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As the United States looks toward the next four years of foreign policy, there are critical issues that the country must grapple with. All of these challenges are also opportunities to push ahead and think of new solutions.

Looking ahead, we need to realize that the twentieth century is over – the Cold War has ended, China is no longer internationally isolated, there is a complex global economy, technology is advancing at an incredible rate – events are changing faster and faster.

National security is not an issue of the Left or Right. We can best address those issues not as Democrats or Republicans – but as Americans.

From the economy to public diplomacy, nuclear proliferation to intelligence issues, even climate change and energy security – these are complex, critical challenges we need to grapple with in order to prosper.

We can best secure our future by examining the challenges currently facing the country with an eye toward our long term benefits.

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American Competitiveness & the Economy

In Brief:

- Improving our country's competitiveness is an urgent national security issue.
- The debate over our country's strength must include factors beyond military might in order to understand, and improve, America's true position globally.
- Six interrelated areas impact America's economic competitiveness: business climate, infrastructure, national debt, labor market and immigration, defense industrial base, and education and healthcare.
- Individuals and businesses together must take responsibility for solutions, just as government (federal, state and local) must, too.

Today the U.S. is gradually losing its ability to compete in a global economy, attract the world's brightest workers, and nurture a functional political system. This weakness has become so great that it threatens to erode the pillars upon which America's national security rests.

Evaluating America's strength is not a question of raw might. The U.S. military remains unmatched even after more than a decade of conflict in Central Asia and the Middle East. The economy is still the world's largest. That cornerstone of American power is assured. But other crucial elements of American competitiveness, such as the national debt, business climate, infrastructure, labor market, defense industrial base, and productive education and healthcare are not.



Some Challenges to America's Economic Competitiveness

Though bond markets have not judged that our debt is a problem – allowing the US government to continue to borrow at historically low rates, the \$16 trillion national debt poses a systemic risk to the country. It has dented America's credibility on the global stage, created opportunities for political leverage by foreign governments in the form of bond ownership, and places the US national security budget at constant risk with the dependence on borrowing money to fund government activities.

Yet, if a thriving economy is a pillar of America's strength, the private sector's health and performance is a critical component. So too is a vibrant economy central to the nation's identity and sense of purpose, which has been tested in recent years during the worst economic environment since the Great Depression.

A thriving economy needs a strong infrastructure to handle natural disasters and deliberate attacks. Additionally, it needs STEM education to provide future workers and ensure the economy stays the world's best.

The urgent need for action

Many writers, pundits, policymakers, military officials, and business leaders have worried about each of these elements for some time. That focus, however, has not stopped decline. A sense of alarm is already not enough to prompt action.

Persistent economic weakness is draining society and eroding America's standing around the world.

More troubling, the poisoning of political discourse makes solutions in Washington essentially unachievable for the simple reason that compromise is a political liability.

America's political and business leaders need a consensus that improving our nation's competitiveness is an urgent priority with much higher stakes than acknowledged today.



This will require balancing some of the toughest and most contentious issues at hand today in a way that is faithful to the needs of shareholders and business owners while also bringing empathy and understanding to the needs of employees and their communities.

The country's medium to long-term competitiveness is defined by its ability to lead globally on the strength of its actions and ideas, to support a vibrant free-market system, to nurture a responsive democratic political system and to uphold a social contract that honors economic and social progress for its citizens.

We need to acknowledge that current policies and objectives in the public and private sector, taken together, dangerously undercut America's current and future global position through instability, inefficiency and risk.

Energy Security

In Brief:

- In the last several years, the U.S. has seen the beginning of a great change in how it uses and produces energy.
- The world's population continues to grow and developing countries' economic growth is putting more pressure on energy than ever.
- The present energy situation is geopolitically, environmentally and economically unsustainable.
- The world will need sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels- and America can lead in the research and development necessary to get there.

America's long-term energy challenges remain daunting – fossil fuel dependence, rising energy prices and the threat of climate change. In order to achieve real energy security, the US will need to balance fossil fuel production with reducing carbon emissions and accelerating the transition to cleaner sources of energy.

Dependence on fossil fuels presents significant national security concerns for the United States – in terms of exposure to price volatility, vulnerability to the dangerous effects of climate change, and a hamstrung foreign policy. Achieving energy security will only come through developing sources of energy that are clean, safe, secure and abundant.



Energy Security is National Security



The United States is the largest consumer of oil in the world, burning through 18 million barrels of oil per day. Our transportation sector is entirely dependent on oil for fuel. Ensuring that oil continues to safely flow through critical chokepoints across the globe places a significant burden on the American military. It's been estimated that \$85-\$106 billion in annual expenditures can be traced to our military's mission to protect oil production and transportation. This is the sort of spending our nation should consider in light of other priorities.

However, many policymakers and analysts have grown complacent in recent years as our new-found fossil fuel abundance has created the illusion of energy security. With natural gas and oil surging to record levels, many are eyeing "energy independence" by the end of the decade.

While new oil and gas production certainly provides economic benefit to the United States, the long-term energy challenges for the United States remain. Becoming self-sufficient in oil production does not insulate American consumers from price volatility. It also does not stave off the rising threat of climate change.

Energy Security requires long-term strategy

In the transportation sector, providing alternatives to petroleum fuels would improve America's energy security. This means investing in biofuels, compressed natural gas, electric vehicles, and mass transit. The Department of Defense is leading on this issue. The Navy is seeking to source 50% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2020, primarily through a mix of biofuels. Other services have similar goals.

In the electric power sector, solar and wind power have made substantial progress in recent years, with the costs of production declining dramatically. In 2012, both the solar and wind industries experienced record years in terms of installed capacity. Although these achievements are promising, the transition from fossil fuels to cleaner technologies needs to be accelerated. However, renewable energy cannot do it alone.

America also should consider taking greater advantage of nuclear power. As the only source of large-scale baseload power that emits zero greenhouse gas emissions or other air pollutants, nuclear power must be part of the solution to America's energy security. There is no conceivable scenario in which the worst effects of climate change are averted without a prominent role for some sort of nuclear power. The industry's growth has stalled, but policymakers need to provide a pathway forward for next-generation nuclear power plants.

While America needs to invest in the clean technologies of today, it also needs to make investments in critical research and development to produce new innovative technologies for the long-term.

Fusion energy holds great promise. Fusion energy is produced by forcing together two hydrogen isotopes – deuterium and tritium. These two isotopes are nearly inexhaustible. Deuterium comes from ocean water, and tritium, though limited today, will be produced from lithium as a byproduct of the reaction. Fusion therefore holds the promise of complete energy independence.

Fusion is also safe and secure. Fusion reactions produce no greenhouse gases and only small amounts of waste, making fusion energy environmentally safe. Fusion power plants also hold no risk of meltdown and, as the plants use no uranium or plutonium, there are minimal risks of weapons proliferation. Making the choice to be energy-secure

The next administration will need to make choices on how to manage our new-found abundance of natural gas and oil while at the same time protecting our environment.

The next administration should consider limits on carbon emissions while making smart investment in cleaner technologies. A national renewable energy standard or a carbon price offer pathways to bolster market demand for clean energy.

Moreover, the next administration has the opportunity to plant the seeds of America's future growth by laying the groundwork for next-generation energy technologies that will break our dependence on fossil fuels. To do so, the administration must properly invest in science and innovation.

With rising global populations putting stress on energy resources, the world urgently needs cleaner sources of energy – and America can lead in the research and development necessary to get there.

Climate Security

In Brief:

- Changes in the climate are becoming more identifiable every year: the Earth is warming at a faster rate than ever before and humans have played a major role in the change.
- Although there are political arguments questioning the science, they do not hold up under close examination.
- Environmental threats blur traditional notions of national security: secure states do not automatically mean secure peoples and climate change is proving that.
- The U.S. must be resilient to potential large-scale variations in weather that will affect not only our country but our economic and physical security.

The frightening truth, all the political rhetoric aside, is that climate change is a scientific fact; the Earth is warming at an accelerating rate and humans have played a major role in the change.

The rise in temperature corresponds very closely with a global surge in carbon dioxide emissions that began in the Industrial Revolution. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Earth System Research Laboratory, atmospheric CO₂ is nearly 40% higher now than it was in the late 1800's.



A global problem affecting America's security

The numbers are sobering; carbon dioxide emissions doubled between 1900 and 1950 and quadrupled between 1950 and 2000. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, human activity releases nearly 20 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year. The rise in Earth's temperature has increased along with carbon emissions and since 1970 that trend has accelerated.

The evidence that climate change is real and that humans have caused it is overwhelming. It is a fundamentally different situation from prior natural changes to our planet's climate.

Climate change is not just global warming; some regions are experiencing very unusual weather patterns. This phenomenon will affect disparate parts of the world differently.

Ice is melting in the Arctic at a much higher rate than the 2007 U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted, affecting weather patterns across the entire northern hemisphere.

Poor countries with weak governance structures, particularly in Africa and Asia, will have an especially difficult time coping with increased floods, drought, and wildfires. Furthermore, many unstable countries, such as Yemen, are facing critical water shortages that could spark serious conflict.

Climate change makes weather less predictable and more extreme. The last several years have seen unprecedented levels of drought (including in the U.S.), extreme flooding, crop failures and water shortages. This can have massive and unpredictable affect on global politics.

Climate change creates political crises

In the summer of 2010, record heat coincided with record drought in Russia, and the resulting wildfires ravaged the country from July to September. By the time the fires were out, nearly 55,000 Russians had died. The smoke was so thick and wide ranging it blanketed Moscow. Crops failed, which prompted the Russian government to halt food exports and sparked a global spike in food costs.

These higher food prices contributed substantially to the 2011 Arab Spring protests, in country after country, the high cost of food was an underlying factor in following years of regime-shattering protests.

Climate change will also affect domestic politics. Hurricane Sandy, which recently ravaged parts of the Atlantic coast, was as horrific as it was, in part, because of climate change. An emerging consensus of scientists agrees that climate change affected both the intensity of the storm and the unique track, which featured an unprecedented westward turn towards New York harbor and the Jersey Shore.

The effects of climate change made Sandy so vast and so devastating. Meteorologist Dan Satterfield described for the American Geophysical Union that an identical storm in a world without climate change “would have been less wet with a storm surge that was lower.” Meaning climate change is a major reason why Hurricane Sandy was so devastating.



A path forward

The U.S. faces two choices. It can do nothing, and assume future generations of leaders will figure a way to cope with the unpredictability. Or the U.S. can try to plan for the future, building resiliency and redundancy into its infrastructure, and try to soften the effects of global climate shifts.

One way we can see this change playing out is the role of the military. After natural disasters, the National Guard is often mobilized to provide aid, rescue, and other forms of humanitarian assistance to affected areas. In the case of Hurricane Sandy, detachments of active duty Marines and Navy were deployed to the New York metro region. Right now, these domestic deployments are thankfully rare, in the future they will happen

more and more often. But what does it mean for our national security if the military takes on disaster relief as a major mission role?

Similarly, infrastructure needs to be hardened and made more resistant to damage. Sandy knocked out power over such a wide area that the area is still reeling from a fuel shortage (you can't pump gas without electricity). Over this summer, the DC area experienced days without power, phones, or emergency services after a derecho destroyed a few key nodes of the power grid and telephone system. More effective disaster preparedness and more redundant networks might ease the damage caused by extreme weather.



There are some proposed policies that could mitigate climate change in the long run. Market-based “cap and trade” programs, which set a limit on the amount of carbon that can be emitted nationwide and allow companies to trade their carbon credits, might be able to harness the power and responsiveness of the market to limit carbon emissions, as well. A tax on carbon emissions might likewise provide an incentive for companies to reduce their emissions over time. Regulatory measures, like changes in fuel economy standards, will also reduce emissions over time.

If we are to have any hope of being ready for the next disaster, we have to start working on it now.

Terrorism and Non-State Challenges

In Brief:

- Because the U.S. lacks a near-peer state competitor, many of the security challenges it faces are asymmetric in nature.
- These challenges are posed by state failure, economic disruption, sectarian conflict, and post-conflict reconstruction.
- These asymmetric challenges require complex, adaptive policy.
- Developing sound policy to manage asymmetric challenges begins with a sober analysis of U.S. interests and long-term strategic goals.

The security challenges the U.S. faces are not just state-based, but vested in more complex phenomena. Non-state actors like al Qaeda and its many franchises are one asymmetric threat. But instability stemming from state failure, economic disruptions, sectarian conflict, and the many challenges of post-conflict reconstruction instead also pose difficult risks to long-term security.

A complex mixture of actors

These challenges and threats are all asymmetric in nature, involving a complex relationship between the U.S., corporations, smaller states, and non-state groups. For example, a sectarian conflict could pose risks to a major economic corridor; ending the fighting, however, might not actually address the instability that created conflict in the first place.

But the normal post-conflict reconstruction methods the international community currently employs have a poor track record. Similarly, confronting recalcitrant, small, belligerent states requires a complex and adaptive mix of policies to deescalate and force compromise – not just bellicose rhetoric and threatening military moves.

Navigating asymmetric challenges begins with a clear articulation of U.S. interests. From there, the role American power should play becomes clear, and from understanding that role we can craft good policy to support our interests.

Asymmetric Threats are a strategic challenge

Strategically, the United States does not face a near-peer competitor the way it did with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. While new states like China are rising, they do not represent the same direct threat that the USSR did. Smaller states like Iran or North Korea or non-state actors can threaten regional power balances, but they do not pose existential threats to the United States.

Thus, trying to fit U.S. national strategic thought into molds originally created in the Cold War – by focusing on direct military adversaries – is out of step with how the world works now and how it is likely to work in the future.

Intelligence Reform

In Brief:

- Since the 9/11 attacks, the intelligence community (IC) has become increasingly militarized.
- The militarization of the IC has created blind spots that can uniquely challenge American interests.
- Reforming the IC requires high-level support from the administration.
- Reforming the IC to more broadly encompass their full range of roles, to include a refocus on general analysis and local knowledge, can prevent those blind spots from becoming permanent.

The militarization of the intelligence community is a long-term challenge facing the U.S. Over the last five years the intelligence community has refocused its collection and analysis efforts toward assembling targeting lists for special operations forces and unmanned drones. This has resulted in some short-term gains in places like Pakistan and Yemen as a growing list of terrorists are killed or forced into hiding. But the long-term costs of that change will be a loss of vision and warning about emerging crises and the players involved in them.



The short-term, tactical gains are coming at the cost of long-term position and information.

Missing important data

This shift in focus can create blind spots that pose unique challenges for the government. If branch chiefs and the policymakers they support value “exploitable” information over deep understanding, they might be ignoring potentially vital information that doesn’t seem immediately of interest.



Lost in this shuffle is an equal focus on human intelligence (HUMINT) and local expertise. Though vital to some missions, like the covert drone war in Pakistan, even HUMINT has been limited by the focus on immediately exploitable information while deeper understanding of countries and conflict zones has atrophied.

Developing the specific knowledge to understand why and how certain pieces of information matter – not just to a narrow counterter-

rorism mission but the full range of U.S. security – is difficult and time consuming.

Few in the intelligence community have it, and sometimes policymakers have mistakenly relied on outsiders to fill in the gaps in their knowledge with embarrassing results.

The next administration needs to bring the IC back to its roots. The counterterrorism mission can and should continue, but it should be placed in the context of the IC's traditional focus on the long term prospects of regions and countries of concern. By fusing deep local knowledge with the vast technological capabilities built over the last decade, the IC can generate the knowledge it needs to inform the President about how to make smart decisions that secure America's interests for the long term.

How to fix the problem

The next administration can bring the IC back to basics by prioritizing the kind of information it wants: by focusing less on the daily grind of counterterrorism missions and more on the social, political, and economic currents that are driving change across the Middle East and around the world.

By developing a more holistic picture of the foreign policy challenges facing the country in the next four years, smart choices can fill in the knowledge gaps and make future surprises less likely.

Threat Financing

In Brief:

- Threat finance is the means by which malign actors fund and support their activities.
- Countering threat finance is a complex issue because of globally integrated financial systems.
- The U.S. must continue to develop the means by which the finances of terrorists, organized criminals, and other threatening groups can be monitored and disrupted.
- Countering threat finance must involve a partnership between the government and private financial institutions, working together.

Mainstream examinations of U.S. counterterrorism (CT) strategy frequently adopt a tactical perspective: how large-scale attacks are foiled through law enforcement or military action, or how responsible parties are tracked down and brought to justice. This perspective, however, frequently ignores the enabling factors of organizations and activities that threaten U.S. national security.

Illicit organizations rely on sound financing that is disguised so as not to reveal either its source or intended use.



Threat finance encompasses the means and methods employed by illicit actors to secure financing for operations and activities in a manner that evades detection by authorities. This manner of financing utilizes various forms of money laundering, ranging from shell charitable organizations, extortion, and kidnapping, to counterfeiting, fraud, or market-based schemes. In 2011, illicit cash flows were estimated to account for 2 to 5% of global GDP (approximately \$800 billion to \$2 trillion).

Threat finance is a complex challenge

Threat finance is a multifaceted issue the U.S. Government faces as global systems further integrate, driven by technology and communication. Terrorism and crime are businesses, nearly inseparable from this technological innovation and connectivity. Consequently, any effective strategy to combat threat finance must take the following into consideration and call on a range of capabilities to detect, disrupt, and deter these operations.

- Terrorism and crime are business operations. Mainstream examinations of terrorism and crime are output-driven, centered on potential and realized damages, as well as recovery efforts. Examining these activities as business operations requires an input-side focus on limiting resource availability -- such as money -- and gaining insight into illicit organizations to prevent the realization of their objectives.
- Threat finance is intertwined with technological innovation and proliferation. The global financial

system (GFS) is ever more integrated due to advances in technology and communication. Informal value transfers such as hawala persist, but many illicit financial activities rely on access to technological resources at some point. Therefore, anti-money laundering (AML) regulation cannot be wholly addressed independent of technological standards and best practices. Of critical import presently is a lack of cyberspace regulation and threat information sharing in the U.S. -- an enormous gap in oversight easily exploited for illicit activity.

- Effectively countering threat finance requires a balanced approach that leverages various capabilities. Degrading illicit financial networks will be countered most effectively through a combination of practice, policy, and education. The diverse characteristics of threat finance necessitate a broad range of technical capabilities in financial intelligence guided by effective, exacting regulation. Policies and regulations must be effective, but still enable legitimate actors to counter threat finance without incurring excessive costs in doing so.

A strategic opportunity

An opportunity exists in AML efforts for both private industry and the public to play a much larger role in detecting and reporting questionable financial practices and transactions. These two groups are generally better positioned than authorities to encounter behaviors symptomatic of money laundering and financial crimes. Therefore, establishing best practices, raising awareness, and expanding the availability of reporting mechanisms could significantly augment AML efforts with limited investment.

Targeting the activities of illicit organizations on the input side (money laundering) complements efforts directed at countering the outputs of their activities (acts of terrorism, trafficking, and other acts). Together, these two sides of the same, sound counterterrorism strategy will bolster U.S. abilities to discover and dismantle these operations, as well as deter other actors from engaging in similar behaviors.



Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication

In Brief:

- Public Diplomacy is a vital element of national security which requires strategic long-term planning and relationship-building.
- Listening to foreign publics allows the U.S. to craft policy and messaging that better achieves strategic objectives.
- Messaging loses credibility if actions are not taken to provide support. Failure to support communication with policy results in an erosion of trust.
- In order to maximize the effectiveness of public diplomacy, the U.S. must first and foremost strengthen the quality of its narrative and strategic messaging.

Public diplomacy is communication with foreign publics for the purpose of achieving a foreign policy objective. It is a vital aspect of our national security strategy and must also inform the policymaking process. Paraphrasing Edward R. Murrow, President Kennedy's Director of the United States Information Agency (USIA), public diplomacy must be in on the take-offs of policy and not just the crash landings.

A 20-year gap

In the 20 years since the end of the Cold War, the United States has yet to establish a defining role for public diplomacy in the context of its foreign relations. Despite playing an important role in America's Cold War victory, public diplomacy efforts and quality of content have since received neither the attention nor the craftsmanship they deserve.



In 1999 the lead government body responsible for public diplomacy, USIA, was disbanded and its assets and responsibilities were subsequently folded into the Department of State. Since that time, public diplomacy has not yet found its rightful place.

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, policy makers and academics alike have wrestled with attempts to put American public diplomacy back on track — in order to better explain America to the world as well as to sway those who might support violence against our country or citizens.



How to improve American PD

Just as our military posture needs to reflect 21st Century realities and adversaries, so must our public diplomacy reflect modern mediums and audiences.

American public diplomacy also has to acknowledge 21st Century standards of communication, properly identify the target audience, and accurately and effectively convey the ideas and policies of the United States

to foreign publics. It cannot always be expected to produce immediate results, and instead must focus on building long-term trust relationships in an increasingly skeptical world.

The past several years have demonstrated the desire for private citizens around the world to have their voices heard. Tapping the power of new-media, individuals and other non-state actors now have access to many of the same tools as governments, and are often more effective in getting their messages across.



Yet the United States cannot merely rely on Twitter, Facebook, and other web-based mediums for communication as a substitute for the content of its strategic messages.

As an important aspect of effective strategic communication, America must also genuinely strive to listen to and understand foreign publics.

This vital component in crafting messages which resonate with target audiences has often gone unheeded or been misunderstood.

Nuclear Security

In Brief:

- Today's nuclear threats come in all shapes and sizes and political leaders will face many choices on nuclear security issues.
- Continuing diplomatic negotiations, backed by international sanctions, is currently the best option for resolving the Iran nuclear crisis.
- The path forward with a nuclear North Korea is unclear but engagement may ultimately prove to be the most prudent option.
- Strategic thinking about the threats the U.S. faces and the resources required to meet those threats will yield a more effective nuclear policy.

The next administration will face substantial choices on nuclear security issues. Its decisions will have serious implications, not just for the future of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, but for U.S. national security. There are four critical choices the country faces.

A menu of challenges

First, we face the difficult question of how to deal with the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. Though this is not a new problem, the stakes are higher now than ever before. While military force will remain on the table, at this stage military action would be unwise and possibly detrimental to our strategic aims. There is still enough time to resolve the nuclear standoff by nonmilitary means.

Iran is increasingly isolated through an interlocking network of international sanctions. The country should continue to work with the international community to show the Iranian leaders and the Iranian people that a decision to acquire a nuclear weapon carries unacceptable risk for their future and will not be tolerated by the international community.

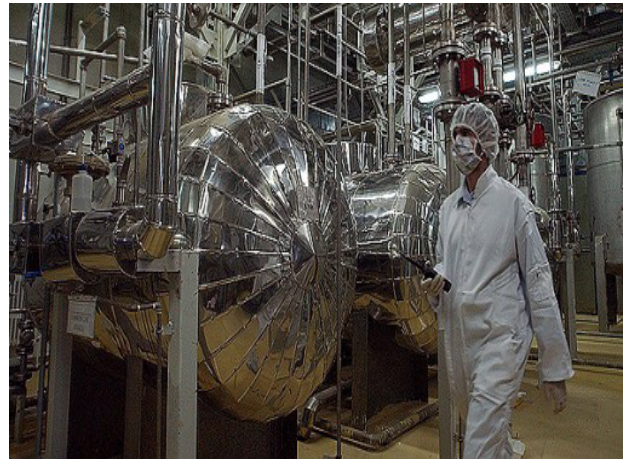
Second, North Korea's nuclear program is still a serious challenge. Engagement with North Korea has proven disappointing but should not be ruled out if the right circumstances should arise with a new North Korean leadership. This will continue to be a difficult issue to resolve quickly.

A third critical nuclear issue is Pakistan's nuclear program. As the war in Afghanistan winds down, many U.S. policymakers will no doubt argue for breaking ties with Pakistan, an often frustrating ally. However, walking away from Pakistan would be a mistake. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal remains a serious threat for many reasons, from the risk of nuclear escalation with India to activity of terrorist organizations within Pakistan.



We must ensure the security and integrity of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal through practical steps such as encouraging Pakistan to adopt the IAEA Additional Protocol and to declare a no-first-use policy toward all states.

Finally, the fourth nuclear issue will be how to move from a redundant posture into a much-needed 21st century strategy. Although the U.S. arsenal has shrunk, our nuclear force structure remains basically unchanged from the Cold War. The world has moved on and threats have changed, but the U.S. nuclear strategy is still shaped by the Cold War.



A more secure nuclear future

The nuclear triad – the land, sea, and air-based delivery systems for nuclear weapons – are the perfect example of this Cold War hangover. Plans to upgrade the triad, at a cost of hundreds of billions of dollars, are moving forward. Yet the need to maintain all three platforms is still unclear. The next Administration's nuclear review should carefully examine the strategy behind maintaining redundant nuclear systems that divert resources from other key defense programs - programs that better address 21st century security threats.



Updating the U.S. nuclear strategy will require that the next president work closely with congressional decision makers – a difficult task in today's partisan environment. Heated political rhetoric often gets in the way of smart policy choices, even on nuclear security issues. It is time for all sides to begin a regular dialogue with each other about post-Cold War U.S. nuclear strategy.

The next four years will be not easy. Fortunately, there are solutions to these difficult nuclear questions. In every case, the key is forging bipartisan support. Today's nuclear risks affect all of us.

Conclusion:

The Need for Long-Term, Strategic Thinking

The issues facing America today are not insurmountable. If anything, we have a greater clarity – and bipartisan consensus – about the fundamental issues facing the country now than we have in the last two decades.

But finding solutions to those challenges requires an honest grappling with the facts. The facts of national security are not liberal or conservative. They are not right or left. While the two sides of America's political discourse may disagree on how best to approach an individual issue, they do largely agree on what those issues are.

Yet, despite this bipartisan agreement on the biggest challenges facing the country, there remains no overarching strategy defining America's role in the world and how best to secure it. Choosing the right strategy is vital to achieving national policy. Strategy determines how we achieve our national goals.

The question facing policymakers, therefore, is not what our policies are, but how can we best achieve them – what is the best strategy?

That is the big question lurking beneath the discussion of these critical national security issues. The American Security Project is devoted to educating the public about these issues, and to highlighting how strategic, long-term thinking can help us solve these challenges.

It doesn't come easy. The difficult work of making and analyzing policy incentivizes immediate thinking: angling for a short-term payoff rather than a long-term benefit. We need to do better, and to think about our country (and its place in the world) with a view to the future.

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Further Reading

American Security Quarterly

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Building a New American Arsenal

The American Security Project (ASP) is a nonpartisan initiative to educate the American public about the changing nature of national security in the 21st century.

Gone are the days when a nation's strength could be measured by bombers and battleships. Security in this new era requires a New American Arsenal harnessing all of America's strengths: the force of our diplomacy; the might of our military; the vigor of our economy; and the power of our ideals.

We believe that America must lead other nations in the pursuit of our common goals and shared security. We must confront international challenges with all the tools at our disposal. We must address emerging problems before they become security crises. And to do this, we must forge a new bipartisan consensus at home.

ASP brings together prominent American leaders, current and former members of Congress, retired military officers, and former government officials. Staff direct research on a broad range of issues and engages and empowers the American public by taking its findings directly to them.

We live in a time when the threats to our security are as complex and diverse as terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, climate change, failed and failing states, disease, and pandemics. The same-old solutions and partisan bickering won't do. America needs an honest dialogue about security that is as robust as it is realistic.

ASP exists to promote that dialogue, to forge consensus, and to spur constructive action so that America meets the challenges to its security while seizing the opportunities the new century offers.



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