

Partnerships for the “Connected Century”: An American Grand Strategy

by

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Abstract

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The 21st century is the “connected century.” Globalization has created social and economic interconnectedness more broadly and deeply than at any other time in history. At the same time, America has entered this century without a grand strategy around which it will shape the environment to suit its interests. This paper will examine the concept of grand strategy and the lack thereof that led to failed nation-building efforts that bookend the post-Cold War period. It will then describe the current global environment and the constraints and restraints that will impact any American grand strategy for the remainder of the 21st century. Finally, the paper will proffer partnerships with India and Indonesia as two mechanisms for increasing global connectivity by cementing the position of those two nations within the global functioning core.

Partnerships for the “Connected Century”: An American Grand Strategy

The United States stands at a geopolitical crossroads in world affairs. The current post-Cold War security environment delivers challenges to the Westphalian state system and the international order that provides its foundation. These challenges have not been met with an American grand strategy that articulates when, where and for what purpose American power will be exercised around the world. Lack of grand strategy has led to failures to advance our national interests at the cost of American lives and treasure. The most spectacular failures have been those of nation-building, when a combination of optimism, policy incoherence, and fundamental misunderstandings of the operational environment have led to ill-defined end states, poorly crafted strategies, and wasted resources.

A grand strategy for the remainder of the 21st century should recognize that the exercise of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) instruments will be restrained by declining relative American power and multipolarity. Two concepts become immediately clear. The first is that it is unlikely that America will retain the means and political will required for nation-building efforts in countries where security is at stake. The second is that America will require like-minded partner nations to maintain the international order. Therefore, an American grand strategy should define strategic priorities and provide clarity to the ways and means through which the DIME can be used to partner with other nations in the effort to maintain international order.

This essay will first define the concept of grand strategy and its relationship to policy and war. Analysis of the nation-building efforts in Somalia and Afghanistan will highlight the futility of nation-building in countries where security is at stake and war exerts influence over policy. It will then outline constraints and restraints on American

grand strategy while providing a view of the world as it exists today. This view defines economic growth and connectedness as the critical requirements for international order, and proffers disconnectedness as the ultimate enemy. Geopolitical factors point to India and Indonesia as two potential partner nations where America can build capacity, increase connectedness, and therefore advance American interests during the remainder of the century.

Grand Strategy, Policy, and War

Before considering a grand strategy to carry the U.S. through the 21st century, the concept of grand strategy must first be defined. Paul Kennedy defines grand strategy as “the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and non-military, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long-term ... best interests.”¹ Taking the definition further, an American grand strategy should provide a vision for building and marshaling all instruments of national power by assessing and understanding domestic and international environments, defining U.S. interests in these environments, and recommending ways and means to secure these interests.²

In the opening paragraphs of Book One, Chapter One of *On War*, Clausewitz tells us that war is “an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.”³ Clausewitz continues Chapter One in a dialectic format by first describing war in the extreme, portraying a “clash of forces freely operating and obedient to no law but their own.”⁴ He then lays out moderating factors that prevent war from reaching the extreme, before stating “once the extreme is no longer feared or aimed at, it becomes a matter of judgment what degree of effort should be made.”⁵ Arnold Wolfers offers a similar position in “National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol” when he states that nations are

compelled to spare no effort in matters of security in rare instances when national survival is at stake.⁶ However, in concluding Book One, Clausewitz reminds us of the primacy of political objectives in the conduct of all war.⁷ Thus, nations break the will of an enemy in pursuit of a greater policy objective, not as an end unto itself. Ideally, the greater policy objective is part of a grand strategy that aligns policy objectives (ends) to the ways and means with which they will be achieved.

Searching for Grand Strategy: Somalia

American policymakers struggled to visualize what the world would look like in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. Francis Fukuyama predicted the end of history and the “universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”⁸ President George H.W. Bush spoke of a “New World Order,” but his administration was feeling their way in the dark when it came to articulating a new global vision and an associated grand strategy.⁹ While the search went on, the world continued to change, and American national security policy became characterized by ad hoc crisis management, episodic global engagement, and the pursuit of ambitious objectives on the cheap.¹⁰ When American power was exercised, too often the demands of war overrode policy objectives, and American leaders lacked the political will to use military force to break the will of the enemy. The American humanitarian intervention in Somalia exemplifies this period.

In January 1991, Somalia plunged into chaos after the overthrow of Major General Muhammad Siad Barre’s dictatorial government as clans and their warlord leadership competed for power in the ensuing vacuum.¹¹ An estimated two-thirds of the Somali population was in danger of death due to malnutrition; a condition based on disruptions in the distribution system due to instability vice lack of food products.¹² In

April 1992, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorized the deployment of 50 peacekeepers and 500 light infantry soldiers to Mogadishu for the purpose of providing security for delivery of humanitarian supplies.¹³ U.S. resistance to funding a large peacekeeping mission was the primary reason behind the force's small size. This force, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), was ineffective at changing conditions on the ground as clans led by Mohamed Farah Aidid and Ali Mahdi Mohamed met the peacekeepers with violence.¹⁴

In November 1992, President George H.W. Bush's National Security Council (NSC) presented new policy options to address the changing dynamics in Somalia; he elected to deploy American ground troops under a UN mandate. UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 794 authorized the deployment of the U.S.-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in December 1992. UNITAF's mission to provide security to the humanitarian relief effort was broader than the UNOSOM mission, but did not include rehabilitation of the government or nation-building.¹⁵ The mission would broaden yet again as UNITAF, always designed as a temporary presence, was replaced by UNOSOM II in May 1993. UNOSOM II, authorized in UNSCR 814, was "mandated to assist the people of Somalia in rehabilitating their political institutions, rebuilding their economies, and promoting national reconciliation and a political settlement."¹⁶

While UNITAF was successful in the short term goal of providing security for the delivery of humanitarian relief, neither UNITAF nor UNOSOM II were successful in ending hostilities between clans.¹⁷ In fact, the transition to UNOSOM II, with its smaller U.S. contingent, led to an increase in conflict as the influential warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid recognized an opportunity to act against a weaker force. Aidid's forces

attacked and killed 24 Pakistani UN troops patrolling Mogadishu. This act put paid to any idea of a political settlement and once again led to a change in mission for U.S. forces: capture or kill Aidid.¹⁸ On October 3, 1993, Aidid's forces killed 18 U.S. soldiers in a two-day battle, an event that triggered the withdrawal of American forces from Somalia and signaled the failure of UNOSOM II.¹⁹

The changing missions that characterized the breadth of U.S. intervention in Somalia during this period serve to highlight concepts that Clausewitz did not proffer. For all of his discourse on war's chameleon-like qualities, or the assertion that "If war is part of policy, policy will determine its character,"²⁰ Clausewitz never broached the converse idea that war impacts the character of policy. Colin Gray articulates this phenomenon well when he writes, "once the dice of war are rolled, policy achievement is largely hostage to military performance."²¹ While Clausewitz presents policy as a constant, Gray presents the idea that policy can change according to military performance, which was displayed in full throughout the UNOSOM, UNITAF, and UNOSOM II missions. Somalia showed that while in a state of war against a functioning enemy, it is difficult to maintain constant policy goals.

Where UNITAF succeeded in its limited objective of providing the security required for short-term humanitarian relief, UNOSOM II failed in its nation-building role. UNOSOM, UNITAF, and UNOSOM II were never able to completely quell the violent clans operating around Somalia; they never broke the will of the enemy. Therefore, the permissive conditions required for nation-building were never created. The clans represented the first battle between Americans and what Thomas P.M. Barnett would describe as forces of disconnectedness – those who wage war against globalization,

global connectivity, and the freedoms it unleashes.²² It was a contest that America lost, and it did not go unnoticed.

Grand Strategy Imposed: Afghanistan

The September 11th, 2001 attacks derailed the “New World Order” and the resulting grand strategy debate. For a time it seemed that there would be a consensus on grand strategy and that America could forge a path forward. President George W. Bush and his closest advisors placed enormous faith in the centrality of American military power and the efficacy of military interventions. The “Freedom Agenda” combined this faith with what Kissinger would describe as America’s “missionary zeal”²³ to spread democracy through either the magnetism of our values or through interventionist crusades.²⁴ The Freedom Agenda’s reactive nature and reliance on military means created an emphasis on crusading and strained the very definition of grand strategy. Moreover, the resultant policies contained ill-defined end states, poorly resourced non-military instruments of power, and were too often changed by the demands of war. The American intervention in Afghanistan exemplifies this period.

America’s hasty retreat from Somalia was a seminal moment for Osama bin Laden. Mogadishu was flush with his al Qaeda fighters that traveled to Somalia expecting the Americans to fight like their Soviet foe in Afghanistan – vicious, brutal, and willing to go to great lengths to break the will of their enemy. Instead, America’s hasty retreat left bin Laden with the impression of America as a ‘paper tiger’ that would accept defeat after a few casualties.²⁵ Al Qaeda, emboldened by their Somalia experience, precipitated a 13-year American military operation in Afghanistan by attacking the United States as part of bin Laden’s grand strategy of weakening American influence in the Middle East and creating an Islamic caliphate.²⁶ The war in

Afghanistan, labeled Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), continued until December 31, 2014, when the U.S. quietly turned over security responsibility in Afghanistan to the Afghan government and declared the end of the American combat mission.²⁷

Initial U.S. policy in Afghanistan was limited to the overthrow of the Taliban regime and ejecting al Qaeda from Afghanistan. The former goal was largely achieved by mid-November 2001.²⁸ For the most part, the Taliban recognized defeat and were ready to negotiate, but the U.S. quashed notions of reconciliation due to a myopic focus on hunting remnants of al Qaeda in support of national military objectives. Initial policy goals were short-sighted, failed to define political success, and prevented the new Afghan government from taking advantage of political momentum.²⁹ Meanwhile, core members of the Taliban and al Qaeda escaped into Pakistan.

Many observers had assumed that once the Taliban were overthrown, the U.S. would lead a coalition to rebuild Afghanistan, an effort that journalist and author Ahmed Rashid acknowledged “would need nothing less than a Western-led Marshall Plan for the region.”³⁰ A plan to form an interim Afghan government and establish the structures of a modern, democratic Afghanistan was delivered in November 2001 by the United Nations (UN) sponsored Bonn Agreement. The U.S. did not commit to the plan, stubbornly holding on to President Bush’s “no nation-building” promise.³¹ Because the Taliban did not participate, Bonn was not a peace agreement between victor and vanquished. Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative to Afghanistan, labeled this as an “original sin.”³²

From 2002 through 2005, the U.S. and its coalition partners maintained a light military footprint in Afghanistan as parallel reconstruction and development efforts

began to make headway.³³ The lack of coalition forces in the rural areas of Afghanistan was a critical vulnerability the Taliban would exploit from 2003 to 2005. The Taliban returned from Pakistan and expanded their area of influence by 400 percent, mostly in the eastern and southern provinces by 2006.³⁴ Their will to fight had not been broken and over the next three years they reversed the gains in development and governance.

NATO troops under the banner of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) arrived in force in southern Afghanistan throughout the summer of 2006. The Taliban, assisted by al Qaeda, launched a counteroffensive to expand their control in rural areas. By 2009, the Taliban held vast swaths of influence in southern, northern and western Afghan provinces. In fact, Taliban control extended to most areas of the country except for the provincial capitals.³⁵ Deteriorating security made nation-building tasks nearly impossible and stalled development efforts around the country.³⁶ Taliban control would not be challenged until the implementation of a fully resourced counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy in 2009.

General Stanley McChrystal assumed command of ISAF in June 2009, and implemented a COIN strategy based on an operational approach of “shape, clear, hold, build.”³⁷ President Obama announced the addition of 30,000 more U.S. troops, but unfortunately for McChrystal, he also announced “transition” as the policy goal. The additional troops would be deployed for only 18 months in order to create the security conditions for a two-year nation-building effort to allow the Afghan government to assume responsibility for their own security.³⁸ In order for McChrystal’s strategy to work, the military surge for security would have to be closely followed by a “civilian surge” that would build capacity. The civilian surge did not happen.

From 2010 through 2012, gains in security were rarely exploited by immediate gains in governance and development. The policy goal of transition remained extant, but the ways and means were not commensurate with achieving stability prior to transition. While the shape, clear, and hold strategy worked, the build phase was poorly synchronized with the civilian surge.³⁹ Lack of progress, combined with mounting domestic fiscal pressures at home, caused the Obama administration to withdraw military surge forces ahead of schedule.⁴⁰ The associated transition process began in 2011, and was announced complete on December 29, 2014.⁴¹

Economically, a decade of development aid has had little effect in restoring or improving the economy in which ordinary Afghans participate. Militarily, it is unclear as to whether the U.S. and ISAF have countered Taliban influence around the country, or whether the Taliban have been waiting for the coalition to depart. Diplomatically, the U.S. and Afghan governments are negotiating with the Taliban, but the Taliban are in a much stronger position now than in 2002, and it appears unlikely that they will accept the standards of democracy and development that the coalition has fought to produce.⁴² It is clear, however, that American policy was continually driven by the demands of war. From “no nation-building,” to nation-building with limited means, to a disjointed and overdue COIN strategy, to withdrawal and negotiation, American policy in Afghanistan ran the gamut of options without success. Lack of a grand strategy that provided consistency for and placed primacy upon political objectives relating to a vision of Afghanistan’s future caused American policymakers to wander in the strategic wilderness for 13 years.

Grand Strategy: Reducing Disconnectedness

American grand strategy for the remainder of the 21st century should be rooted in the sustainment and advancement of the liberal, rules-based international order that will increasingly be underpinned by a balance of power that is favorable to American interests.⁴³ The four enduring national interests to be advanced are preventing war between great powers, growing the open international economic order spurred by globalization, managing the rise of peer competitors, and spreading democracy and the rule of law.⁴⁴

American grand strategy will be restrained by declining relative power. With no impending solution to increasing deficit spending and associated rising national debt, America must maintain strategic solvency by keeping “external commitments in line with resources to back them.”⁴⁵ Policymakers will need to be very careful in determining where, when and for what purpose the DIME will be used, and grand strategy is the key to prioritization. This will require a coherent view of the world that accurately defines the environment and the threats therein.

American grand strategy will be restrained by multipolarity. Many foreign policy analysts agree that America’s “unipolar moment” is over; Robert J. Art bookends it from the December 1991 breakup of Soviet Union to the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008.⁴⁶ When considered against softening U.S. economic and military power, the rise of Brazil, India, China, and other regional hegemony signals an overall decline in American relative power. America’s position of *primus inter pares* in world affairs offers the most significant opportunity for grand strategy in the 21st century.⁴⁷ America must be seen to lead, not dominate, and must be viewed as doing what is best

for everyone, not just our own national interests.⁴⁸ Our position requires a clear view of those nations with whom our interests and values intersect.

Thomas P.M. Barnett proposes that the economic growth spurred by globalization has connected most of the world in an interdependent web of economies and societies, but has also left behind large regions of the world that remain disconnected and unable to reap the benefits of connectedness.⁴⁹ Barnett breaks up the world into 'Core' and 'Gap' nations. Core nations function within globalization, adhere to international rule sets, and can handle the connectivity that comes with having a national economy that is fully integrated with the global economy.⁵⁰ Nations in the Gap are disconnected, lack integrated economies and often operate outside international rule sets. Barnett proffers disconnectedness as the "ultimate enemy," and defines threats to world order as forces of disconnectedness.⁵¹ America can defeat those threats by extending globalization and its associated connectedness.⁵² Forces of disconnectedness, exemplified by state, non-state, and trans-state organizations from Russia to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), represent the main threats to American interests and to the state and international systems so carefully crafted throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Simply put, the sum total of global challenges to connectedness exceeds America's resources and capacity.⁵³ America can no longer go it alone.

Finding Partners

The factors determining the partnerships America seeks will be geopolitical and economic. Partner nations should be on the border of the Core and the Gap, should share commonality of interests and values, should possess the economic potential for domestic growth as well as the opportunity for that growth to positively affect

neighboring countries, and should be recognized leaders in regional international fora. Finally, our partner nations should possess a degree of political and security stability that will enable the proportional exertion of the DIME.

Targeting nations that are on the border of the Core and the Gap prevents America from diving directly into Gap nations with the intent to make them part of the Core. This is important for two reasons. First, this is exactly where we failed in Somalia and Afghanistan. Nation-building in Gap countries militarizes the DIME and carries the risk of war driving policy as forces of disconnectedness resist the imposition of an outside order on their physical and cultural territory. Second, America no longer possesses the financial or military power to sustain the long-term nation-building efforts required to bring a nation from the depths of the Gap to the Core. The U.S. appropriated approximately \$100 billion to Afghanistan in non-military funds from 2002 to 2013. That country still ranks near the bottom of the world in literacy, life expectancy, electricity usage, Internet connectivity, and is near the bottom of the World Bank's Human Development Index.⁵⁴ Rather, America needs to seek opportunities to either empower other Core nations, or to build capacity in nations that are on the cusp of the Core in order so that they may be fully integrated. As connectedness and the economy are critical requirements for integration into the Core, our efforts should be focused here.⁵⁵

How and where does America decide to focus its efforts? Simply put, we need combine the geopolitical ideas of Barnett with those of Halford Mackinder and Alfred Thayer Mahan. Mackinder's theory of Eurasia as a "vast pivot region of world politics" that possesses the conditions of far-reaching mobility of economic and military power remains valid today.⁵⁶ Combining the maps of Barnett and Mackinder, we see that

several of Barnett's Gap nations are on the border of Mackinder's Pivot Area and Inner Crescent. Consider that Barnett sees economics as the mechanism for generating connectivity, while Mackinder clearly places landpower over seapower as the primary means of transmuting the conditions of commerce;⁵⁷ America needs to look for opportunities brought about by land commerce along the Mackinder's inner crescent. Marrying the ideas of Barnett to Mackinder leads America to India, a young democracy founded in 1947 that is also the most influential nation in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).⁵⁸

Although more of Asia is "covered with railways"⁵⁹ than in 1903, Mackinder's ideas are incomplete in today's world. The concept of trans-continental railways as the primary source of the movement of all types of power over land is muted by the vast ocean expanses of the Asia-Pacific. Here we turn to the ideas of Mahan, who readily recognized the interdependence of seaborne commerce, overseas markets, and the role naval power in achieving command of the sea in order to secure maritime commerce.⁶⁰ Marrying Mahanian concepts of sea control to Barnett's geopolitical ideas leads America to Indonesia, a nation entering its 17th year of democracy that is the most important nation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.⁶¹

India

India displays most characteristics of a Core nation, but there are opportunities for American engagement for four reasons. First, India faces social and economic challenges that could cause it to struggle to maintain its rising status in the world economy. Second, India represents tremendous economic opportunity; commerce routes in and around India have reversed from the days of the British East India Company when resources primarily flowed out of the subcontinent to other destinations.

Securing India's economic growth will have positive ripple effects throughout South, Central, and Southeast Asia that are beneficial to American interests. Third, creation of a South Asian balance of power could enhance South Asian stability within increasingly constrained American ways and means. Fourth, the current political climate is conducive.

India must create 12 million new jobs per year while sustaining ten percent GDP growth to keep up with its population growth rate.⁶² India's greatest challenge will be delivering the energy required to sustain both population and GDP growth. India was the fourth-largest consumer of energy in 2009, and although power generation capacity doubled from 1991 to 2005, her energy demands are projected to quadruple by 2035.⁶³ India is dependent on energy imports; it is the fourth-ranked importer of coal, imports 70 percent of its oil, and will continue to be a net importer of natural gas despite its significant domestic reserves.⁶⁴ U.S. State Department officials estimate that India will need to invest \$1.25 trillion in energy production by 2030.⁶⁵ India's twin challenges of sustained job growth and increasing energy production offer tremendous opportunities for American policymakers. Fortunately, India occupies a prime location to take advantage of the shifting global economy; the subcontinent has historically served as both a resource and a link in the sea route that connects the Mediterranean and Middle East with Asia.⁶⁶ India can leverage this position to facilitate energy security while generating the economic growth required to support what will be the world's most populous nation by 2030, thereby enabling its emergence as a regional power.⁶⁷

There are two paths for India to gain energy security: increasing land-based importation from Central Asia, or expanding domestic production of renewable and

nuclear energy.⁶⁸ Each path offers opportunities for the U.S. to create stability in Central Asia by influencing development and energy security in India. Land-based importation of energy and resources from Central Asia into India offers the most immediate opportunity for U.S. influence as it is in India's short-term national interest to reduce dependence on Middle East imports while meeting long-term economic growth goals.⁶⁹

The U.S. can use the projected flow of energy and resources into the Indian subcontinent to its advantage by supporting the New Silk Road Initiative (NSRI). NSRI is an interconnected web of about 40 development projects that enhance the movement of commerce around South and Central Asia.⁷⁰ The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) initiative is one such development project. TAPI is a 1735-kilometer natural gas pipeline that originates in Turkmenistan and passes through Afghanistan and Pakistan before terminating in the Punjab region of India. It is expected to carry 60 to 90 million cubic meters of gas per day once completed, meeting about 12 percent of India's demand. TAPI will bring Turkmenistan access into India's growing energy market, and will be Afghanistan's largest development project with the potential to produce U.S.\$400 million per annum.⁷¹

Acting as an enabler for Indian energy security allows the United States to directly ensure India's long-term status as a Core nation, while indirectly influencing stability in Central Asia. As energy flows into the subcontinent from Central Asia, security in that part of the world will be a greater imperative for India; there is potential they will be willing to sacrifice more to maintain the permissive security environment required to maintain that flow. To this end, India will address regional stability and development by investing in Afghanistan. India has spent U.S.\$2 billion on infrastructure

around Afghanistan's Ring Road, and plans to spend up to U.S.\$100 million to upgrade the Iranian port at Chabahar with the intent of eventually connecting it to the Ring Road via a road and rail network. Both of these development projects are critical to ensuring India has access to Central Asian markets.⁷²

Perhaps most importantly, India's current political climate is conducive to a deepening partnership. First, there is a clear intersection between Indian and American interests in the region. A Congressional Research Service report highlights the fact that India's four core foreign policy objectives of a stable Afghanistan-Pakistan region, influencing the Indian Ocean region, obtaining "rule-maker" status in the international arena, and maintaining economic growth, all require cooperation with the United States.⁷³ Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted a dramatic victory in the May 2014 elections, sweeping into office with a campaign based on political reform, economic growth, and infrastructure development.⁷⁴ The relationship between Modi and President Obama is deepening, evidenced by the two leadership summits held since the election as well as their joint *Washington Post* op-ed, "A Renewed U.S.-India Partnership for the 21st Century."⁷⁵

While the Obama-Modi relationship is deepening, there is an understanding that balancing against China is the driving force behind at least a portion of the intersection of interests. India has always sought strategic autonomy and will take pains to ensure that it is not seen to be too heavily influenced by the U.S., therefore policy cannot force India to choose between partners. Rather, U.S. policy should set realistic expectations and allow India's regional relationships to grow unhindered, while at the same time creating the conditions for broader and deeper intersection of interests that will foster a

closer relationship.⁷⁶ The challenge now is for the U.S. to establish prioritization of effort and follow through with initiatives that serve the interests of both nations.

Indonesia

For the U.S., Indonesia's geography and culture offer opportunities to increase stability in Southeast Asia while improving a fledgling democracy in a Muslim nation. Indonesia is a Gap nation that is on the cusp of joining the Core. Indonesia's growing population and economy are critical strengths that must be exploited to maintain positive trends. Indonesia's strategic position astride both the Strait of Malacca and South China Sea offers great leverage to ensure stability in both of those critical trade passages. The U.S. can facilitate, and even accelerate the process of fully integrating Indonesia into the Core through the right mix of development initiatives.

Indonesia is the world's third-largest developing country.⁷⁷ It possesses the largest economy in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economic bloc, and has consistently sustained an economic growth rate of about 6 percent since 2007, when it fully recovered from the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-1998. This growth rate is reflective of good economic management, but is also the minimum required to maintain job growth.⁷⁸ While Indonesia's economic growth has created a burgeoning middle class and reduced national poverty, there are challenges that need to be addressed in order for Indonesia's economy to reach its potential.

It is in American interests to bring Indonesia into the Core nations for three reasons: geography, international partnership, and culture. Indonesia position astride the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea make it strategically important to the freedom of trade flow throughout these two highly trafficked areas. The Strait of Malacca is the main passage between the Pacific and Indian Ocean and represents a

critical link between Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Middle East. About 30 percent of world trade passes through the strait, including 80 percent of petroleum products bound for Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. The strait opens into the South China Sea, an area that supports about 25 percent of annual global shipping and is also the scene of resource ownership disputes between China and several ASEAN nations.⁷⁹

Indonesia offers the U.S. international partnership opportunities that will enhance regional stability through ASEAN. Established in 1967, with Indonesia as one of the founding members, ASEAN is “one of the most prominent and enduring regional organizations in the world.”⁸⁰ Conceived with the objective of maintaining regional peace and stability, ASEAN’s role in economic integration has been a priority since the Asian Financial Crisis.⁸¹ Indonesia’s influence in ASEAN is substantial; its economy constitutes about one-third of the ASEAN aggregate, while its population is about 40 percent of the ASEAN total.⁸²

Significantly, Indonesia is a fledgling democracy and the world’s most populous Muslim nation.⁸³ The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 precipitated the collapse of the Indonesian economy, the subsequent resignation of President Suharto in March 1998, and the culmination of 50 years of authoritarian rule. Indonesia stumbled out of the blocks after the 1999 elections, and it was not until the 2004 election of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono that Indonesian government started real, consistent reform. Yudhoyono’s administration tackled corruption, promoted judicial reform, negotiated an end to the separatist movement in Aceh, and put Indonesia on a positive political and economic path.⁸⁴ Joko Widodo, who succeeded Yudhoyono in October 2014, appears to have the gravitas to continue those reform trends. His reputation as the former governor of

Jakarta is that of competence, clean government, and of great concern in dealing with the problems of ordinary Indonesians.⁸⁵ Despite the positive trends, analysts like Damien Kingsbury note that while Indonesia's short term trajectory is positive, the long term future path is uncertain.⁸⁶

Increasing Indonesian connectedness means improving its economy; most observers remain convinced that it has not yet reached its potential. The Indonesian government's current plan for economic growth, "Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesia's Economic Development 2011-2025," recognizes this dynamic. The plan specifically identifies that poor national connectivity inhibits growth, undermines competitiveness, and reduces external market access. By way of comparison, "Indonesia ranks 75th on the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index, well behind ASEAN competitors Singapore (2nd), Malaysia (29th), Thailand (35th), Philippines (44th), and Vietnam (59th)."⁸⁷ The two areas that offer the greatest opportunity for improvement, and U.S. development, are in foreign investment and trade.

Private foreign investment in Indonesia can be made more attractive by lowering or removing existing barriers, corruption being the most significant. The democratic reforms of the Yudhoyono administration had a marginal effect on corruption at the federal government level, and in many cases this has meant that corruption merely decentralized down to the local level.⁸⁸ The U.S. can support Indonesia's corruption reforms by working through the World Bank and by promoting investment to U.S. companies. The World Bank's Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) team works hand-in-hand with the Indonesian government's Anti-Corruption Commission (KPK) to increase transparency in financial management, strengthen checks and balances, and

promote open competition.⁸⁹ U.S. assistance to the KPK and to targeted Indonesian business firms, can accelerate the pace at which foreign investment becomes more attractive to American business.

The U.S. and Indonesian governments can also work together to highlight U.S. companies that have successfully operated in Indonesia: Caterpillar, Cisco, Conoco, Goodyear, and Mattel are examples. These companies have established what could be termed best practices for operating in Indonesia; publicizing these practices will serve to encourage other investors.⁹⁰ The target audience for this education should be in the American manufacturing industry, a sector that is critical for Indonesia's long-term economic growth and where U.S. investment is negligible. American investment is typically in the mining, oil, and gas sectors, which are increasingly unproductive and should be encouraged to shift.⁹¹ Additionally, the U.S. should bring a delegation of American CEOs for engagement in Indonesia. President Obama did this on his recent visit to India, bringing representatives from American business heavyweights like PepsiCo and MasterCard to a symposium of American and Indian CEOs. While there, Obama spoke directly to the need to make it easier for American companies to work in India.⁹²

A report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) found that trade between the U.S. and Indonesia "lags far behind its potential," and that economic ties between the two countries are far weaker than military ties.⁹³ The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) offers an avenue to change this dynamic. The TPP is a proposed free trade agreement between 12 Pacific nations at various stages of economic development.⁹⁴ TPP countries currently represent 40 percent of U.S. goods trade and 25

percent of total U.S. services trade.⁹⁵ U.S. objectives in TPP are to achieve a high standard free trade agreement that reduces trade barriers, increases opportunity for investment, creates a greater role for U.S. influence in trade liberalization, and provides the opportunity for the U.S. to establish new norms regarding emerging trade issues.⁹⁶ Indonesia is currently excluded from TPP; it lacks the regulatory frameworks required to meet standards for transparency and anti-corruption as described above. As a stepping-stone to TPP, the U.S. could offer Indonesia partnership in the Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) initiative to facilitate deepening economic ties while working with the U.S. to modernize regulations and build economic capacity.⁹⁷ The U.S. and Indonesia should set a cooperative goal to achieve Indonesian TPP membership by 2020.

Conclusion

Creating international partnerships with countries like India and Indonesia is a long-term effort that is critical to maintaining international order and the Westphalian state system. The character of the current post-Cold War security environment is such that the diffusion, lethality, and complexity of the forces of disconnectedness cannot be countered by America alone; we do not currently have the means, ways, or the political will. By viewing the world through Barnett's theory of Core and Gap nations, American policymakers can generate a view of the globalized environment that emphasizes economic integration as the key to security, and connectedness as a critical requirement for that connectedness. Combining Barnett's newer theories with established theories of landpower, seapower, and commerce leads to the key regions of the world where American power across the DIME can be utilized effectively. By further looking within those regions for nations with stable governments, regional influence, and intersecting interests, the list of potential international partners can be narrowed down.

This process is critical to devising a grand strategy that will prioritize both American interests and the exertion of American instruments of power abroad. Without grand strategy, there is no prioritization. Lack of prioritization leads to wasted power and resources in nation-building efforts in the middle of the Gap, exemplified by Somalia and Afghanistan. Failures in those two countries were primarily due to a lack of security and the expedience of war that frequently drives or influences policy. These are failures that America can no longer afford politically or economically. The best way to avoid these failures is through the articulation of grand strategy.

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