

**AMERICAN POWER  
MAINTENANCE: THOUGHTS  
FOR THE FUTURE**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## **AMERICAN POWER MAINTENANCE: THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE**

by

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U.S. Army War College  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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As we move into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, America has suffered significant damage to its reputation and prestige. America also, reportedly, faces serious threats to all elements of its national power (Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic). This paper will examine these reported threats to national power in depth to determine their nature. Critical to this examination and contained in this paper is a short review of some of the pertinent literature on the topic of the loss of American image, power and influence. This paper will also examine whether the power and influence lost to those threats is actual or perceived and address what actions America should take to repair any dents to reputation and prestige. In the end, this paper concludes that the actual near-term threats to America's power are minimal, but the damage to its image and influence is real. That damage can be repaired and the key to doing so is the balanced use of soft and hard power through careful and nuanced statecraft.

## AMERICAN POWER MAINTENANCE: THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE

By the end of World War II, the United States was widely considered the strongest, richest and freest nation in the world.<sup>1</sup> This prestigious position was measured and confirmed in all elements of national power (Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic). The position was also confirmed by international public opinion and put forth by the 20<sup>th</sup> century being widely and famously designated as “the American Century.” Such a designation could place a significant amount of pressure on a nation to live up to such lofty billing, but America was up to the challenge and the facts prove this. America lived up to this billing.

Economically, after the war, the United States possessed two-thirds of the world’s gold reserves and over half of the world’s manufacturing capacity.<sup>2</sup> In 1947, it accounted for one-third of the world’s exports.<sup>3</sup> Its foreign trade balance was comfortably in the black and, as measured by trade value, exports more than doubled imports.<sup>4</sup> Most importantly, the dollar had displaced the British pound as the global reserve currency. This made the United States the world’s money manager. The country was a net creditor and led the world in the production of oil, steel, airplanes, automobiles and electronics. Clearly, the United States was the world’s unrivaled economic power and the world was, rhetorically speaking, its for the taking.

Militarily, the United States possessed unquestioned naval and air supremacy and until 1949 the United States had an absolute nuclear monopoly. After 1949, the military advantage remained, affirmed by a permanent and indisputable edge in military technology.<sup>5</sup> The advantage was further strengthened by the fact that its immediate neighbors were weak and posed no military threat and that its adversaries were far

away and did not possess sufficient reach to attack it. Taken together, the above ensured that militarily, the United States was the unchallenged global power.

Informationally, the United States dominated the world through a palatable ideology. On the heels of the regimes of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, the world was eager for something hopeful to grasp a hold of and the ideology of the United States provided that hope. The particular ideas and ideals of the United States; liberal democracy, free markets, and the open society made the American way of life extremely attractive to the rest of the world.<sup>6</sup> These ideas or ideals have been grouped together in many ways in a variety of slogans marketed to various areas of the world depending on the target audience. The success of the information campaign was undeniable as the United States used the ideological advantage to ensure that, informationally, they were the global power.

Diplomatically, the post-war power of the United States was clearly a result of winning the war. As one of the victors, the United States was able to play the key role in the determination of the terms of the peace. It also served as the primary occupation force in both West Germany and Japan. This gave it tremendous influence in Europe and Asia. Its performance in the war gave it tremendous global respect, and subsequently, influence. Its power in the other three elements of national power provided a significant insurance policy for its fledgling diplomatic power. Regardless, its diplomatic power was respected and proof of this power was exhibited by the choice of the United States as the location for the headquarters of the United Nations, perhaps the ultimate sign of respect for the diplomatic power of the United States. Although

rather immature, the United States was quickly growing into its role as the premier diplomatic power in the world.

As the decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after World War II, came and went, the United States continued to grow and become more and more powerful each decade. The world continued to change and the United States was presented, time and again, with opportunities to flex its muscles, regardless or rather they were diplomatic, informational, military or economic. Although there were many bumps in the road as this new power learned the limits of its newfound strength, more often than not, the United States prevailed.

The first decade after the war was marked by the growth of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the bi-polar world that would define the next 40 years of international politics. In the face of this challenge, the United States relied heavily on the “hard” power elements of military and economics. These powers allowed the United States to answer the threat posed by the Soviet Union, through pure industrial might and military strength. The launch of Sputnik in 1957 raised an intense fear of falling behind in the arms, space and missile races to the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup> This fear allowed for the growth of the military and the expansion of the military industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned of in his farewell speech. The American people were not afraid of the military industrial complex, they were afraid of the Soviet Union. Although the growth of the military was erratic at best, leading up to the 1980s, the military strength, technology and strategy was unchallenged and served as the perfect deterrent for the Soviet Union. The growth of the military and the economy were symbiotic, and the late 1950s served as the beginning of sustained growth in both areas. The United States

was already the premier power in the world and, at this time, began tremendous focus on the “hard” power elements of power at the expense of the “soft” power elements of power (diplomatic and information).<sup>8</sup>

The 1960s and 70s were marked by the same focus on the military and economic elements of power and on the surface this appeared to be the correct approach as the United States maintained its position as the leader of the free world. The United States was the only one with the “hard” power might to stand up to the threat posed by the Soviet Union and the rest of the Warsaw Pact. Although there were some stumbles along the way, those stumbles tended to happen in the diplomatic and informational realms. The Bay of Pigs fiasco, the political failure of the Vietnam War and the oil crisis of the 1970s are perfect examples of the failures of American diplomacy.<sup>9</sup> Fortunately, the economic and military power was enough to cover those losses and maintain the leadership role of the United States in the world.

The 1980’s were marked by increased focus on the military and the economy. The doldrums of the 1970’s had brought the United States to an incredible low caused by the embarrassing exit from Vietnam, the inexcusable Watergate scandal and the Iranian Hostage affair. These and other occurrences had taken the morale of the United States to historically low levels. The 1980’s would change this, beginning with the victory by the US Olympic hockey team over the team from the Soviet Union, the release of the hostages from Iran, military victories in Grenada and Panama and the ultimate event of the 1980’s; the collapse of the Soviet Union. The United States was able to devote necessary resources, mostly people and money, and still maintain the ability to recover from or fix mistakes, which ultimately led to victory in the Cold War.<sup>10</sup>

This decade ended with the United States as the leader of the world. The world was unipolar and the United States was the pole.

Fresh from the glow of victory in the Cold War, the United States, the leader of the world, spent the 1990's searching for its way. In that search, it chose to take the peace dividend and consciously, with the complicity of both Congress and the White House, allowed key elements of national power to wither. The active military was cut by 40 percent and the intelligence community was cut by 30 percent.<sup>11</sup> The State Department froze hiring for a period of time and the United States Agency for International Development was cut from a high of 15,000 in Vietnam to about 3,000 in the 1990's.<sup>12</sup> The United States Information Agency was abolished as a separate organization and spread throughout the State Department.<sup>13</sup> Piece by piece the government of the United States was slowly tearing apart the elements of national power that had made it great for most of the previous century.

Regardless of the turmoil, the United States entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the single power in the world. The previous century was clearly the "American Century." In fact, the period of American hegemony and balance of power is often referred to as Pax Americana.<sup>14</sup> The only other periods of time that bear a similar name are Pax Romana and Pax Britannica.<sup>15</sup> These periods were marked by extended periods of relative peace. Pax Americana would face significant challenges entering the next century due to the fact that the United States was throttling back on the elements of power.

The challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the ability of the United States to answer them, form the foundation of this paper. The first decade has already provided some unique challenges that will be examined in depth later in the paper. This paper will move

from the foundation presented in the previous pages and move forward, addressing the known challenges and solutions of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will follow by proposing some thoughts for the maintenance of American power for the foreseeable future.

### Literature Review

The changes in the world over the last twenty years have been dramatic and have provided a plethora of opportunities for pundits, authors, scholars and whoever, to come forward with their ideas about how the world was going to change and what those changes might mean to the United States. Many would write about the fall of America and the rise of other powers, some would write about how the world was becoming one through globalization and there was no place for a world power. Some would write about how America was becoming too arrogant and the world hated it. Yet others would write about the future of American power and the role of America in the future. Regardless of the approach these authors took, they all provided a timely look at a current problem.

Perhaps the seminal work in the area of rising and falling nation-states is the work by Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. In this book he states that wealth and power are relative and that great powers demand a flourishing economic base. According to him the longevity challenges are the balance between defense requirements and means and the ability to preserve the technological and economic bases of power. He concludes that the primary reason for the fall of a great power is imperial overstretch. Written in the 1980s, this work provides the foundation for many of the works that followed on this topic.

An important concept of this century that is specifically related to the power of nations is globalization. Thomas L. Friedman, in his book *The World is Flat* states that there were three phases of globalization. The first phase was the globalization of countries (1492 – 1800), the second was the globalization of companies (1800 – 2000) and the third was the globalization of individuals and small groups (beginning in 2000).<sup>16</sup> He discusses expanded free market opportunities such as China, India, Russia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. When taken holistically, there are new players, a new playing field and new processes for collaboration. The world is now incredibly interconnected and that interconnectivity has reduced the requirement for a world power. Everybody is dependent on everybody else and there is no need for a global national power, the market is everything.

Power, what it is, how it is acquired, maintained, and used, is of critical importance as the globally connected world attempts to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the world of international politics, power is universally accepted to fall into two categories; hard and soft. Hard power is the application of military and/or economic power to meet national objectives. Soft power is the ability of a nation to achieve its goals by attraction. This comes from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals and policies. Legitimacy is the central theme in soft power usage. When taken in the context of the four elements of national power, hard power refers to the military and economic elements of power and soft power refers to the diplomatic and informational elements of power.

The preeminent work on hard power is *Hard Power* by Kurt M. Campbell and Michael E. O'Hanlon. They put forth the importance of the use of hard power in the

realm of national security.<sup>17</sup> They advocate for the use of the instruments of hard power for nations to achieve their national security policy goals. Some of the tools available in the hard power realm are: threats, military force, military alliances, sanctions, payments and bribes. These tools clearly fall within the military and economic elements of national power.

The counter to Campbell and O'Hanlon's work is *Soft Power* by Joseph S. Nye Jr. This book puts forth a strong argument for the use of soft power and how important the appropriate use of soft power can be for moving a nation toward achieving their national goals.<sup>18</sup> Some of the tools available in the soft power arena are: public diplomacy, broadcasting, exchange programs, development assistance, disaster relief and military – to – military contacts. These tools are clearly within the diplomatic and informational elements of national power.

Andrew J. Bacevich, in his book *The New American Militarism*, argues that Americans, liberals and conservatives alike, have become enamored with the use of the military element of national power. He notes that prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, American leaders tended to utilize the military as a last resort. In the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, that has changed; the military is often the first element of national power employed by the leadership of the United States.<sup>19</sup> His argument has gained some traction as the Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates, has been on the record many times expressing his concern about the militarization of American diplomacy. They are both warning against the overuse of the military to accomplish national objectives.

As described earlier, the other part of hard power is the economic element of national power and there has been quite a bit written about the use of this element of power entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the more prominent pieces is the work by Nina Hachigian and Mona Sutphen entitled *The Next American Century*. Although this book presupposes the rise of other economic challenges and challengers to the United States, it further discusses the connectivity between the challenges. It notes rising powers such as China, India, Russia and Japan and the fact that they and the United States are connected on a variety of levels and that their rise might actually benefit the United States.<sup>20</sup> The book notes that the United States should not fear these rising powers, but should welcome them, not as threats, but as partners in the maintenance of the volatile world that has emerged in recent years. This partnership is critical to maintaining America's prosperity. However, the implication here is that the United States will have to relinquish some of its power and influence; and potentially some of its sovereignty.

Another book, with a similar point of view, is *The Post-American World* by Fareed Zakaria. He also proposes that the rise of the rest is not necessarily a signal of the downfall of the United States. He states that this power shift is actually beneficial to the United States, not a signal of its decline.<sup>21</sup> The United States, rather than focusing on its own short-term interests, should focus on bringing these rising forces into the global system. This will allow the United States to strengthen political, economic, and cultural ties with these powers and increasing their influence on the world.

An area that has received quite a bit of attention lately is the perception of the United States and its ideals globally. There is some concern that the unilateral actions

taken by the United States over the last decade has significantly impacted its prestige and standing in the eyes of the world. In the face of this concern, the investigation of this topic has spanned the gamut, from opinion pieces to scientific study. The Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs of the United States House of Representatives has even done a study.

The study by the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs of the United States House of Representatives published a report on “America’s International Image (covering Decline, Impact on U. S. National Interests, and Recommendations)” entitled “The Decline in America’s Reputation: Why?” As described earlier, soft power is the ability of a nation to achieve their goals by attraction. The components of this report clearly relate to America’s soft power and her global legitimacy. The report notes that people do not hate America because of its values; rather they are disappointed because it is not always true to those values.<sup>22</sup>

The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank in Washington, DC, has also weighed in on the downturn in America’s global image. Its reports, one by Juliana Geran Pilon entitled “Why America is Such a Hard Sell: Beyond Pride and Prejudice,” and another by Lisa A. Curtis entitled “America’s Image Abroad: Room for Improvement,” conclude that America’s image has been tarnished, but not irreparably. Although some bad decisions may have been made, the culture and policies of America that were originally so attractive to the rest of the world, remain so today.<sup>23 24</sup> America’s greatest contribution to the world is not as much material as it is spiritual or ideological.

The last work reviewed for this paper is *Seeing the Elephant: The U. S. Role in Global Security* by Hans Binnendijk and Richard L. Kugler. The authors take an in-depth look at the post-Cold War strategy of the United States by a unique synthesizing of more than 50 reviews of books by influential thinkers of strategy. They categorize the thinkers into “neo-Hobbesian” and “neo-Kantian” schools of thought, synthesize them, and propose a way ahead for the United States.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately they propose a combination of both schools of thought that proposes an increase in international cooperation backed up by a strong military and a strong economy. Essentially, they propose a soft power lead for the United States.

### Challenges to American Power

As described in the introduction and elaborated on during the literature review, the challenges to American power are many and come in many different forms. Some of those challenges are real and some are a matter of perception. Regardless, any threat to America and her position as the world leader must be taken seriously. This paper takes an in depth look at the challenges to America from the perspectives of hard power (the application of military and/or economic power to meet national objectives) focused on the military and informational elements of power and soft power (the ability of a nation to achieve its goals by attraction) focused on the diplomatic and informational elements of power. Each of the threats will be examined as to the veracity of the threat and whether or not it should be of concern to policymakers and strategists.

*Hard Power Challenges.* The nature of hard power challenges is such that they are often directly attributed to a nation or a group of nations. Today, those challenges are most often attributed to the nations of Brazil, Russia, India and China, also known as the BRICs.<sup>26</sup> Many times Japan, Germany and the European Union are added to the

list. As described earlier, for the purposes of this paper, hard power refers to the military and economic elements of power.

From a realistic point of view, there is really no nation today that can challenge the United States from a military point of view. The challenges will come from a transnational threat such as terrorism, crime or the environment. The United States' ability to deal with these threats will depend greatly on its ability to keep close cooperative relations with the nations mentioned above.<sup>27</sup> There is international consensus that these threats will continue well into the foreseeable future and, most importantly, are expected to threaten all players in the international community, not just the United States.<sup>28</sup> Looking into the future, aside from the transnational threats, the challenge to the United States' military is expected to come from China.

The Chinese military capability has been evaluated on many levels, studied by military experts, commented on by pundits and spoken about by the Secretary of Defense. However, when the analysis is done, China is a nation in transition with a military in transition. China refers to its military growth as a peaceful rise and they note that they have not been involved in any major external hostilities since 1979 in Vietnam and further note that the reason for the growth is to defend itself against foreign aggression and to catch up to the West.<sup>29</sup> Although the Chinese military is the largest in the world, it is not augmented by a large civilian and contractor supporting force like the United States; its military members perform those tasks.<sup>30</sup> This takes away from the amount of personnel they can put on the battlefield; making the size of its military and that of the United States essentially equal. Although someday China may operate more globally, other than participation in some anti-piracy operations off of Somalia and other

minor contributions to select United Nations' peacekeeping operations, they have not shown any interests in a large global military presence.<sup>31</sup> In order to maintain visibility of the Chinese military, the United States should watch for the time when the Chinese put military spending first in their budget, attempt to match or exceed the United States' nuclear force in numbers, and begin the foreign basing of their troops.<sup>32</sup> There is no indication of this happening now or in the near future. The United States should focus elsewhere when exploring challenges to their power. America is now and will be for the future, unthreatened in this arena.

An area of concern, from a hard power perspective, is the economic element of power. The field of economic competitors is much larger than that of potential military competitors. The challenges of today's global economic woes also make this area more difficult to analyze and forecast. Despite this fact, China is the threat most often discussed as the economic challenge to the United States. Some experts have even described the world as globalized with two poles, the United States and China.<sup>33</sup> This same author dismisses India due to its extreme poverty, Russia for its dismal demographics, and other potential challengers out of hand.<sup>34</sup>

Although the rise of China economically has been impressive, it is still significantly behind the United States in the standard by which all economies are measured, Gross Domestic Product or GDP. In 2001 China's GDP was \$1.3 trillion and the United States' GDP was \$10.2 trillion, nearly eight times larger.<sup>35</sup> The 2007 CIA World Factbook places the GDP of China at \$3.25 trillion and that of the United States at \$13.8 trillion. This is truly impressive growth by China as it more than doubled their GDP in six years. Looking at it in other terms, they grew by nearly \$2 trillion and the

United States grew by \$3.6 trillion. Regardless of how the growth is viewed, both China and the United States have impressive economies and are clearly world leaders. The United States, today, remains the world's economic leader in any measurable category. Depending upon the source and the category, China is expected to surpass the United States somewhere between 2015 and 2050. Economics is not a zero sum game; the rise of other powers is good because it expands the pool.<sup>36</sup> The challenge is that geopolitics, at its core, is a struggle for power and influence.

Regardless, any hard power challenge to the United States in the future will clearly come from China. The United States must work to repair its struggling economy so that it can continue to maintain its leadership role in the world. The economy of the United States is the enabler that provides the ability to project and use the other forms of power. Without a strong economy, the United States will cease to be a world leader. However, in today's globalized collaborative world, it does not have to do this alone. In the world of economics, the world of supply and demand, nations give up a little of their sovereignty to make the global system work.<sup>37</sup> However, the economies of the players in the system must be strong enough to back up their role in the system. In order to maintain its influence and meet the challenges to the economic element of power, the United States must get its economic house in order.

*Soft Power Challenges.* The nature of soft power challenges is nebulous. Often these challenges come to the forefront due to a nation's inability to make the gains it desires via the use of the diplomatic and information elements of power. These failures come about because the nation is no longer attractive to individuals and nations. This attractiveness forms the relationships that are the foundation of the ability of a nation to

exert soft power. Madeleine Albright notes that as she looks to future she can think of nothing more important than the relationship between the most powerful nation in the world and the rest of the world.<sup>38</sup> She further states that if that relationship is not understood then America's leaders will not take action and pursue policies that will gain international support.<sup>39</sup> The ability of the United States to utilize its critically important soft power is dependent on these relationships. The scholars and leadership of the United States noticed a decline in America's image and set about trying to figure out the root cause of that decline. These findings were published in a report by the House of Representatives.

The report noted that from the 1950's to 2000, the United States was viewed in a generally positive manner worldwide; immediately after September 11, 2001 and into 2002, there was worldwide support and sympathy for the United States, but, after 2002, the view of the United States has become generally negative.<sup>40</sup> In 2002, 83 percent of the countries polled had a majority of their citizens judge the United States favorably, but, by 2006, only 23 percent of the countries polled viewed the United States favorably.<sup>41</sup> Although the United States cannot base its national security strategy and foreign policies on opinion polling, the negative view of United States' foreign policy is alarming and does affect the ability of the United States to accomplish its policy goals.

There are two schools of thought as to why the favorability of the United States has declined so precipitously. The first school argues that the negative view is simply due to a rejection of American culture, disagreement with American values and jealousy of American power.<sup>42</sup> For this school, opponents of the United States are simply anti-American. The second school argues that the negative view does not come from our

culture, values, or power; but rather our policies.<sup>43</sup> In this school, the concept of anti-Americanism is rejected in favor of the thought that the negative view comes from disappointment with our failure to live up to American values.

The polling done in support of the data shown above and presented in the 2008 study on the decline of America's reputation by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs shows that the negative views come from our policies, not anti-American views.<sup>44</sup> The Committee notes that this is a positive as expressions of disappointment vice those of pure hatred are something that the United States can work on. The United States can regain its standing in the world. In order to do that the United States must understand the root of the problem. The Committee held a series of 10 hearings about the levels, trends, and causes of international opinion of American policies, values, and people in an attempt to discover those areas which needed attention.

The hearings identified eight main findings which are summarized here. 1) It's true: United States' approval ratings have fallen. Favorable ratings dropped 60 percent from 2002 to 2006; this includes a 27 percent drop in the United Kingdom, one of our closest allies.<sup>45</sup> 2) It's the policies: opposition to specific policies, rather than American values or people has driven this decline. The key policies that have driven this opposition are the invasion and occupation of Iraq; support for repressive governments; a perceived lack of even-handedness in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute; and torture and abuse of prisoners in violation of treaty obligations.<sup>46</sup> 3) It's the perception of hypocrisy: international perception that American values are selectively ignored when confronted with American security or economic considerations. Disappointment and bitterness arise from the perception that the proclaimed American values of democracy, human rights,

tolerance, and the rule of law have been selectively ignored by successive administrations when American security or economic considerations are in play.<sup>47</sup> 4) It's the unilateralism: the recent pattern of ignoring international consensus, especially with the application of military power, has led to anger and fear of attack. The Government Accountability Office confirmed that this activity is turning the disagreement with United States' policies into a broadening and deepening anti-Americanism.<sup>48</sup> 5) It's the historical memory: United States' domination is a powerful, enduring image that is used to discredit current policies.<sup>49</sup> 6) It's the lack of contact: contact with America and Americans reduces anti-Americanism, but not opposition to its policies. Visitors to America, particularly students and their family and friends, have a more (+10%) positive view of America and her policies.<sup>50</sup> 7) It's the visas: interaction with United States' immigration and the visa process leaves visitors with the impression they are not welcome.<sup>51</sup> This view spreads through their communities when they return home, furthering the negative image of America. 8) It's the perceived war on Islam: the combination of the previous findings has fueled the belief that the United States is using the "war on terror" as a cover for its attempts to destroy Islam.<sup>52</sup>

This study is very comprehensive. It includes survey and polling data from every corner of the world conducted specially for this project. It also includes data taken from the Pew Global Attitudes Project, the largest international public opinion survey ever undertaken, lasting four years and conducting over 91,000 interviews in 50 countries.<sup>53</sup> Regardless of the source, the eight points above are surprisingly similar, regardless of the source. The conclusion of the studies is also similar; that the United States is not despised for its ideals, rather its policies. The reports are also similar in the fact that

they conclude that much of the problem comes from the fact that the United States is not well understood and the pundits often misinformed.<sup>54</sup> Regardless of the source of the hatred, misunderstanding, or misinformation, unless the United States is able to make significant progress in turning these issues around, it is going to continue to have problems achieving policy goals. It must focus energy on fixing these threats to its soft power.

### The Solution

In order to begin to address the challenges described above, America must change the way it currently operates internationally. It must move away from using the hard power options first and instead focus on using soft power first. It is important to note that a strategy that focuses on the use of soft power first must not forsake the hard power elements of national power. The hard power elements must be robust so that they can be utilized should the soft power approaches fail. Soft power without the tools of hard power to influence is impotent.

In order to implement such a strategy the United States must make policy decisions with primary regard to national interests and must always consider/implement ways to revitalize America's role and position in the world. This will allow the policy maker to focus on achieving National Interests while still considering and accommodating those opportunities to improve America's image. Although no policy action will escape criticism from the domestic, political, and international audiences, this action does allow for consideration of the influences of those audiences during execution. The policy maker will be able to work through the issue at hand by first dealing with the affected National Interests and then dealing with various opinion leaders (domestic, international and political) to work through ways to enhance the

policy decision by enhancing America's image. The risk in this decision is minimal as it addresses the primary area of concern, America's image, yet still puts America first by focusing on National Interests and allows for consideration of others by mandating consideration of ways to revitalize America's role in the world.

The art of statecraft is critical as this policy action allows for the best use and integration of the elements of national power (Diplomatic (**D**), Informational (**I**), Military (**M**) and Economic (**E**) (**DIME**)). As the policy maker moves forward with the execution of this policy, rhetoric "**I**" will be critical as the application of the "**M**" and the "**E**" elements of power without concern for others have received the most criticism internationally. The proper application of the "**I**" can help lessen the impact of the other elements. The "**D**" will help soften the impact of any hard power approach. Flexibility and nuance is the key to this policy action.

### Conclusion

In today's hyper-connected world, the threats to American power are many. Those threats come from all realms and pose challenges to all elements of national power. The United States must always act in its national interests, but must also consider the impact of their actions on other players in the world community. United States foreign policies must be shaped to rely on soft power first and the use of hard power only when absolutely necessary. More emphasis must be placed on using a combination of soft power tools such as coordinated public diplomacy, economic assistance and military-to-military programs.

In order to accomplish this, the United States must make policy decisions with primary regard to National Interests and always consider and/or implement ways to revitalize America's role and position as a the world leader, a first among equals in

today's global environment. This ensures that National Interests are the priority and that the policy maker has the flexibility to deal with domestic, international, and political opinion and influence by working to revitalize the American role and position in the world. It also allows for the tailored use of the elements of power (Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic (**DIME**)) depending upon the situation. The art of statecraft will ensure that these elements are used appropriately and that their use is explained as required.

### Endnotes

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<sup>6</sup> James Kurth, "Pillars of the Next American Century," *The American Interest*, Holidays (November/December): 6.

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<sup>10</sup> Robert M. Gates, "Landon Lecture."

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>20</sup> Nina Hachigian and Mona Sutphen, *The Next American Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), cover flap.

<sup>21</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 218.

<sup>22</sup> U. S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, *The Decline in America's Reputation: Why?* June 11, 2008, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Lisa A. Curtis, "America's Image Abroad: Room for Improvement," *Heritage Lectures*, May 31, 2007, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Juliana Geran Pilon, "Why America is Such a Hard Sell: Beyond Pride and Prejudice," *Heritage Lectures*, March 20, 2007, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Hans Binnendijk and Richard L. Kugler, *Seeing the Elephant: The U. S. Role in Global Security* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Book, 2006), 11.

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<sup>27</sup> Binnendijk and Kugler, *Seeing the Elephant: The U. S. Role in Global Security*, 284-285.

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<sup>29</sup> Drew Thompson, "Think Again: Why China's Military is Not Yet a Threat," *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2010, 2-3.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 4.

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