

THE NATIONAL  
SECURITY STRATEGY  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA



Proposal

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## MEMORANDUM

To: President-Elect Michael Bloomberg  
From: Patrick Bunch, Ismael Cuevas, Sarah DeCuir, Sarah Hamshari, George Kioussis, and Caitlin Sharp, National Security Advisory Team  
Date: May 6, 2012  
Re: National Security Briefing

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### National Security Strategy 2013

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## Introduction

*For those who believe that hope is not a strategy, America must seem a strange contradiction of anachronistic values and enduring interests amidst a constantly changing global environment. America is a country conceived in liberty, founded on hope, and built upon the notion that anything is possible with enough hard work and imagination.*

Captain Wayne Porter, USN and Colonel Mark Mykleby, USMC  
“A National Strategic Narrative,” 2011

Mr. President-Elect:

Your election as an independent candidate has granted you a window of opportunity to transform the United States’ national security strategy. A decade of reactivity, short-term thinking, and partisan divide since September 11 has pushed us further away from a world that seeks connection to us. We have perpetuated our insecurities by selectively – and at times hypocritically – pursuing interests over values. This has not made us safer.

The time is ripe for change – a change in philosophy and a change in action. Dismayed by a grand strategy that was conspicuous only in its absence, Captain Wayne Porter and Colonel Mark “Puck” Mykleby called on policymakers to rethink the national narrative.<sup>1</sup> A narrative, the pair reasoned, would clarify the country’s purpose and, in so doing, provide a guiding framework for its strategic actions. In particular, they advocated a five-pronged approach that shifted focus from:

- Control in a closed system to credible influence in an open system
- Containment to sustainment
- Deterrence and defense to civilian engagement and competition
- Zero-sum to positive-sum global politics/economics
- National security to national prosperity and security<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Porter and Mark Mykleby, “A National Strategic Narrative,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011. The piece is also known under the title, “The Y Article.”

<sup>2</sup> Anne-Marie Slaughter, Preface to “A National Strategic Narrative.”

This is a helpful start, but it is just that – a start. Captain Porter and Colonel Mykleby stopped short of extensive and tangible policy prescriptions. The plan offered herein bridges the divide, providing both broader strategic goals and tactical recommendations. The former – drawn in part from “The Y Article” – can be condensed into three cornerstones, which will inform the rest of our analysis:

- Credible influence
- Cultural exchange
- Economic opportunity

Credible influence will call for a stronger diplomatic corps and a more reasonable and flexible military apparatus. Cultural exchange will highlight a commitment to human capital and provide a channel to facilitate understanding across several groups of people. Economic opportunity will show that the City on a Hill is not exclusive and that a positive-sum economic model – which welcomes others to share in a Dream that is not uniquely American – is feasible.

As it builds upon these cornerstones, the United States must rectify its interests and its values. In an environment that is in a perpetual state of flux, values can provide both a lone constant and a “beacon of hope.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, these values often fall prey to immediacy and circumstance. America can no longer afford to say one thing and do another. Values are key to regaining our moral force and buttressing our position at the forefront of global leadership. The United States has long claimed to be a champion of democracy and human rights. It must now promote these principles with increased vigor, for the waves of self-determination sweeping across the world are more permanent than fleeting.

This is not a naïve approach. We recognize the complexities inherent in both the security and international relations arenas. Prioritizing areas of concern is a reality that your administration must address. To this effect, America should more ardently support its values where it is most pressing. By leading in this fashion – and drawing its closest allies into the dialogue – it can induce others to follow suit.

Have no question – the United States will not be marginalized. It will continue to play the role of leader. However, our conceptualization of what constitutes leadership will change, taking into account the information revolution, shifts to transnational governance, and an increasingly prominent civil society sector.

On the heels of the Arab Spring, we now turn to the American Summer – a summer which will usher not only the United States, but also its friends, into an era of growth, prosperity, and stability. Americans have voted for longer-term thinking and a transformational approach. They will take pride in our innovation, leadership, and maturity. The cornerstones outlined above will achieve this and galvanize if not a sense of togetherness, then certainly a sense of partnership and mutual benefit, whose power will extend beyond governmental authorities to myriad players. In short, this narrative offers a new dream to fit a new reality.

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<sup>3</sup> Porter and Mykleby.

## Strategic Focus

A strategy for the future requires a rethinking of the world's geopolitical balance. Our approach is transformational because it recognizes that being everywhere at once is neither efficient nor practical. The areas we deem relevant are those that will take prominence within the scope of your presidency and also in the decades to come. Naturally, different circumstances require different approaches, and this model takes into account the feasibility of engagement in multiple countries and regions.

Our strategic focus divides the United States' areas of interest into two tiers. The term "tier" is not meant to indicate importance, urgency, or geographic location. Rather, it simply denotes the level of society at which engagement will occur. Tier 1 refers to those areas whose governments and national leaders we will work with directly. Tier 2 areas are those whose youth – and other members of civil society – will shape the future and, consequently, demand our attention. Tier 2 areas can be, in part, further divided into places that have undergone recent social, cultural, and political shifts (e.g., Gulf countries) or require indirect engagement due to their relative isolationism (e.g., North Korea through China). A complete list is provided below:

| <b>Tier 1</b> | <b>Tier 2</b>  |
|---------------|----------------|
| Brazil        | Indonesia      |
| Russia        | Singapore      |
| India         | North Korea    |
| China         | Israel         |
| South Africa  | Iran           |
| Turkey        | Jordan         |
|               | The Caucasus   |
|               | Gulf countries |
|               | North Africa   |

Finally – and perhaps most importantly – we do not advocate scaling back relations with our closest allies. Partnerships with Canada and Western Europe will continue to be a fundamental component of American security. Indeed, the economic ties we share, coupled with social, cultural, and political parallels, render their governments important actors. Yet the emergence of new players will force America to rethink its geopolitical scope and welcome others into its vision for security and peace. This scope must be less skewed toward the West, as both the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East come to the fore of global governance. In short, our previous approaches are simply no longer feasible.

# Credible Influence

## Diplomacy

Though the United States continues to enjoy a superpower status, its credibility has been significantly tarnished within the last half-century. A series of policy mishaps has seen the country become the subject of derision and negative sentiment around the world. America's reputation, in turn, has waned, while its security has suffered. Your administration will assuage the damages brought forth from decades of strategic shortfalls by addressing both diplomatic and military concerns.

As we go forward in designing our national security strategy, we must first examine the reasons for our insecurities – the root causes of anti-American sentiment and attacks on our country. We must accept that, at the core, our own actions in the past have been part of the problem. Our projection of military might – often lacking the appropriate deftness – around the world is partly to blame. Our record of supporting authoritarian dictatorships for the sake of our self-interest, rather than defending the self-determination and human rights we claim to endorse, has only fanned the flames.

Our history of international engagement – the tools we have used and the goals we have supported – has reduced our international standing. Consequently, having the strongest military in the world has not made us safer. We must regain our credibility by readjusting our foreign involvement to project leadership rather than authority. Diplomatic activity must take precedence in our actions; limited military engagement should complement this.

This plan of action will be spearheaded by a reformed diplomatic apparatus – a Department of State with enhanced capabilities and expanded personnel. The other elements of our strategy will support this change. A decrease in military spending (details provided in the following subsection) will provide the financial resources to enable strengthening the State Department. Educational and cultural exchange will develop the human resources and individual expertise necessary to staff this new, augmented structure.

The reformed Department of State will lead America in its long-term vision. The Secretary of State will symbolize the resilience of the American people. The American diplomat will exude the openness and transparency of American values, while no longer being forced to represent a country that contradicts these values through its own actions.

Today's American embassy represents all that the past decade has made us – isolationist, aloof, and afraid. We need to move out of Fortress America, project our soft power – that is, our strategic influence rather than our overt military capabilities – and become part of the cultural centers of the world once again.

Diplomacy is a more effective, flexible, and inexpensive option than the military to address our insecurities worldwide. It will become the primary tool in our arsenal as we engage the world,

demonstrating the maturity and resilience of our actions. It will demand that we focus our energy more strategically, rather than bluntly, as military force often requires.

Previous national security strategies have frequently led to conflict between our interests and values. This has bred anti-American sentiment and made us the target of terrorist attacks both in our international establishments and our domestic heartland. Conflict between our interests and values is no longer acceptable. We must realign our interests to promote the values we hold most dear.

We will provide a shining example of freedom, democracy, and justice worldwide. We will champion human rights and self-determination. We will exhibit consistency in our actions toward both our friends and our enemies in advocating for these goals. In the long-term, promoting these values among all peoples will create a safer, more peaceful world.

However, we must remain sensitive to the areas in which this strategy can be the most successful. Attempting to act everywhere at once will drain American resources and hinder – if not prevent – our successes. In issue areas where our allies possess unique and advantageous political positions, we will allow them to take the lead.

With regard to Turkey, for instance, Germany and France can use their point of leverage – Turkish desire to join the European Union – to force Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s government to adequately respond to human rights concerns. Though we can – and should – support this goal, the efforts of our allies will minimize the need for our overt participation and, consequently, the risk of sullied relations.

We will engage first those countries and regions where our tactics will do the most good. This calls for high- or government-level engagement with Tier 1 areas and popular-level approaches in their Tier 2 counterparts. We will also support our goals with forethought and sensitivity. A heavy-handed approach runs the risk of estranging current and potential allies and obstructing the long-term aims of our strategy.

Diplomacy is a tool that enables engagement not only with governments, but with entire cultures and people at the civil society level. By establishing relationships with the youth in many regions – notably, the Middle East and emerging economies in Asia and Latin America – we will leave a legacy of long-term commitment and affability. In so doing, we will influence the next generation of leaders and emerging power structures, while encouraging a progression toward self-determination and human rights. Where changing the existing system is difficult or impossible, we will instead attempt to shape the future.

## Military

A rethinking of our diplomatic apparatus requires a rethinking of its military counterpart. In much the same manner as the former, the military must move beyond short-term thinking and focus instead on long-term goals. It must shift toward a strategy of sustainable defense and not simply be content with containing potential aggressors.

Through a policy of active engagement, as opposed to reflexive exclusion, would-be adversaries can turn into strategic partners who are willing to join us in an increasingly inclusive, multi-polar world. America must engage its fellow nations as the first among equals, showing the maturity and responsible use of power that a world leader is expected to provide.

The military vision we recommend has three main themes:

- Influence over presence
- Asia-Pacific focus
- A mature and reasoned response

The credible influence we advocate is one that is enduring. It requires strength tempered with restraint, power exercised with patience, and deterrence matched with discussion. The most significant shift is in a refocusing of the military to the Asian-Pacific rim. In this region, we will encounter our most pressing challenges of the next decade, from the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, to the eventual collapse of the North Korean regime. Our military might must be prepared to support our diplomatic efforts and answer the calls from our allies that our honor demands. We must re-balance force, structure, and investments in this direction – and the Middle East – while sustaining key alliances and partnerships elsewhere.

Offshore balancing is key to this new approach. This includes developing bi- and multilateral relationships (APEC, ARF, TPP), continuing existing security treaties (JP, SK, ANZUS), renouncing the Taiwan Relations Act, and offering conventional arms reduction talks for the Pacific Rim with the PRC and in consultation with our allies.

To ensure that these conditions are met, we advocate the following policy prescriptions:

- Flexible response (1+ war)
- Enhanced allied capabilities
- Sustainment of key alliances and partnerships in other regions
- Protection of key investments in advanced technology

A focus on influence over presence will see America shift to a 1+ doctrine. Recent studies anticipate no prolonged, large-scale stability operations in the near-to-mid-term (i.e., ten years). A 1+ approach fits well with our current needs by allowing our military to plan and size forces to be able to defeat a major adversary in one theater (e.g., DPRK, Hormuz), while denying aggression elsewhere by imposing on the enemy unacceptable costs (e.g., Straits of Malacca, the Middle East).



We must complement our military activity with the encouragement of allies to develop their own domestic force capabilities. This can occur either through American augmentation or the Foreign Military Sales program. Regardless, our partners will be empowered to have a greater say now than in years past and take pride in their willingness to provide additional support and – ideally – a first-response to critical events.

This development will relieve the United States from the burden of being the “world’s policeman,” while allowing it to retain the authority and dignity that a global superpower demands. By providing the sustained and reliable assistance expected by allies, America will consolidate and buttress the support network in which it is embedded. This network can prove especially important if and when the tools of diplomacy and statecraft fail.

Naturally, this is not to ignore an enterprise like NATO, which should – and will – continue to enhance Allied capabilities with regard to control, transport, and logistics. Great Britain and France will remain key global partners, while Germany and Poland will take on expanded roles. America should complement this with increased engagement with such periphery nations and regions as Turkey and the Baltics to bring them more closely into NATO’s cycle of training, planning, and deployments.

A sustainable defense is not only a safer approach for the United States, but also a more cost-efficient one. Indeed, it can be achieved while allowing for significant cuts to the Department of Defense budget, which – and this is important – do not sacrifice our military capability. We project a potential \$1 trillion reduction in military spending over the next decade, as outlined below:

- Adoption of Nuclear Dyad (drop Air Force Bombers, keep ICBMs and subs with 1,000 warheads)
- 30% reduction in Army & Marine Corps (retain 30 Army Brigades)
- 20% reduction in Navy (with eight carriers)
- 30% reduction in Air Force fighters (16 fighter wings)
- 30% reduction in DOD civilian workforce
- Department of Defense compensation & health care reform

Our true military strengths are – and will continue to be – flexibility in response, resiliency to loss(es) through the management of expectations, and the bolstering of our allies. These strengths will allow the United States to remain at the global fore in terms of capability, firepower, and reach. Perhaps more importantly, when taken in tandem with a newly fashioned diplomatic vision, they will help restore American credibility.

## Cultural Exchange

The United States has proved time and again ill prepared for predicting and responding to sociopolitical shifts abroad. This is most glaring in the Middle East, where, much like it did on the eve of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, America missed the warning signals of the Arab Spring just last year. This was partly due to a breakdown in dialogue at the diplomatic level, where policymakers failed to adequately gauge public sentiment. The United States, in turn, was consigned to a fairly reactive role and forced to watch – with no shortage of uncertainty – as history unfolded and new power structures emerged.

Yet a sense of uncertainty lingers with regard to the shape these structures will ultimately take. To date, the “new order” remains relatively amorphous. This is complicated further by a highly fractured political party system, which may threaten the very peace and stability for which people have rallied.

Given this dynamic, America can no longer afford past oversights. We must seize the opportunity to ramp up our engagement with several nations and cultures in the Middle East and elsewhere. In so doing, we must place increased emphasis at the civil society level, where we can cultivate deeper multicultural understanding on shores both foreign and domestic. Our primary goals are to:

- Garner insight into public sentiment in areas of strategic import
- Foster reconciliation
- Create future generations of capable and internationally sensitive leaders

These are, of course, anything but simple. But expected challenges should not deter us, for they are often the hallmark of real change. For reasons outlined henceforth, education provides the ideal channel through which to push this change. The United States’ efforts in this regard should involve:

- Funding federal scholarships for first-generation college students to study abroad in Tier 2 areas
- Increasing access to student visas for students in Tier 1 areas to study abroad in the United States
- Expanding critical language and area studies programs in Tier 2 areas

Our federal scholarship program will provide a diverse group of students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in countries with which we would like to build stronger and more enduring partnerships. These exchanges will make American culture and society more accessible and less threatening to foreign youth, as scholarship recipients will represent America’s best and brightest. Consequently, American students will be given the opportunity to broaden their horizons and develop an understanding of – and respect for – unfamiliar traditions and societal norms.

Our revised visa program will provide students throughout the world with access to the best universities and research funding opportunities in multiple fields. It will engage them in an intellectually stimulating environment and help them develop the skills necessary to succeed not only in the United States or their homelands, but in a rapidly changing global economy. Furthermore, it will improve cross-cultural dialogue and – ideally – help counter negative preconceived notions about the United States.

Finally, our expanded critical language and area studies programs will enhance our future diplomatic capabilities and excellence. They will help build a new generation of informed political leaders and diplomats, who have mastered the tools and knowledge necessary to forge sustainable, cooperative partnerships. In our vision of a positive-sum world, we will present these programs in a manner that highlights American commitment to a system of mutual benefit and that, consequently, makes our partners feel their long-term security is being considered and protected.

In tandem, these exchange programs will function as a form of soft power in line with our strategic shift toward enhanced diplomacy and international cooperation. Cultivating a better understanding of the social forces, languages, and traditions of other nations will foster feelings of goodwill and friendship – thus providing a point of leverage – that can carry us into a more peaceful and secure future.

Critics may worry that increasing the number of foreign students in American universities will crowd our citizens out of higher education. This view, however, overlooks the stagnancy that has plagued our system for years. An increasingly competitive academic environment will spur large-scale innovation and motivate American students, many of whom have lost a competitive edge, to raise their levels of academic achievement. Indeed, this lack of competitive edge has been most glaring in several math and science graduate programs, where the presence of our students is marginalized.

What is more, in an era where open source reigns supreme, an ever more diverse student body will ensure that American youth are exposed not only to new ideas, but broader educational processes and methods of thought. And while advances in communication technologies have already facilitated this process, the higher education system can take it to the next level. Indeed, while the virtual third place has carved its place in the global consciousness, physical spaces and face-to-face interaction still prevail.

To assist those who do not make it into the university system, we recommend providing increased trade and technical school opportunities that teach the skills necessary for and applicable to an increasingly service-oriented economy. The United States' shift from a nation of builders to one of providers has left many unfortunate citizens without jobs. We must ensure that the same does not occur to the next generation's workforce.

Other cynics will undoubtedly point to the fact that ideologies can be diametrically opposed in some respects. This can lead to anxiety and tension when said ideologies are placed opposite one another. In axiomatic terms, this is the idea that familiarity breeds contempt. We offer a stern

rebuke, for strategies cannot be designed upon sweeping generalizations. Interestingly, Gordon W. Allport's contact hypothesis suggests the reverse is true.<sup>4</sup>

We, of course, call for a nuanced view. Allport's framework is contingent upon the manner in which contact occurs. If it lacks institutional support or simply reinforces power asymmetries between or among players, it will likely magnify said anxiety and tension. However, in the correct setting, contact can prove markedly beneficial for relations and relationships. Education provides this very setting – it promotes an intellectually open, nonthreatening environment; supports a merit-based system of success and personal growth; and grants those within it the opportunity to create a shared vision.

Acknowledging the existence of an array of cultural practices is key to building new, sustainable relationships. Though America is a proponent of the values of freedom and individual liberty, we must recognize that we cannot impose our will on other societies and cultures. Respecting views that differ from our own mitigates the fear that these differences will provide the basis for violence and aggression.

While our recommendations target the civil society level, they will be transformational due to the full support and credibility of the American government. By approaching cultural understanding through the prism of education, you will not only highlight our country's commitment to intellectual capital, but also bolster international collaboration in an issue area in which all nations can believe.

What is more, building international collaboration through educational projects will refocus our attention toward creativity, innovation, and civil society interaction as a viable method for addressing global challenges. This will encourage future generations abroad to balance with the United States rather than bandwagon against us. Our recommendations will enhance our long-term security and status as a global leader.

In short, cultural exchange programs will address the root causes of hate and fear and, in turn, stem anti-American sentiment abroad. Furthermore, they will allow the United States to glean the insight abroad that it might otherwise lack – a dynamic that has proved costly in years past. Finally, they will foster relationships that help carry us into a future of shared responsibility within the international community.

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," *Annual Review of Psychology* 49 (1998): 65-85.

## Economic Opportunity

Economic opportunity is consistent with credible influence, cultural exchange, and the opportunity we have to change the course of America's future. Protests and revolutions occur as conditions improve, for to taste some rights while being excluded from others runs counter to the human condition. Economic rights are as important as their civil counterpart, as prosperous economies are more stable and can educate their citizens, ensuring their contributions to society across myriad sectors.

To date, years of containment policy have trapped us in a zero-sum mindset that permeates our relationships with many countries. An interconnected, globalized world cannot operate under these outdated rules. Positive-sum economics should extend to each new emerging market – its prosperity is our prosperity. Embracing these economies not only for their goods and services, but also – and more importantly – for the talent of their people will contribute to the growth and progress of international human capital.

The United States must take the lead in setting a precedent for just and sustainable economic rights. America needs to be at the forefront of encouraging innovative change to create a more prosperous world, stemming from the development of specialized economic policies and an increasingly educated class of citizens.

To accomplish this, we recommend:

- Welcoming BRIC nations with a positive-sum outlook
- Engaging and trading with emerging economies as allies
- Framing immigration as an economic and human rights issue

Brazil, India, and China are poised to become increasingly important economic players within the course of the next two decades. China's status is, of course, already well established and eclipses that of its counterparts. However, the regional clout of India and Brazil will evolve into a stronger global presence as their populations and markets grow. The United States must avoid framing these developments as a threat, for healthy economies can lead to less vociferous political dissent and more secure governmental institutions. Indeed, economic stability can promote more educated populations, ensuring steady streams of skilled – and, where appropriate – specialized workers, who can contribute to their societies.

Our shift to a positive-sum approach will also involve fostering closer working relationships with emerging economies. By increasing trade and engagement in this regard, we can facilitate the growth of international prosperity. Naturally, this prosperity will not be limited to foreign players; the partnerships we build can provide tangible benefits to American institutions. Most notably, they offer the potential to create new – or expand existing – markets for our companies and products.

We can further build our partnerships with developing economies by addressing immigration as an economic and human rights issue. Our new national narrative will take pride in the country's

demographic changes and diversity. It will recognize that we are, at our roots, an immigrant nation. It will take the “alien” out of our rhetoric and welcome the notion that the value of foreigners – documented or undocumented – exceeds the low-level employment opportunities to which they are often resigned.

In so doing, the United States will harness the power of a bastion of intellectual capital that is ripe with opportunity. We will not tacitly neglect, but proudly uphold the timeless words of Emma Lazarus etched onto the Statue of Liberty, which echo the ethos upon which this nation was – quite literally – built: “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

As we evolve beyond a superficial understanding of immigration, we must ask ourselves about its root causes. The United States attracts people from across the globe with its living and working conditions, but these alone do not drive transnational labor flow in our direction. Indeed, the carelessness of America’s economic policies abroad and their resultant effects often force people to move from their homelands. This is no longer tolerable.

Protectionism at home leads to disadvantage abroad. Our neighbors and biggest trade partners are frustrated by the agricultural subsidies that keep them out of business; then they are turned away from our borders and told they are not our responsibility. American citizens are certainly our first concern, but protectionist practices benefit no one in the long-run. Instead, we wait to engage with our South American neighbors’ plight until they are in our sights in a War on Drugs. Unstable and unsatisfied neighbors that are blocked in every attempted path to prosperity are just as much a threat to our future as our other adversaries.

If America is to be a service economy, we need more developed economies with whom to trade. If we are to work through bilateral and multilateral institutions and agreements, our partners must be prepared to take on greater financial responsibilities. In short, we need more countries that share our values and capabilities to assist us in the future.

An increase in the economic power of other nations will inevitably lead to their increased clout within the international governance system. This, in turn, may stoke domestic fears about America’s waning influence. These fears are misguided. A more balanced global economic environment – where risks are shared among multiple players – ensures stability.

We should not expect the dollar to lose its status as the international currency of choice in the near future. Its historical precedence has placed it in an advantageous position where it is still relatively trusted despite its recent decline. Though, one day, it might lose its hegemony, other countries will continue putting their faith in it if the United States can rekindle – and build upon – its economic integrity.

The emergence of new actors is, of course, to be expected. This is, however, a gradual evolution. China remains entrenched in the ongoing tension between divergent economic models; India and Brazil lack the legitimacy to render them immediate players, while the latter in particular is faced with the significant task of funding two costly mega-events in the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics; and the Eurozone stumbles along the brink of collapse amid financial

crises across the Mediterranean. And while one – or more – of these options may emerge in the long-term to challenge the status quo, the United States should welcome this development for the reasons outlined heretofore.

Your presidency will undoubtedly be forced to address economic issues. You can transform the current financial situation by establishing a national economic character that supports prosperous, stable economies throughout the world; builds healthier trade relationships with emerging markets; and more efficiently taps into the talents of an entire demographic of people. These tactics support our other cornerstones and, consequently, will prop up American security in the years to come.

## Existing Issues

This long-term strategy is also relevant for the manner in which we will address immediate issue areas. As we build and maintain an approach with the future in mind, we cannot afford to neglect short-term concerns. Indeed, we must confront these now, but only in a fashion that is consistent with our desire to revolutionize our interaction with the world. Specifically, we can address the following immediate concerns:

Iran – We must eliminate the hypocrisy of which the country’s leaders accuse us, as they use this to justify their continued hold on power. Our consistency will take their platform out from underneath them. The existing Iranian regime will eventually be brought down from within. Antagonizing it will only encourage Iranian nationalism and allow the current leaders to stay in power. Furthermore, by supporting self-determination in the long-term and positioning ourselves to engage with the youth and civil society, we place ourselves in a position to forge an alliance with Iran when its government eventually falls.

Israel – Our treatment of Israel personifies the contradiction between our interests and values. We cannot afford to maintain Israel as an interest in its own right. We must instead support consistency and transparency in all of our international relations. Distancing ourselves from Israel, while simultaneously initiating long-term engagement with other nations throughout the Middle East, will reduce both the number and enmity of our enemies. As a result, we will no longer need to support Israel as fervently.

Middle East – We must accept that Islam is not a threat to our interests, but an integral part of the national character of many countries in this region of the world. We will focus on diplomacy, investment in education, and engagement with a wider variety of groups – including those like the Muslim Brotherhood with which we have traditionally avoided engaging. Our goal is to support the rights of peoples in the Middle East to choose their own governments and to ally with the emerging leaders of these nations. The Middle East’s political landscape is changing, and we can no longer rely on the support of authoritarian leaders, like those in Saudi Arabia or formerly in Egypt, to guarantee our access to the region.

North Korea – This is a humanitarian – not a military or strategic – issue. We will partner with China to position ourselves appropriately for the inevitable fall of the DPRK, enabling us to respond to the unfolding humanitarian crisis swiftly and decisively. This will, consequently, improve our credibility in the region and provide us with a potentially valuable point of access.

China – Positive-sum economic engagement will continue to strengthen political ties between our two countries and create an ally out of what could otherwise be an enemy. China’s interests are inextricably linked to those of the United States given our economic interdependence through trade and debt. We can share responsibility with China as a regional leader. The economic strength of rising powers can only help us. As China becomes



wealthier, its demand for American products will continue to increase, creating new markets for our companies.

Terrorism – We can work to scale back the sources of terrorism rather than simply taking a reactive approach in the short-term. We must resist the inclination to pander to partisan fear-mongering. We will renounce preemptive strikes, increase our resiliency, and accept the risk that democracy could bring to power those whose interests are not immediately in line with our own. Engaging with future leaders will more effectively eliminate anti-American sentiment across the globe. We will no longer interfere with popular movements, instead allowing them to develop organically. We will change the game, raise the stakes by increasing individuals' power of self-determination, and show the effectiveness of working peacefully within the system rather than using violence against it.

## Benefits to America & Conclusion

The element of multilateralism functions as something of an undercurrent throughout the course of this narrative. One might question – and rightfully so – whether the welcoming of additional actors into a system of shared responsibility is simply wishful thinking. In other words, is it reasonable to assume that others will prove willing to step up? The answer, in our view, is a resounding yes.

We firmly believe that our approach can produce the incentives necessary to create and sustain common buy-in. Indeed, the strategy outlined above provides myriad benefits to both the United States and its partners, including:

- Increased human capital
- Increased competitiveness
- Strong economic allies
- The ability to harness demographic diversity as a strength
- Lasting leadership in a new reality

There is, of course, something to be said for the idea that increasing the number of players in a game pushes it further from the control of any specific one.<sup>5</sup> This, in turn, creates unpredictability. Yet whether this position is an uncomfortable one for the United States is a moot point – globalization has rendered interconnectivity inevitable.

The cosmos is changing and our approach must change with it. We need to recognize that our position is inextricably linked to those of others and find pride not in blunt might and brute force, but in our integrity, transparency, continuity, and openness. The time has arrived for our past experiences to translate into maturity. The lessons learned from history must become a new precedent, for status quo thinking is archaic, if not utterly futile.

The threats to America are real and looming. The cornerstones of our strategic vision – credible influence, cultural exchange, and economic opportunity – address them in both the short- and long-term. Your election signals an evolution to a post-partisan endeavor in which responsibility is shared. By design, your presidency leaves petty politics in the past and does not bow to the pressures of immediacy and circumstance. So, too, does the new American narrative. Embrace it sooner rather than later – the fate of the nation is at stake.

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<sup>5</sup> Sue Dopson and Ivan Waddington, “Managing Social Change: A Process-sociological Approach to Understanding Organisational Change within the National Health Service,” *Sociology of Health & Illness* 18 (1996): 525–550.