians, and neo-conservatives together have helped make it impossible for anyone in the U.S. government to talk seriously about halting Israeli settlement-building without being accused of being anti-Israel. Their collaboration has helped prolong a colonial Israel occupation that now threatens the entire Zionist enterprise.**
>
> **"Either leaders of goodwill get together and acknowledge that Israel can't stay in the territories, but can't just pack up and leave without a U.S.-NATO force helping Palestinians oversee their state, or Osama wins—and the war of civilizations will be coming to a theater near You."**
> Longitudes and Attitudes, p.151

I conducted a one-week seminar in Muscat, Oman in November 2001 for the senior officers of the Omani Royal Air Force. The commander said to me when I arrived, "when will the United States start asking **why** instead of **who** regarding terrorism?" During the discussion of

[1] The term "fundamentalist", was coined in 1920 by Curtis Lee Laws, a Baptist journalist and layman, to describe evangelical leaders who denounced Darwinism and modern theology. Its core is the belief in inerrancy of one's religious doctrine, e.g., Bible; Koran, and the exclusive rightness of one's beliefs. Christian fundamentalists generally believe in: creationism, original sin, the divinity of Jesus, the Virgin Birth, the resurrection, and the imminent Second Coming (when the saved are raptured). Many fundamentalists also believe that the "Greater Israel", to include Samaria and Judea, must be established to prepare for the Second Coming.

international terrorism, I asked the officers about bin Laden, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah. They universally condemned bin Laden and the Taliban; they considered the others as "freedom fighters". They estimated that maybe ten percent of Muslims supported Al Qaeda, and most of that support would vanish if the U.S. would force Israel to implement U.N. Resolution 242, which calls for return to the 1967 borders. Obviously this is not a scientific survey, but it corresponds to credible surveys that have been conducted. They emphasized that it would be a mistake to lump all "terrorists" together, since one person's terrorist, e.g., Hamas, is another person's "freedom fighter".

The current crisis in our policy toward Israel pertains to Israel's threat to go to war against Iran. I wrote a New York Times op-ed in November 2011 on this, which I will post on the OLLI website, so that you can see my take. As you have no doubt read, the recent election results in Israel reflect a divided public regarding Netanyahu's hawkish stance toward Iran and negotiations with the Palestinians.

In the United States, there is a sharp divide on our Israeli policy. Both Hagel and Kerry have come under fire for their argument for a "more balanced" approach. Both Congressional Democrats and Republicans are hawkish in support of Israel, How the Obama foreign policy team fares in this conflict will be interesting to watch. The Jewish community in America is divided, as it is in Israel. The American/Israeli Political Action Committee (AIPAC) is a powerful lobby for a hawkish Israeli policy. In an attempt to counter its influence, "J Street" was established. The latter has far less influence, but Hagel addressed the annual conference last March, drawing the ire of AIPAC.

Iran.

Our policy toward Iran is very controversial and draws sharp criticism from conservatives. I will distribute by e-mail attachments contrasting articles as a basis for our discussion on foreign policy. Basically, the divide is between hawks demanding military action (Mostly conservatives), and doves promoting a diplomatic solution (Mostly liberals). Netanyahu has recently shifted his rhetoric to favor increased sanctions, perhaps because of the feedback he got on his trip to Europe last fall (2012). The 2013 election results will probably add to this shift since the Israeli public is growing less hawkish. In addition to this essay, I have also posted on the OLLI website an 11/15/11 op-ed in the New York Times (*Before we Bomb Iran, Let's Have a Serious Conversation*) that offered my views on the hawkish rhetoric of the Republican presidential candidates. That article has links you can click on if you want more details and sources of my op-ed.

Terrorism

Terrorism is our current immediate threat based on violence. As I will make it clear, I do not believe large-scale military force is an effective means of meeting this threat. Hagel supports this view. Rather, I will argue that it is a war of ideas and key to the outcome is which side holds the moral high ground.

Terrorism presents a special problem, whether it is domestic or international in scope. The first hurdle is coming to a consensus on a definition of terrorism. In the most general sense, terrorism can be defined as the use of violence against a target when the intended effect is the psychological impact on a wider audience in order to achieve political goals. Some limit the definition to apply only when the specific target is noncombatant civilians. In the past, different agencies of the U.S. have used approximations of this definition. If one accepts this definition,

the carpet-bombing of cities in WWII, by both sides, can be classified terrorist acts. The use of atomic bombs on Japan was, in fact, deliberately designed to terrorize the Japanese into surrendering. President Truman's diary and the planning minutes attest to this purpose. All participants in WWII used such measures. They were routinely morally justified as avoiding greater violence. Thus, the atomic attacks avoided the costly invasion of Japan, which most analysts agree would have resulted in millions of deaths, both civilian and military.

This rationale may in fact suffice as a moral justification of the acts, but it does so by arguing that the ends justify the means. Some ethicists reject the notion that ends can justify means when the act in itself is immoral. This is not universal, however, and experience shows that most people often justify acts that are immoral per se, but where the consequences of the act can justify it. Thus it becomes a calculus that weighs the pros and cons if the consequences can be shown to further a "just cause". Those who bomb abortion clinics and/or kill doctors who perform abortions, as well as those who justify the use of weapons of mass destruction, follow this reasoning.

Terrorism is the force of choice for domestic dissidents and the militarily weak in international affairs because it gives them an asymmetrical advantage, especially if they cannot be readily identified. Non-government groups conduct much of international terrorism such as the 9-11 acts. While they may have the support of governments, these connections are difficult to prove. This limits the counter-terrorist efforts because over reaction against broad targets can generate more hostility and lose moral legitimacy for the counter terrorism effort.

If a belligerent wishes to brand acts of terrorism against it as immoral, it must find a definition that distinguishes the type of terrorism used by it and its allies from that of its adversaries. In the case of the current "war against terrorism", declared by President Bush II, this presents problems. It is useful to rally the American people by stating the effort in moralistic terms of good versus evil and rejecting any suggestion that the terrorism is any way related to U.S. behavior. Another way to isolate the Islamic terrorists is to define terrorism to exclude actions of nations or their military.

Recent definitions by U.S. Government Agencies in fact offer such definitions, restricting the label to non-nation activity. This restricted definition, of course, denies legitimacy to the only means of violence available to the weak and takes away the reciprocal advantage. This word-smithing may appeal to the militarily powerful, but non-nation terrorist groups may argue that the ends justify the means if their terrorist acts result in a change in U.S. policies that they label as unjust. Moreover, they may argue, those U.S. policies involve a form of economic and military terrorism—economic against Iraq, Cuba, etc. and militarily against the Palestinians, Nicaragua, etc. It all depends on whose ox is being gored; one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. Each side is convinced of its moral high ground. It then becomes a contest for convincing the rest of the world that your version is the valid definition.

Obama has shifted from the Bush policies in some respects, emphasizing diplomacy over military force as the primary instrument of managing conflict. His overture to the Muslim world attempted to separate moderate Muslims from the extremists who are terrorists, or those who support and sympathize with the terrorists. One element of this was the recognition that some of our policies were not the best. In some instances, this has been seen as "weak" and apologetic. His extended use of drones as a precise weapon has caused some damage to our moral stature because of the collateral damage among civilians. His failure to close Guantanamo has hurt our image. Obama has been criticized for this failure, but the evidence is that the failure is due to

political resistance by both Democrats and republicans based on what Admiral Mullin and Secretary Gates called "emotional hysteria."

The jury is still out on how successful the current foreign policy of the United States will be in its fight against terrorism and its vision of world order. While the initial response to the 9-11 terrorist acts was overwhelmingly in favor of condemning those directly involved in the attacks, talk of expanding the war to include action against all "terrorism"—and adopting the policy of "preventive wars"—received less than universal support. In fact, there is some indication that if current rhetoric by hardliners is converted to action against other countries, the U.S. may find itself and Israel going it alone

Most polls show that the American public believes the policies of our nation are based on the highest moral principles. The common perception is that we "have the moral high ground" in the conduct of our international relations. Therefore, jingoistic and bellicose rhetoric that calls for tough action has a basic appeal to the domestic audience. Surveys reveal that much of the rest of the world sees it differently. Even in the case of our response to terrorism, much of the world rejects our public explanation that the terrorists base their action on hatred solely because we "are free and democratic." Although our government attempts to disconnect terrorism from our policies, much of the world insists that the two are linked. The most common policies that draw linkages to terrorism, especially in the eyes of the Mid East and Muslim communities, are the quest for cheap oil and unwavering support of Israel. The Long Commission report, which investigated the terrorist attacks on American Embassies and the USS Cole, warned against divorcing these attacks from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Other sacred cows of America's value system that underlie our foreign policy include the export of "market economies" and "liberal democracy" (see Kennan's comments above). Many parts of the world see these policies as the exercise of raw power when economic, political, and military power are used to impose these beliefs on others as if they are prerequisites for "freedom and human rights" and legitimacy.

Whether or not criticism of these policies is valid is arguable, but perception is reality from a moral standpoint. World order based on morality requires shared values and beliefs about what is good and bad behavior. There are necessary compromises and this means surrendering some sovereignty in the process. Charters of international institutions such as the United Nations and World Trade Organization usually contain abstract values as the basis for moral order. When nations flout the rules of behavior in these charters, moral order is weakened.

In the final analysis, there is considerable evidence that almost all nations at some time use violence against civilians to terrorize a wider audience to achieve political goals if it suits their interests. Fire-bombing of cities in WWII, by both sides, are an example. If a nation adopts a militaristic approach to foreign policy, it need not attempt to justify its actions morally, but it must be prepared to face the moral condemnation of the international community. A more direct tangible cost is the probability that adversaries will adopt the same practices, e.g., political assassinations and torture of prisoners. Most terrorists dress their actions in moral clothes, arguing that theirs is a just cause and that the ends justify the means. The victims attempt to strip the terrorists of any moral authority for their acts and cast the battle as good versus evil. Adversaries usually invoke the support of their particular God to buttress their moral legitimacy to conduct war, whether it is conventional or terrorism, as is the case with both Al Qaeda and the United States.

Need for Bi-Partisan Foreign Policy.

The need for unity of effort in projecting American interests is based on the self-evident fact that a divided nation cannot project the power needed to prevail in the international system whether it be in military operations, diplomacy, or economic matters. In practice, this has never been easy to achieve. In our current era of political partisanship, it is especially difficult. I will limit my discussion to the military dimension of foreign policy.

Historically, criticism of foreign policy, especially during wartime, was supposed to stop at the water's edge. Support of foreign policy by members of Congress was a patriotic duty once a decision had been made through the interaction of Congress and the Executive Branch. We also expected the media to support policy when it involved war. Public criticism by senior military officers, active or retired, was taboo.

Obviously, national will and cohesion are necessary for successful execution of wars. In fact, the show of national unity is an essential element in diplomatic negotiations to prevent war. Potential adversaries must perceive a credible willingness to use force if peaceful means are to be successful. This is sometimes referred to as "coercive diplomacy." In a democracy, such a unified effort can only be achieved by convincing the public of the necessity of war.

The quest for bipartisan support in wartime is more likely to be achievable when the policies and wars are based on a "clear and present danger" as the rationale. Try as they may in wars since WWII, this ideal has been elusive for each of the administrations involved. The Vietnam conflict was the most difficult in this regard. Clearly, public criticism of policy by influential people such as elected officials, senior military officers, and the media can undermine the support necessary for successful execution of foreign policy, especially wars.

On the other hand, stifling criticism is unacceptable in a democracy. The central issue, it seems to me, is to know the difference between loyal dissent and irresponsible, destructive criticism.

In April 1816, naval commander Stephen Decatur toasted his victory over the Barbary pirates with these words**: "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong."** Carl Schurz, who was a Major General in the Union Army and later a Senator, revised the Quote in a speech to the Senate. His version is**, "Our country, right or wrong. When right, it ought be kept right; when wrong, to be put right."**

Senator Schurz may have had it more correct for a democracy than did Decatur. In regard to the Spanish-American War in 1898, he offered the following observation on patriotism:

> **The man who in times of popular excitement boldly and unflinchingly resists hot-tempered clamor for an unnecessary war, and thus exposes himself to the opprobrious imputation of a lack of patriotism or of courage, to the end of saving his country from a great calamity, is, as to "loving and faithfully serving his country," at least as good a patriot as the hero of the most daring feat of arms, and a far better one than those who, with an ostentatious pretense of superior patriotism, cry for war before it is needed, especially if then they let others do the fighting.**
> – Carl Schurz, *April, 1898*

The problem comes when a large segment of the nation perceives that "things are wrong and need to be put right." When and how does one go about putting things right without undermining national will and unity in general and more specifically without harming military

morale of those fighting? When is it appropriate for influential members of the country to criticize policy publicly during wartime, and who judges the limits of this criticism? There are legitimate differences of opinion among our body politic about when things "are wrong and need to be put right." In the complex world today, it is too easy to take advantage of the complexity and use dissent for political purposes. I will next address congressional dissent.

Congressional Dissent.

Many will argue that the only legitimate dissent within government in wartime should be within the confines of the political process. Narrowly defined, this could be interpreted to go something like this:

> *The Constitution establishes a process for going to war. The president is given authority to provide national security, but only Congress can declare war. (This is a murky area and recent conflicts have been "undeclared," with congressional approval expressed through war power "resolutions." Let us assume that this conforms to the intent of the Constitution; The Supreme Court has not been asked to rule on its constitutionality).*
>
> *The people elect their government representatives. Those people debate the issues and decide on policy. Once this policy is decided, all should get behind the effort and cease public criticism. This applies especially to the Congress and the military. Otherwise, it is difficult, if not impossible, to prosecute a war. Not only does public dissent weaken national will and hurt military morale, it gives aid and comfort to the enemy.*

In ideal circumstances, that argument is valid. Unfortunately, current circumstances regarding our foreign policy in general, and the Mideast in particular, are not ideal. The shock of 9-11 changed the political process significantly.

The 9-11 shock aroused the public to a "clear and present danger"—terrorism was brought to our homeland in a stark manner. We circled the wagons and for some time had national unity—and the sympathy and support of the world community. Congress and the American public overwhelmingly supported the president in his response to this danger. In effect, Congress and the American people gave President Bush complete authority to do what he thought best to protect the nation. The decision to go into Afghanistan received domestic and international approval, to include UN approval.

When the president convinced the American public that Iraq represented the front line of terrorism, the American people supported the decision (78%) to go to war in Iraq. Not only did President Bush convince the American people that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that were an immediate threat, he also convinced them that Iraq had a direct link to Osama bin Laden and the 9-11 attack. The public perceived a "clear and present danger."

In a show of unity, the American people, and their elected representatives, gave Bush free reign to use whatever force he deemed appropriate against Iraq, if necessary. Congress passed a bi-partisan resolution authorizing the use of force, *contingent on certain circumstances* (Hagel made this explicit in a speech on the floor of the Senate). If one reads the resolution carefully, it is evident that the resolution was designed to strengthen President Bush's bargaining power to

use diplomatic means to force Saddam to allow UN inspectors into Iraq. Whether the resolution gave President Bush authority to go to war without further authorization is open to interpretation.

Congressional criticism of the Iraq War was politically dangerous even when the polls showed the public was against continuing that war. This was due partly to the jingoistic attitude among the American people and the knowledge that the American culture is now supportive of an aggressive use of military power. Andrew Bacevich describes this culture in his 2005 book, *The New American Militarism*. At the end of WWII, we were enamored with military power, but the Korean War tempered that fervor somewhat. The Vietnam War shattered it. Several groups, particularly the neo conservatives, were dedicated to reviving that culture and take it one step further—to use it to establish hegemony over the globe.

It is very difficult for an elected official to separate criticism of policy and support for the troops in this climate. Consequently, the normal political process is not working and it is difficult for Congress to "put wrong policy right" without being accused of "not supporting the troops." Are members of Congress merely "playing politics" when they criticize these policies? Draw your own conclusions as the debate over withdrawing troops from Afghanistan continues. Whether Republican leaders in congress are motivated by political considerations when they criticize Obama's foreign policy will be difficult to determine. It will probably be a mixture. That was the case when Democrats were criticizing Bush II. There are clear differences in their ideologies and we should give them the benefit of a doubt.