CSIS-Baker Institute Task Force on

THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF
THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

In January 2002, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University launched an effort to explore the broader geopolitical consequences of the war against terrorism and to draw appropriate conclusions for future U.S. policy. The two organizations formed a Task Force under the honorary chairmanship of James A. Baker III and consisting of prominent analysts with extensive experience in government: Samuel Berger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Wesley Clark, Robert Gates, Lee Hamilton, John Hamre, Fred Ikle, Sam Nunn, Teresita Schaffer, and Brent Scowcroft.

Organized by CSIS Counselor Richard Fairbanks and Baker Institute Director Edward Djerejian, the Task Force met seven times to discuss recommendations on U.S. interests and policies in key areas of the world. A summary of observations and subsequent recommendations follows.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH MAJOR POWERS

1. EUROPE

The disparity in military capabilities and in the willingness to engage in a post-911 anti-terrorist agenda imply new complications for transatlantic relations. The gaps are growing. The existing disconnect between European desires for involvement in (or even leadership of) Western decision-making and their ability to fund and support credible forces is real. We can expect European frustration to translate into corrosive rhetoric. Perceived “unilateralism” by the United States can be countered with respectful consultation without ceding critical decision-making. Future U.S. actions in support of our interests must be conditioned with these factors in mind.

Attention must be paid to identifying ways in which the Europeans can be encouraged to use their economic and diplomatic skills in common efforts. Similarly, drawing from the more extensive experience that Europe has had with terrorism, attention must be paid to expand areas of cooperation in anti-terrorism activity.

Conclusions:

- The United States must actively explore a realistic and appropriate discussion of the implications of the widening gap in defense capabilities on each side of the Atlantic. The clear trend is that U.S. defense spending, accelerating in the wake of the 911
attacks, will create ever more difficult circumstances within which to manage U.S.-
European relations on the basis of parity.

- We, therefore, recommend that the United States should continue pursuing its broader
interests in Europe by expanding the NATO alliance and supporting the enlargement
of the European Union (EU). Washington should support expansion of NATO on
geopolitical grounds with potential for further enlargement based on established
NATO criteria. It should also continue efforts to promote enlargement of the
European Union on grounds that a broader Union brings deeper stability to Europe.

- In the emerging geopolitical context, to avoid additional friction the United States and
Europe must define and implement a new division of labor with respect to national
security and foreign policy interests which accounts for U.S. qualitative and
quantitative superiority in most military capabilities. To that end, the United States
should encourage the Europeans to rationalize their military capabilities, capitalizing
on the unique strengths of each country, in order to maximize the overall
effectiveness of the alliance.

- The same conclusion applies to the ways in which the United States and Europe
respond to the new realities of the war against terrorism. In this regard, Washington
should lead a transatlantic effort to bolster areas of cooperation in the campaign
against terrorism—such as the strengthening of multilateral coordination among
domestic counter-terrorism agencies.

2. **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

*Moscow’s policies and attitudes suggest Russia’s recognition of America’s dominant position internationally. They reflect Russia’s changed status in the post-Cold War era. U.S. policies toward Russia should reflect sensitivity to these new positive attitudes from Moscow.*

Attempts to strengthen relations between Russia and the People’s Republic of China to inculcate an “anti-hegemon” alliance against the United States are insignificant. In light of its diminished status and China’s rising posture, Moscow’s realistic choice is to focus on a new balance with the United States.

Conclusions:

- In geopolitical terms, therefore, the challenge to Washington is to restructure relations
with Moscow in a manner that more realistically reflects the new power balance
between them. That will require relating Russia to U.S. geopolitical interests, such as
NATO expansion and EU enlargement, in such a way that Moscow has a
participatory role, but with primacy given to U.S. geopolitical objectives. We must
also carry out policies that assist Russia in playing a more constructive role in the
region—e.g., democracy in Belarus as well as political and economic liberalization in
other areas of the former Soviet Union.
Regarding Chechnya, we recommend that the United States become more actively engaged with Moscow in seeking a solution with the overall goal of political accommodation and peace in the Caucasus.

We strongly recommend that more leadership and resources be directed by the United States to a broadened Nunn-Lugar initiative to secure nuclear and biological materials and expertise in Russia.

The United States should promote a “virtuous circle” by assisting Russia in reforming its economic and regulatory systems in such a way that it promotes the inflow of higher levels of foreign direct investment.

3. PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Sino-American relations in the near term are marked by low expectations on both sides. The agenda continues to be dominated by management of the list of bilateral and multilateral issues, such as Taiwan, proliferation, human rights, religious rights, trade issues, and relations in the Asia-Pacific region. Cooperation in counter-terrorism has improved in the wake of the September 11 attacks and the two recent visits of President Bush to the country. Future cooperation will likely be constrained by the fact that the definitions of terrorism held by Washington and Beijing do not coincide.

In the longer term, Washington needs to build on this relationship, which is already largely “on track”—cooperative, constructive, but candid. Especially in light of the looming changes in Beijing’s political leadership and the transition implicit in the country’s accession to the WTO, longer-range relations with Beijing must continue to support liberalization of economic activity and observance of more democratic practices.

The United States should have no illusions: the cardinal foreign policy issue for Beijing is Taiwan. Not to exacerbate the problem on either side of the Strait, we should continue our longstanding policy commitments to the three communiqués, six assurances and the Taiwan Relations Act. The most realistic and peaceful resolution of this issue resides in China’s continued economic reform and integration into the international community and in deepening economic and social interaction across the Strait. Therefore, strategic patience is required.

Conclusions:

The goal is to define the Sino-American agenda for the next generation of leadership in Beijing, advance the agenda relating to the campaign against terrorism, strengthen the political environment between the two countries, and in the process reduce tensions created by fundamental differences over Taiwan.

We therefore recommend building on the 30th anniversary of the opening of relations to mount a major push to develop relations with the PRC as Beijing passes through its
political transition this fall. Such a priority should consist of continued close consultations with the senior Chinese leadership on a variety of issues of common concern, including but not limited to the campaign against terrorism, regional affairs in East Asia, regional affairs in Central Asia, developments in South Asia, arms proliferation, human rights, and global trade liberalization. It should also include deepening of recently renewed military-to-military talks and potential membership of the PRC in the G8.

- These recommended approaches to enhanced strategic engagement imply defining a new balance of relations between Washington and Beijing commensurate with heightened U.S. involvement in South Asia (Afghanistan, India, Pakistan) and Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan). It also implies developing opportunities for cooperation on South Asia, stability on the Korean Peninsula, and additional cooperation on anti-terrorism.

4. **JAPAN**

*The events of 911 provided the impetus for Japan to begin a transition to a new security posture. U.S. policy should focus on encouraging economic reform in Japan, which has obvious security implications, as well as dealing with existing bilateral issues (i.e., Okinawa and basing).*

**Conclusions:**

- Longer-range U.S. policy toward Japan must preserve the strength and longstanding importance of U.S.-Japanese security relations, on the one hand, and work directly and indirectly to support political and economic reform in Japan, on the other. It should seek to maintain security, political and economic stability in Japan as part of an overall strategy of maintaining stability and prosperity in the region.

- Especially in the light of the decade-long economic recession afflicting Japan and the difficulties that Tokyo has encountered in implementing reform, primary emphasis must be placed on stabilizing the Japanese economy—especially the banking sector. The greatest threat that Japan poses to the ongoing campaign against terrorism is deepened economic and financial instability.

**U.S. RELATIONS WITH REGIONS / REGIONAL STATES**

1. **MIDDLE EAST**

*The Middle East, a region of vital interest to the United States, is undergoing the dynamics of profound political, economic and social change. In addition to the central conflict-resolution issue of Israel and the Palestinians, these dynamics pose serious challenges to U.S. leadership. Especially after 911 and in the context of the campaign against terrorism, how successfully the United States deals with these issues will affect our ability to prosecute the campaign. It will*
also undercut the ability of secular and religious extremists to exploit these tensions for their own purposes. This was apparent in the exploitation by Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein of the Palestinian issue. The so-called source of terrorism in the region is not a single issue. In addition to bin Laden’s attempts to employ it to radicalize the Islamic world, there are a multitude of unresolved factors, including lack of political participation, the need for economic and political reform, and other broad human rights issues which help to provide a fertile breeding ground. Addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will assist the United States in its strategic standing with the “moderate” regional states by promoting regional stability.

**Peace Process.** The U.S. national interest dictates that Washington must be fully engaged in efforts to de-escalate the Arab-Israeli violence, and restore a political framework for peace negotiations on all fronts. This is also important in the longer-term because a perceived constructive role of the United States in the Middle East will serve to undercut extremism, reduce the chances that we will be the target of future terrorist attacks, and diminish the opportunities that extremists can exploit the situation for their own political ends.

Positive and effective U.S. leadership is important not only because the United States has a clear national interest in promoting a just and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, but also because the United States needs to engage moderate states in the region (Egypt, Jordan and the GCC states) in efforts to combat terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**Conclusions:**

- The United States must attach the highest priority to serving as a catalyst to achieve an Israeli-Palestinian peace. We recommend a continued and intensive effort, no matter how difficult, to bring the parties to negotiations.

- The United States must now take the next step. The United States should table a peace proposal, which would provide the parties with the necessary political context to begin negotiations within a mutually agreed upon timeframe. It is clear that many details would still have to be negotiated, but the prospects for success would be significantly enhanced once the outlines of an endgame are known.

- This clearly will involve continued and intensive engagement, driven by the urgency of events, by the President, the Secretary of State, and other senior members of the Administration.

**Iraq.** The issue is not whether we go after Saddam Hussein, but rather the political context and the methods we employ to halt the regime’s continuing pursuit of WMD.

The first priority should be to forge as significant a coalition as broad as possible through the United Nations Security Council—namely, adherence to a robust weapons inspection regime as well as a “smart sanctions” approach to pressuring Iraq. The basis
of such a coalition should be an emphasis on the Iraqi Baathist regime and its weapons of mass destruction that continue to represent a threat to the region and its stability. The absence of such a coalition, however, should not deter the United States from action when our national interest dictates.

If the use of force becomes necessary, and if United States can achieve a quick and decisive victory, remove the Iraqi Baathist regime and its weapons of mass destruction, and promote the establishment of a stable successor government, we will garner support in Europe, the moderate Arab countries, and elsewhere. The coherence of the successor government and the maintenance of Iraq’s territorial integrity will be vital to the perceived success of the undertaking. Under a scenario of a more protracted conflict, without near-term positive results, progress on addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict becomes even more crucial to temper criticism in Europe, the Arab world, and elsewhere.

The United States must proceed with a clear postwar result in mind—a viable political structure, maintaining Iraq’s territorial integrity, a strategy to mobilize international support, and a commitment to a long-term approach to stability. We need to recognize that expunging the country of its weapons of mass destruction will require a long-term program assuming the total cooperation of the successor regime and the support of the international community.

Conclusions:

- We therefore recommend that the United States follow a “ramp up” strategy, employing escalating phases of suasion and coercion and mobilizing the political coalition that will become crucial to creating a more stable future in Iraq. That implies beginning with multinational efforts to bring about the elimination of Iraq’s capacity to produce and employ WMDs. If that is not possible (as well may be the case), force must be used to effect a change of regime. That implies escalating engagement—moving, under appropriate circumstances, from indirect support to alternative political players to covert operations to military operations to undercut the Iraqi Baathist regime. These scenarios clearly require an honest discussion with our citizens about both the threat and the costs involved in addressing it.

- In dealing with moderate regional states, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt, it is essential that the Administration convey clearly its expectations of a post-Baathist Iraq. In addition, as part of a strategy to reduce its dependency on facilities in the region, the Administration should carefully weigh the possibility of finding alternatives to existing basing arrangements in the region particularly in light of the Iraq threat.

Iran. We need to recognize that, despite the power of the hard-line clerics, Iran may very well be in a “pre-revolutionary” stage i.e., demographic dynamics are generating
significant societal transformation] in the near- and mid-term and it would be in our interest to identify with and keep channels open to the youth and the reformers.

Conclusion:

- We need to keep the doors open to a dialogue with Khatami and those elements in the Iranian government that may seek such a dialogue.

2. SOUTH ASIA

Owing to strengthened relations between Washington and Islamabad, the United States is now in a position to play an even stronger role in the South Asia region. Accordingly, Washington should spell out the strategic nature of its commitment in the Central and South Asia regions writ large—the “Global Balkans.” In particular, it should define and convey a longer-range strategy on its relations throughout the region—from Iran through India and from Central Asia south through Sri Lanka. Especially in light of China’s growing power, India is a potentially important counterweight on the global chessboard.

**India-Pakistan.** Strengthened U.S. relations with India and our reengagement with Pakistan provide a unique opportunity to influence both countries. The United States needs to mount a steady, high-level effort to move these two countries toward a settlement of their differences, especially over Kashmir.

Conclusions:

- U.S. policy must drive toward two objectives: avoiding a war that could go nuclear, and eliminating the terrorist threat in Afghanistan and Pakistan. These goals are not a tradeoff; the events since December 2001 have shown how the impact of an India-Pakistan crisis undercuts our efforts against terrorism. We risk losing the benefit of our military success in Afghanistan unless we pursue both these goals as a major priority.

- The near-term crisis and the longer-range strategy require an intensified and major role in seeking to defuse the current threat of warfare in Kashmir and promote a negotiating process which can lead to a stable solution.

- U.S. policy should reinforce institutions and governance in Pakistan. The army will be a key player for the indefinite future, but strengthening the judiciary, the parliament, and the functioning of the political system are key ingredients in bringing about a government that can sustain both a peacemaking effort with India and a crackdown on terrorists.

**Afghanistan.** The longer-term priority is to stabilize Afghanistan with a view to creating a peaceful political structure and a social system that can support political and economic
modernization. Such a commitment is critical to stability in the region, the campaign against terror, and the credibility of U.S. efforts in the Middle East and elsewhere.

**Conclusion:**

- U.S. policy should stress building the institutions on which a healthy state depends. The short-term stress should be on establishing enough security outside Kabul that the new central government can hold its own in the inevitable negotiations with powerful local figures.

3. **CENTRAL ASIA**

Another significant strategic opportunity for the United States is the development in Afghanistan of an infrastructural corridor--consisting of roads, pipelines, and trunklines--that will link the region with the outside world. By “connecting” north and south through Afghanistan, Washington can help stabilize post-Taliban Afghanistan while also contributing to a broader regional integration process.

For these reasons, moving the region’s oil and gas resources to market must be a U.S. priority. In addition to stabilizing world markets, the increase in production can contribute economically to the development of the region economically and politically.

**Conclusion:**

- We recommend that, above and beyond assisting in the development of an infrastructure corridor through Afghanistan, U.S. leaders establish the United States as a major player in Central Asia and a major influence in regional oil politics. To carry out these goals, we must develop vital new relations with regional states, forge new levels of cooperation, and work with governments to modernize individual economies.

4. **NORTH ASIA**

Korean Peninsula. The events of 911 did not change the current internal dynamic on the Korean peninsula. The Administration’s “axis of evil” has changed the atmospherics, but the region is marked by the least change in policy.

**Conclusions:**

- We recommend, in close consultation with our allies in South Korea, continuing cautious support of dialogue with North Korea using both carrots and sticks to lay out a detailed road map that clearly sets out Washington’s priorities with respect to non-proliferation, curtailment of the development and production of weapons of mass destruction, and efforts to effect unification with South Korea.
The current flood of North Korean across the Chinese border may signal the impending collapse of the regime, an event that would require close coordination with our South Korean allies.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY / NATIONAL SECURITY

Public diplomacy. In its campaign against terrorism, the United States must undertake a fundamental reassessment of its capacity to project “message” to the rest of the world. New and more effective channels of communications are critical to the campaign against terrorism and U.S. efforts to promote stability and prosperity in the face of rapid change.

Conclusion:

We recommend that the Administration commit significant resources to ensuring that the United States has a radically improved capacity to project its values, viewpoints and objectives across the world. This is particularly true in the Middle East, which is characterized (at best) by continued misunderstanding about Washington’s goals and policies. A major effort should be directed at radio, television, and other media—in all the major languages of the Islamic world—to provide a more objective and representative image of the United States and its role in the region.

Relations with Muslim countries. In dealing with Islamic countries in the context of its global campaign against terrorism, the United States must be careful to avoid framing its policies as an approach toward “Islam,” per se.

Conclusions:

This implies the development of a differentiated strategy toward the Muslim countries, with policies at once geared to combat terrorism and also to foster progress on pressing political, social and economic issues as well. Such a strategy would affirm that U.S. engagement takes into account broad political, social and economic challenges.