

Smart Power: Building a Better, Safer World

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Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the Committee. It is a privilege to be here today with you. This committee, under your leadership, is the guardian of our country's foreign policy, a beacon to those who want to work together to protect and support this great nation.

Our presence here today may surprise some. Why would a Marine and a former Navy attack pilot come to this committee to support the budget for the State Department, for USAID, and the civilian activities of our government that impact the lives of people around the world?

We are here because from our time on the front line of America's presence in the world, we know that the U.S. cannot rely on military power alone to keep us safe from terrorism, infectious disease and other global threats that recognize no borders.

We are here representing a group of over 50 retired flag and general officers who share a concern about the future of our country and our ability to lead effectively.

We have witnessed the tough security and global challenges that burden the world today. We have been in nations that have failed to provide the most basic services to their citizens; territories where tribal and clan divisions threaten unbelievable violence to the innocent. We have seen despair, anger, resentment, and the consequences of poverty that result in desperation. Some respond with slow surrender to this hardship, some look for conspiracies, and some twist religious ideology to explain a life of frustration.

And when that frustration spills over into armed conflict, the alarms go off and often our military is rushed into action. As this committee knows so well, the military is a blunt instrument. We have our strengths: in times of humanitarian crisis, we can provide the logistics and organization to get help fast to those in need. No other organization on this earth can respond as well as the U.S.

military. We can break aggression, restore order, and maintain security. But we cannot reform a government, improve a struggling nation's economic problems, or redress political grievances.

To be clear, all that our military instruments can do in conflict is to create the conditions that would allow the other tools of statecraft – especially our diplomatic and development tools – to be successful. But when those other tools are underfunded, understaffed, and underappreciated, the courageous sacrifice of the men and women in uniform is often wasted.

For the United States to be an effective world leader, it must strategically balance all three aspects of its power – defense, diplomacy, and development. This is what we refer to as using “smart power”: the integration and appropriate application of all the tools of statecraft.

We have come to this committee today acknowledging that while the United States has done many good things in the area of foreign assistance, we still have much work to do ahead. We urgently need a new and vibrant strategic direction for our national security and foreign policy. We need strong U.S. leadership to enhance global security, strengthen democratic governance, alleviate poverty and foster global economic growth. This is not only the right thing to do, but it is in squarely in our national interest.

Mr. Chairman, there are powerful and creative forces for change in this country which reflect the vitality of our democratic system. Calls for reform, for this new concept of smart power, come from across the political spectrum, from corporations and think tanks, to faith-based and humanitarian organizations. Even from old warriors such as ourselves. In addition to the group of distinguished flag and general officers we are proud to represent, we are also here as part of a broader coalition with the Center for U.S. Global Engagement, a non-partisan organization whose allies include companies ranging from Boeing to Caterpillar to Microsoft; private voluntary groups such as CARE and Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children and World Vision. Despite our diversity of experiences, we share a common belief that America is underinvesting in the very tools that are vital to our national security, our economic prosperity and our moral leadership as a nation.

We know that it is time to act. We are part of a growing movement for change, a new constituency to support you, on this committee, as you make the hard choices and help forge a bipartisan strategy using smart power.

For this is an issue that transcends partisanship. We are talking about the future of our nation and our ability to address the most complex and perplexing global problems of our day. Shifting the emphasis of U.S. foreign policy from one that relies heavily on military might to one that elevates the value of diplomacy and development will, indeed, take strong political leadership, a decisive strategy to guide us, and ample resources and personnel to ensure we are successful.

Such leadership and shift in strategy is not without precedent. As World War II ended, the nation faced a new challenge on the horizon. Leaders from the State Department, the military and Congress came together to first analyze the problem at hand, develop a strategy to address this problem, and then design and resource the institutions and policies to implement that strategy. Thus within a few short years, we had a strategy of containment, a National Security Act of 1947 to create a new national security architecture, and the Marshall Plan to address the specific economic challenges of a destroyed Europe. Later the Truman policy to provide aid to Greece and Turkey expanded the task of foreign assistance.

Over the years, this committee wrote the major foreign assistance legislation for our nation and supported the State Department, USAID and the other departments concerned with foreign relations. You and your predecessors authorized a wide number of programs to address the world's problems.

In the over 50 years that our nation has been at this growing task, U.S. foreign assistance has:

- Saved millions of lives each year through vaccinations and access to basic health care, access to potable water, and sanitary food preparation education;
- Given hundreds of thousands of HIV/AIDS patients access to life-saving anti-retroviral treatments.

- Created the capacity for millions of people to feed their families through agricultural breakthroughs in crop production and soil conservation;
- Nearly eradicated river blindness, polio and smallpox;
- Helped war torn nations rebound from civil and ethnic conflict; and
- Stimulated economic growth in countries around the world.

While these are remarkable achievements, emerging challenges call us to come together again, with the same careful process that we practiced 50 years ago. We must analyze the problems at hand, develop a new strategy, and design and resource the institutions and policies to implement that strategy. We must work with other great nations who share our values and strengthen our alliances for peace. We cannot take on this mighty task alone.

Mr. Chairman, some call this grand strategy, but we have to get down to basics if we are to succeed. We cannot skip the first step – to analyze the problems at hand. What is the strategic threat facing the nation today?

When we entered service to our country, the answer to that question was easy. The enemy was an aggressive nation-state, with a history of insecurity and authoritarian rule, and an economic ideology that threatened our way of life. The world divided along philosophical lines; the Soviet Union and the West each had a grouping of developing nations under their wings. We did not concern ourselves with the problems facing nations in the Communist camp. That was Moscow's responsibility.

Now the Cold War is over, but the problems facing vast regions of the world persist. We know that the “enemies” in the world today are actually conditions – poverty, infectious disease, political turmoil and corruption, environmental and energy challenges.

All nations face these challenges, but why do some governments fail at their tasks to meet their citizens' needs?

We must first study the core problems. If we can understand why struggling nations do not care for their own, we may better understand the appeal of extremists groups and beliefs that rationalize this failure. What is the mix of culture and history, religion and resentment, change and tradition that results in what we term a “failed state”? This failure infects the global community as surely as pandemics of contagion or natural disasters. We cannot draw a protective curtain around ourselves or inoculate our nation from this failure. We must address it head on, study, listen, learn, and provide that support to make development a reality.

This is a puzzle which continues to confound. We know there are aspects of culture and tradition which make personal and communal relationships more important than objective and impartial bureaucratic procedures. We know that certain economic models lend themselves to income disparity, great divides between wealth and poverty, low tax regimes and resultant corruption among public servants and business alike. We know that tribal, clan and ethnic conflicts persist in regions where revenge trumps growth, where there is no trust in government and no sense of protection for minority concerns.

The consequences of these factors are plain to see: disease, hunger, violence, hatreds, environmental destruction, political turmoil and economic stagnation.

In retrospect, designing a strategy to contain the Soviet Union, with its all its weapons and resources, was simple compared to the challenges ahead.

As we study this problem and design a new strategy, we know that armed force alone cannot solve these challenges. There is no “pure” military solution to terrorism. If we are determined to reduce the strain on our troops, respond to the threat of global and political and cultural insurgency, and protect America, we must be prepared to make bold changes. We must provide a national security tool chest that has been enhanced with a wide variety of capabilities which would flow from the integration of our nation’s “soft” power.

We must match our military might with a mature diplomatic and development effort worthy of the task ahead. We have to take some of the burden off the shoulders of our troops and shift it to those with core competencies in diplomacy and development. Our military mission has continued to expand as funding for the State Department and development agencies has been inadequate to the tasks they have been asked to perform. They have been forced to make do, with fewer personnel, more responsibility, but without the resources to match their assignments. This has not developed overnight. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Shalikashvili, warned years ago, “What we are doing to our diplomatic capabilities is criminal. By slashing them, we are less able to avoid disasters such as Somalia or Kosovo and therefore we will be obliged to use military force still more often.”

While we acknowledge and are heartened by the fact that the President has asked for an increase of 8.5 percent in the International Affairs Budget, we agree with Secretary of Defense Gates that these times call for a “dramatic increase” in funding for our “civilian instruments of national security”: that is, programs and departments under this committee’s jurisdiction. We support his call for a “new benchmark” for how much we invest in diplomacy and development.

This is striking enough to reiterate: the head of our Defense department has called for an increase in funding for the State department and development agencies. As Secretary Gates said, “We must focus our energies beyond the guns and steel of the military, beyond our brave soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen. We must also focus our energies on the other elements of national power that will be so crucial in the coming years.”

That means rethinking the current balance between defense, diplomacy and development. The International Affairs Budget represents only 6.6% of the overall National Security Budget, which includes defense and homeland security. The entire current International Affairs Budget is roughly equal to the requested INCREASE in the Defense Department budget. Particularly worrisome is that despite this request and recent increases, our funding is still 11% less in real terms.

Mr. Chairman, it is time, past time, for a new strategic triad – diplomacy and development, as well as defense – to prepare us for the challenges ahead. We note that the President’s budget calls for

significant investments in USAID personnel, and the creation of a Civilian Response Corps, which you and Senator Lugar have championed. These are important first steps.

And they dovetail with a number of broader efforts underway to address a new national security architecture. There is much discussion these days about using the ideas of the Goldwater-Nichols Act for the inter agency process, a “whole of government” approach to policy formation and implementation, a new National Security Act. Washington is alive with good people working on these topics. We want to acknowledge the work of this committee, most recently Senator Lugar’s report on how *Embassies Grapple to Guide Foreign Aid*, as an important contribution to this effort.

It is clear to us that we need to bring our military and diplomatic structures into better alignment. We need complementary regional structures that allow our personnel to develop deep experience and expertise in specific regions, to develop expert language skills and cultural understanding, and sustain that knowledge over their careers. We need to tap the talent we already have at the State Department and our development agencies as well as our NGOs. The insight and real life experience they bring to the table has too often been ignored in the policy process.

In after-action reports and strategy exercises conducted by the various commands around the world, there is a constant theme. We need civilians who know the area, speak the language, bring needed expertise, and most importantly, have long standing personal relationships with local decision makers. These are not skills and assets that can be developed overnight. And they should not be abandoned after a short term assignment.

We need to get serious about our business. We need longer tours, in depth knowledge, language ability and cultural understanding to do our jobs well. We need to give the brave men and women of both our military and the diplomatic and development communities the resources to they need.

If we are able to do all of this, we will be able to secure a better, safer world where America’s values and interests are supported. Going forward with a national security strategy that balances our military strength with a stronger diplomatic agenda, it is our view that our engagement with the world will more closely align with our traditional strengths.

Mr. Chairman, in this Presidential primary season, in the excitement of the campaign, there has been a lot of talk about foreign policy and defense, Iraq and Afghanistan. There is talk about victory and defeat. But as Anthony Cordesman from CSIS notes, freshly back from the front lines in Afghanistan and Iraq, “Meaningful victory can come only if tactical military victories end in ideological and political victories and in successful governance and development.”

Recent reports from RAND, the 9-11 Commission, the HELP Commission, the CSIS Smart Power Commission study and the Center for U.S. Global Engagement’s own “Smart Power” policy framework – all very bipartisan efforts – all point in the same direction. Across these documents, a range of options on both funding and modernizing our foreign assistance and national security apparatus have been placed on the table that Congress – and our candidates for President – should be considering now. A new President has a remarkable opportunity, and a security imperative, to make this a priority early in the first term.

In closing, it is time to rethink and rebalance our investments to create a better, safer world. It is time to deploy smart power, and increase our support for global health, development and diplomacy. We and our military colleagues stand ready to support you in this effort. We look forward to the day when both the Senate and the House come together with the President and his/her Administration to see the Defense Authorization, the State Department Authorization and the Foreign Assistance Act as three equally vital components of a new strategic triad for our country’s leadership in the world.