



Stabilizing the Realm: Surviving in Roiling Foreign-Policy Seas

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America's position has changed a great deal over the fifteen years since the fall of the Soviet Union. Yet even today, many of those in charge of our nation have not fully grown into our role as sole Superpower, and continue to see things in an old light, limited by old preconceptions and worries. If this does not change, and soon, we may see as yet untapped opportunities disappear, new possibilities never come to pass, and the world miss out on American leadership that could dramatically reshape history and make permanent a number of those values that have heretofore always been transient.

It has become a truism that American power today is in a radically different position than before the fall of the Soviet Union, and even critics concede that Washington has dispatched with aplomb the task of shepherding a sometimes recalcitrant world into a brand-new era of untrammled development. The plethora of opportunities now arising in such disparate parts of the world as Iraq and Central America are only the most superficial mark of this triumph: in fact, a brand-new landscape of profound opportunity is beginning to stretch as far as the ships can sail or planes can fly, with a future ultimately shaped by one benevolent power alone: America.

Although we universally celebrate these developments, many of us on the right, even many of us in positions of some responsibility, do not fully accept their logic. We use circumlocutions and big clumsy sentences to hide from ourselves, and from each other, core elements of the basis on which recent achievements repose; as a result, we cripple their logic and impoverish our communal thinking.

There is good reason to avoid speaking about all things in all fora. But when we deny elements of the truth in our *for intérieur*, our thought capacity sunders like so much outdated naval technology. A ballastless battleship hit by the broadside of happenstance, the ship of our State starts to sink, all guns firing at once; our monuments go the way of the Forum.

To prevent this scenario from completing, we at the Society for Socioeconomic Stability have begun to develop a list of key points that Americans on the right, who occupy positions of some responsibility, should be fully aware of. These points already underpin our thinking and actions; to avoid considering them is to proceed without ballast through the narrow straits of blowback as well as the choppy seas of comeuppance.

To many, these points will seem obvious—if you are a high-level White House official, there is surely no reason to read this!—but for others, clarity on these issues could significantly increase the intellectual ballast needed to insure America's stability in the years and decades to come.¹

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Point: The decision to attack Iraq was a forward-thinking, future-oriented one.

When examining the so-called “lapses” of the Administration—its “excessive” attention to Iraq both before and after 9/11, at the expense of attention to Al Qaeda²—critics and partisans alike often ignore the differences between the forms of security threatened by each. Al Qaeda did indeed pose a threat to security of the physical kind, not paying attention to which might result in much death. But Iraq posed a much, much graver threat—a threat to the long-term stability of our oversight. Inattention to the threat from Iraq might have ultimately resulted in the destruction of our entire way of life.

Sure, the World Trade Center downings were grave—and of course those 3000 victims should have been able to experience all the joys of life for the duration of their naturally allotted years. But let us be clear about this: were ten more 9/11 events to occur, the military and economic security of our country would not be in the slightest danger. The downing of the WTC did not—and the threat of similar downings do not—constitute any sort of *real* security risk to this country.

Whereas Saddam Hussein, very clearly, did.

Iraq’s threat did not take the form of WMDs. (Those, like the human rights issue, were in one sense an issue of convenience.³) Rather, Iraq represented all that is uncontrollable in the Middle East, all that threatens our long-term security. Not only our cars, but our agriculture itself depends on the stability of our access to Middle East resources; our presence in Iraq will afford us with reliable control of this access—control that we have been missing for decades.

It has recently been discovered, for example, that thirty years ago, Richard Nixon, understanding the security threat that the OPEC crisis was beginning to represent, began drawing up plans for an aerial attack to secure Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti oil fields.⁴ (It so happens that Iraq, with its Soviet backing, formed a major impediment to those plans.) Today, we have finally taken the first step to resolving this issue once and for all, so that no future president need consider endangering American talent with crisis-spurred action.

That is why we can state with the utmost confidence that although the Administration has received a lot of flack for aiming at the “wrong” target in the hours, days, and months following the 9/11 attacks—there having been no hint of Iraqi involvement in 9/11, etc.—there is no doubt that it was the *right* one.

Point: The decision to attack Iraq was taken solemnly, after lengthy deliberation.

Critics and partisans both sometimes find themselves arguing that the attack on Iraq was motivated in part by emotional considerations. The partisans suggest that the President was angry about 9/11; some critics point to Saddam Hussein’s designs on the President’s father.

Not coincidentally, those who hold these views are often the same ones who consider that we failed in Afghanistan. Let us examine that point, which will clarify this one.

Point: The liberation of Afghanistan was a resounding success.

There are many, even on the right, who insist that we failed in the Afghan campaign.

For one thing, they say, we did not capture the prime evildoer, Osama bin Laden. For another, they note that although our conquest secured future rights to an important pipeline that had to

pass through the country, we had already been well on our way to securing these rights through negotiations with the Taliban, who were, after all, our clients.

Those proffering criticisms such as these ignore one thing. At the time of the Afghan campaign, American public opinion was not yet at the point of understanding the need for full-scale American intervention at the heart of the Middle East, let alone accepting and willingly paying for it. It took the intervening year for the U.S. public to come to understand the logic of attacking Iraq; during that knowledge-building phase of the operation, public support of the Administration's project soared, as over 60% of the public came to understand that a campaign against Iraq would be appropriate retaliation for 9/11.

By the end of that same year, as public opinion came to reflect political reality, U.S. forces in Afghanistan had been positioned within a stone's throw of the final target—a target which, again, was infinitely more important to our future prosperity and even continuity than Osama bin Laden (see first Point).

What could have been more successful?

Point: Apocalypse is our friend.

Apocalypse is a difficult doctrine. It involves the world coming to an end, most of humanity dying harsh deaths, etc.

There is a very good chance that if you are a typical well-educated conference-goer, whether Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, you do not subscribe to the concept of Apocalypse. You may find it absurd *prima facie*, or you may feel that the Book of Revelations, as most scholars suggest, was elliptically addressing an immediate Roman subject, and never pretended to describe what might happen 2000 years in the future.

Well, we're here to tell you something: whatever the scholars might say, the Apocalyptic model is *correct!*

Note: we are not suggesting that Apocalypse will soon happen. The Bible's later books may or may not have relevance about what, in the year 2004, we can expect from the future. Rather, we are asserting that the Apocalyptic mindset is exactly is needed in the world today.

Today's world is one in which there is an increasingly limited supply of basics. Our actions in the Middle East are necessary to stave off an inevitable outcome: oil *will* run out, though for some countries sooner than for others. At some point not so long from now, assuming there are no major, successful shifts in technology (a fair bet; the so-called "hydrogen fuel cells" are not going to do it, for example), we may find ourselves battling others abroad, or even strata within the homeland, for control of the precious resources required to drive our civilization.

Where will we stand when this happens? Will we be at the mercy of "small groups of unreasonable people," to paraphrase Richard Nixon,⁵ or will we be able to maintain the level of comfort and development to which we are accustomed, whether through new forms of social control or new and more effective overseas ventures?

These are the questions and realities that face those of us with some degree of responsibility; they are our main concern. But it is not only with those on the inside that a political movement must occupy itself; it must interface with *everyone*, or with the largest number of people possible. And there is one mindset, constitutive of a great number of mass movements, whose

understanding of outside reality most closely mirrors our own, and which creates for us natural allies.

This is why, during the run-up to the 2000 election, the President teamed with a wide variety of believers in Apocalypse, from Muslim fundamentalists to Lubavitcher Hasidim, from the Reverend Sun Myung Moon to Jim Bakker. Most importantly, then and since, has been the President's appeal to the forty million Christian Americans who believe the Apocalypse is imminent and inevitable. These are the President's bedrock, and it is these who insure the President's ascendancy in the face of all news.

In the 2000 election, the President's more exotic alliances were misunderstood almost as often as they were discussed—which was never. Rather, it was we who stand at the President's side, feeling ourselves to be “above” superstition, who sometimes, quietly, take issue with these coalitions. It is time for us to stop doing so, and to cease being defensive about those dynamics which make these alliances possible. When we hear the President accused of having “100% certainty, 0% knowledge,” let us not tread onto the thin ice of disagreement—let us, rather, nod agreeably and rest comfortably in the knowledge that it is precisely this ratio that insures our success.

Conclusion

We are a people that moves; we manifest our way to the limits of destiny, and then push beyond. When we stand still, we become just like any other people, and therefore we die: that is the way it is with us. What is the solution? We cannot become just like any other people—no: we must keep moving. That *is* the solution.

We have discovered many methods for ensuring perpetual motion. For example, we have discovered the motive power of wealth. When the poor and middle class own 95% of America's wealth, only about 15% of that wealth can go to investment in the most innovative forms of corporate growth; ordinary people spend most of their money on living. The rich, on the other hand, can invest *most* of their income without going hungry. If the *rich* own 95% of the wealth, fully 70% goes to financing corporate growth. And the less they are taxed, the more that figure increases.

Other methods for ensuring thrust are implicit in the points we have outlined above. Our clarity on these issues will serve as lubricant for that thrust's lubricant. But besides the points outlined in this paper, there are a number of other issues that it is also necessary to examine—to take in our hands, turn over a few times, and replace at that joint in the infrastructure where they will best serve our motion. For example, is it indeed sensible, given the necessity of always hurtling forward, to arrest that development every four years with a whole new election? Why not, like the other great peoples of history, establish once and for all the requirements of our leadership, and move forwards from there?

These considerations will form the basis of a subsequent paper.

¹ It is especially important to consider this in light of the likely length of the current version of Future. As Mr. Rumsfeld noted on October 4, 2001, the war against terrorism “undoubtedly will prove to be a lot more like a cold war than a hot war. If you think about it, in the Cold War it took fifty years, plus or minus. It did not involve major battles. It involved continuous

pressure..... It strikes me that that might be a more appropriate way to think about what we are up against here.” (“Secretary Rumsfeld Media Availability with Traveling Press,” Oct. 4, 2001: www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2001/t10042001_t1004sd2.html)

² Recent books by Bob Woodward, Richard Clarke, Paul O’Neill, et al. have belabored this point ad nauseam. They can eat their hearts out, however—CBS News noted it long before they did. (“Plans For Iraq Attack Began On 9/11,” Sept. 4, 2002: www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/04/september11/main520830.shtml)

³ As Paul Wolfowitz has explained, “For bureaucratic reasons, we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on.” (“WMDs only 'bureaucratic reason' for war: Wolfowitz,” May 29, 2003: www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/05/29/1053801479971.html)

⁴ “War for Arab oil in '73?” *New York Times*, January 2, 2004: www.iht.com/articles/123419.html.

⁵ “War for Arab oil in '73?” *New York Times*, January 2, 2004: www.iht.com/articles/123419.html.