

ACTIVE GEO-STRATEGIC PLAYERS, GEOPOLITICAL PIVOTS AND THE CHANGING BALANCE OF POWER IN EURASIA

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Abstract: Efforts of constructing, organizing and foreseeing regions have become an important part of world politics. In the heart of the ongoing geopolitical struggle in the Eurasian region lies a long-standing Russian-American rivalry over dominance in this region that involves many interested regional actors on both sides. The source of domination of geopolitics in Eurasia is twofold. Regional processes in Eurasia are strongly influenced by the behavior of foreign actors involved there. Russia, China and the United States are the most important among them. They see each other's behavior and relationships through the prism of traditional "Great Game" analysis. According to the Great Game narrative, Eurasia is an important piece in a strategic confrontation among great powers for regional and global domination. Hence it is important to prevent other powers from dominating Eurasia. In its modern version, the control of Eurasia will also offer to control side unique opportunities to define the transportation of oil and gas resources of the region. Secondly, Eurasian states themselves adopted old balance of power politics as the main instrument of their foreign policy. Not only do they try to play major powers involved in Eurasia against each other, they also see themselves in obligation to balance among themselves.

Key words: Geopolitics, Great Game, Geo-strategy, Eurasian Convergence Zone, Functioning Core, Non-Integrating Gap, Energy, Pentagon's New Map, Security

At the beginning of the 21st century the nature of security itself is changing on a global basis. The security agenda has expanded in functional terms. Formerly peripheral challenges such as migration and economic competition, together with more obvious risks from the spread of weapons of mass destruction, now compete with conventional military rivalries as factors affecting the use of force. Functional changes in the nature of security "problems", together with post-Cold War political transformation, are also changing the geographical terms in which policymakers, military leaders, and analysts must

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think about long-range planning. Simply put, many of the traditional distinctions between security theaters are eroding under the pressure of cross-regional challenges – from migration and terrorism to the steadily increasing range of weapons systems available worldwide. Systemic changes in the global economy, communications, and, not least, military technology might alter strategic stakes and capabilities. The increasingly interdependent character of security across key regions poses new intellectual and practical challenges for all national defense communities whose thinking and organization are still necessarily influenced by planning for *regional* security: in “Europe”, the “Middle East”, “Asia” and elsewhere.

Eurasia is poised to become the new strategic center of gravity in international politics. This transformation is momentous in that for most of the modern era the continent subsisted mainly as an arena for Western exploitation and dominance. Asia functioned as the “*object*” rather than “*subject*” of power and hence, owed not only its political order but oftentimes even the eidetic image of itself to the acts and beliefs of others. This transformation is momentous in world-historical terms in that for the first time since the beginning of modernity – circa 1500 – the single largest concentration of international economic power will be found not in Europe or the Americas but in Asia. The implications of this development are as far-reaching as they are poorly understood.

One of the problems for the study of international relations is how to study change. Looking at one country limits the ability to understand international developments. Furthermore, the way we study different parts of the world will greatly affect our interpretation of history and contemporary events. One such vast area or ‘super-region’ that has not been studied too often as a unit is *Eurasia*, geographically comprising the interaction of Europe, Russia, Central Asia and the Far East. In common parlance, the portmanteau term *Eurasia* refers to a huge landmass that comprises both the European and the Asia continent, two more traditional concepts which date back to classical antiquity. The very heart of this landmass is bordered by Russia in the North, China in the East, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran in the South, and finally Turkey and the Black Sea in the West. We can speak of *Eurasia* in widest sense of the interaction of this entire zone, ranging from Europe to Japan, and also of two other regions, *Central Asia* (including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan – sometimes Afghanistan is regarded as part of South Asia: in fact it sits astride linkage points to several areas), and the *Caucasus region* which links the Caspian and Black Sea areas, including Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, as well as influencing parts of Iran, Turkey and South Russia. A new term has begun to emerge in the literature: *Greater Central Asia*, suggesting the Central Asian states have a strong interaction with adjacent areas in Mongolia, Tibet, Western China and Pakistan. Often regarded as being on the edge of the world, *Eurasia*’s rich treasure of minerals is moving the region toward the centre of economic gravity. The region is poised to receive substantial investments from resource-hungry foreign investors. Since the collapse of the former USSR, Azerbaijan and the states of the post-Soviet Central Asia have been regarded first of all through the prism of their rich energy resources. The important geographical location of this vast region in relation to the transport and communication networks in the “West-East” and “North-South” directions, concentration of tremendous oil and gas resources here, as well as its vulnerability to the problems of the neighboring regions of South-Asia

and the Middle East, have revived the ideas of the Heartland and “Eurasian Balkans” with the emphasis on the specific role and significance of Central Asia in world affairs.

Eurasia, the globe’s largest continent, is geopolitically important. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski: *“For half a millennium, world affairs were dominated by Eurasian powers and peoples who fought with one another for regional domination and reached out for global power. A power that dominates Eurasia would control two of the world’s three most advanced and economically productive regions. About 75 % of the world’s people live in Eurasia and most of the world’s physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil. Eurasia accounts for about 60 % of the world’s GNP and about three fourth of the world’s known energy resources. All but one of the world’s overt nuclear powers and all but one of the covert ones are located in Eurasia”*. (Brzezinski, Z., 1997, p.31).

Eurasia has been the main theater of Soviet-American rivalry throughout the Cold War and will remain the bone of contention in the post-Cold War era. Sir Halford Mackinder introduced the discussion of Eurasia with his concepts of the *“Eurasian Pivot Area”* (which included much of Siberia and Central Asia) and later of the Central-East European *“Heartland”* (which was equivalent of the territory of the former Soviet Union) as the vital springboard for world domination. In this context Mackinder coined his famous dictum: *“Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland: Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island: Who rules the World-Island commands the World”* (Mackinder, H., 1962), p.150). As Colin S. Gray has pointed out Mackinder was wrong: *“In 1941-43, Nazi Germany not only ruled East Europe, its armies stood on the banks of Volga at the gateway to Asia and yet the Heartland power recovered and secured total victory”* (Gray, C.S., 1977, p.25).

Nicholas Spykman offered a critique of Mackinder’s thesis about the opposition between British sea power and Russian land power reminding us that World Wars I and II were not simple land power – sea power struggles. Instead, he offered his counter dictum: *“Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world”* (Spykman, N.J., 1944, p.43). His thesis did not fundamentally challenge Spykman’s thesis on the importance of Eurasia and the need for the maintenance of balance of power in that region. Their difference lied only in the relative importance of the *Eurasian Rimlands* vs. the *Eurasian Heartland*. To prevent the domination of Eurasia by a single power the United States entered two World Wars in a century.

Zbigniew Brzezinski argues that today geopolitics has moved from the regional to the global dimension, *“with preponderance over the entire Eurasian continent serving as the central basis for global primacy. The United States, a non-Eurasian power, now enjoys international supremacy, with its power directly deployed on three peripheries of the Eurasian continent, from which it exercises a powerful influence on the states occupying the Eurasian hinterland”* (Brzezinski, Z., 1997), p.39). The middle space of Eurasia controlled in the past by the former Soviet Union is now the most fragmented and fluid section of Eurasia. To the south of this region lies the energy rich section of Eurasia of vital interest and importance to the great powers. The far eastern section of Eurasia is occupied by an increasingly powerful China whose enormous population, rapid economic growth, continuous increase of military power and the promotion of its geopolitical interests in the South China Sea make her a formidable player.

In the geopolitical game for control of Eurasia Zbigniew Brzezinski identifies two kinds of states: *active geostrategic players* and *geopolitical pivots*. *Active geostrategic players* are defined as “the states that have the capacity and the national will to exercise power or influence beyond their borders in order to alter the existing geopolitical state of affairs” (Brzezinski, Z., 1997, p.41). *Geopolitical pivots* are the states “whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potential vulnerable condition for the behavior of strategic players. Most often, geopolitical pivots are determined by their geography, which in some cases gives them a special role either in defining access to important areas or in denying resources to a significant player. In some cases, a geopolitical pivot may act as a defensive shield for a vital state or even a region” (Brzezinski, Z., 1997, p.41).

The identification and protection / promotion of the post-Cold War key Eurasian geopolitical pivots have become a crucial aspect of all major players in the international arena. In the current global circumstances, we can identify five major geostrategic players in Eurasia. The United States, France, Germany, Russia, China; Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran play the role of the geopolitical pivots.

One important geopolitical consequence of the demise of the Soviet Union was the rise of an intense political and commercial competition for control of the vast energy resources of the newly independent and vulnerable states of the Caucasus and Central Asia. These energy resources and, in particular, the oil and natural gas deposits have now become the apple of discord in Central Asia introducing, according to analysts, a new chapter in the “*Great Game*” of control over Eurasia. The essence of this “new geopolitical game” in Central Asia is twofold: *first*, control of production of the oil and gas, and *second*, control of the pipelines that will transfer the oil to the western markets. The outcome of this game will determine the future of the Central Asia region will have an impact upon Russia’s future and the relations between this country and the West. Also, America’s global primacy will be directly dependent on how effectively it preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained. What happens in Eurasia will depend, to a large extent, on America’s strategy. America is the world’s unchallenged superpower, the victor of the Cold War, and, as such, retains the initiative to develop policies that will shape the post-Cold War world, in general and security in Eurasia, in particular. No major Eurasian issue can be decided without America’s participation or arbitration. How the U.S. relates to the major powers of Eurasia will determine the longevity of its primacy and the nature of the balance of power system in the region.

This wider region has gone through dynamic political and economic changes that affect global politics and adjacent regions. If not yet an integrated region, it has been suggested that Eurasia is a new “*Convergence Zone*” where the interests of a number of great and medium powers are interacting, in part cooperatively, and in part competitively. Saul B. Cohen has defined the “*Eurasian Convergence Zone*” as a vast arena which extends as an Inner Eurasian Crescent from the Eastern Baltic, Eastern Europe, and the Black Sea to the Trans-Caucasus, Central Asia, Tibet, Chinese Turkistan and Mongolia, and then across northern Manchuria and the Russian Far East to adjoining North Pacific islands and the Korean Peninsula. The Middle East Shatterbelt serves as the Zone’s southwestern hinge, and is strategically linked to it. In his

2005 article *“The Eurasian Convergence Zone. Gateway or Shatterbelt”* Saul B. Cohen has discussed geopolitical implications of U.S. penetration into *Eurasian Convergence Zone*, within which the influence of major world political powers (Maritime Europe, Russia, China, India, and Japan) converge. Following a discussion of the nature of U.S. activity in major subsections of the Zone (Eastern Europe, Trans-Caucasus, Central Asia, and East Asia) Cohen examined economic, demographic, and military strategic stakes of the major geopolitical powers in the region. For Cohen, the importance of this arena is that it is *“where five of the world’s major geopolitical power centers – Maritime Europe, Russia, China, India and Japan – converge upon it. U.S. penetration of the Zone affects their military, political, and economic interests directly. The countries and regions within the Convergence Zone serve as land, air, and water transit-ways for flows of capital, people, technology, manufactured goods, energy, and other mineral resources. Increasingly the importance of the arena to its abutting powers has been magnified by its natural resources, especially oil and natural gas, specialized agriculture, tourist services, and relatively low wages for off-shore manufacturing operations, and negatively as bases for terrorists and the smuggling of arms and drugs. In addition to military security and economic concerns, the vital interests of the abutting powers embrace historic territorial claims and racial, ethnic, tribal, religious, linguistic, and ideological bonds. Thus far the Eurasian powers have respected the geopolitical balance of the Convergence Zone. However, the impact of U.S. military and economic moves there could provoke a reaction having the potential to reconfigure it into a vast Shatterbelt. This would have a greater destabilizing effect on the world system than the Iraq war”* (Cohen, S.B., 2005, p.1).

Cohen stated that it is ironic that such a threat occurs at a time when globalization forces have drawn the major power centers more closely together because in contrast to the precarious stability of the Cold War years, during the current era they have benefited from an equilibrium that is rooted in their economic and social interdependence (Wallerstein, I. 1993), p.1-6) and this has fostered warmer political relations, accelerating the development of a more specialized and integrated world geopolitical system (Cohen, S.B., 2003), p.33-61 and 887-893). Despite some predictions that the world is plunging into turmoil and chaos (Huntington, S. 1993, p.22-49; Kaplan, R.D., 2000, p.37-41 and 51-57), many post-Cold War political transformations and territorial adjustments have been accomplished relatively peacefully. Insurgencies, widespread local wars, terrorism, and other dire upheavals, as serious as they are, have not undermined global equilibrium. The balance has been maintained by the consensus reached by the great powers on most of the major global strategic issues, reinforced by the increasing responsibility assumed by regional powers for containing threats to regional stability.

In the heart of the ongoing geopolitical struggle in the region lies a long-standing Russian-American rivalry over dominance in this region that involves many interested regional actors on both sides. The struggle of leading world powers for geopolitical and geo-economic domination in the region is explained first of all by their geo-strategic aspirations for leadership in the post-Cold War world order, as well as by necessity to solve various regional and global security problems, many of which are linked with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. For many analysts America’s global primacy, in the aftermath of the Cold War, will be directly dependent upon its ability to

perpetuate its preponderance on the Eurasian continent, which was, after all, the geopolitical prize of the victory of the Cold War (Brzezinski, Z., 1997, p.30).

According to the standard geopolitical argument the instability of Eurasia is a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union which led to a power vacuum in the region which in turn was an invitation for renewed geopolitical struggle. The most important regional players – Russia, China, Turkey, and increasingly Iran, are seeking to either reassert or gain new influence in the region. As Central Asian states dispose of natural resources in a period of perceived energy scarcity, there are further incentives for the Americans and the Europeans to get into the game. Current efforts to construct and operate a number of pipelines that would circumvent Russia demonstrate to what extent economics and geopolitics are intertwined in the region. Another facet of the standard geopolitical argument is that the present situation is basically a result of the terrorist attack of 2001 and the United States' infamous War on Terror. It led the West into Afghanistan and a protracted conflict which is now spreading into Pakistan. It also led the United States to lease two former Soviet military bases in the region, one in Uzbekistan and one in Kyrgyzstan. In fact, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan (all Partnership for Peace countries) are all of vital interest to NATO. On the other side, we find the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional security organization whose members include China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India, Mongolia, Iran and Pakistan have observer status. Originally created to deal with some border issues amongst the member states, it has increasingly been seen as a potential vehicle for Russian influence (but the Russians seem to have miscalculated the degree to which they would receive political support from his organization in the conflict over South-Ossetia and Abkhazia).

According to the standard geopolitical argument the perspective for conflict and instability in Eurasia is basically to be found in old-fashioned international politics. States pursue their interests and thus compete for influence. When and whenever there is power vacuum, it is expected that competition will become more intense. Obviously, there is something to all of these facets of the standard argument. Skeptics contend, however, that it does not touch upon the fundamental problem.

According to a different line of interpretation, the fundamental problem is to be found in the imperial legacy of the region – a legacy left behind by the rapid and comprehensive collapse of the Soviet Union. To understand why issues as good governance or the lack of state capacity are so prevalent there, we would have to think about the sort of system the Soviet Union constructed and the results of its rapid collapse. Empires are characterized by certain features, notably by a core and a periphery. In some ways, these structures resemble a wheel, with a hub and spokes going out to peripheral units. The units at the periphery do, of course, not have direct relations amongst themselves. In other words, the wheel is incomplete because the rim is missing. Since the economic and political relations have always been between the periphery and the core, but never amongst the peripheral units themselves, the collapse of the imperial core and the emergence of independent units at the periphery leave these units in a particularly weak position with respect to dealing with one another. As a result, these new states often have to deal with a security dilemma. They do have some military capabilities, but increasing their strength to ensure their security inevitably makes their neighbors nervous. The very fact that there is no

antecedent for their dealing with one another on these security issues create a very real potential for misperception and the sort of arms race dynamic that can easily get out of hand and cause trouble. This seems particularly to be the case for Armenia and Azerbaijan. Imperial collapse also tends to breed revolutionary leaders and these leaders usually want to build a strong state.

From this perspective, efforts to capture state power and centralize control can hardly come as a surprise. It should be noted, however, that political elites at the core have a much greater capacity to exert their power than those at the periphery. The core, after all, still has a remnant of its previous imperial habits and prestige; thus efforts to reassert control are likely to be more successful here than at the periphery. According to this line of argument, Russian attempts at reasserting authority in the former imperial periphery look almost natural. More importantly, they should be seen not as a function of a leader such as Vladimir Putin or Dmitry Medvedev but of deeper, structural factors. How much of stress laid in Moscow today on the menace confronting Russia from the outside (NATO, U.S., EU) is founded not on real antagonisms, but rather on the need to explain and defend the consolidation of authority and to reassert Russian control over distant and unconnected parts of its former empire. In conclusion, what would the Eurasian region like if is left alone; if we had no political competition over energy resources there, no *War on Terror* and no clash of civilizations? The structural argument holds that the entire region would still be prone to instability.

The situation of relative equilibrium in Eurasia has been changed especially because the American superpower under the leadership of George W. Bush has abandoned multilateralism in favor of unilateral action in Iraq and in the *Eurasian Conversion Zone* and has become, as a result, the gravest threat to this stability (Prestowitz, C., 2003, p.5). Preemptive war, withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol on Global Warming and the ABM treaty, and development of new, tactical nuclear weapons were unilateral policies that ignored the integrated nature of the world system. These policies have been guided by neo-conservative doctrines committed to the overthrow of brutal dictatorships (although selectively applied) and the spread of free-market democratic values, as well as securing energy supplies and using the “new” Iraq as a strategic foothold within the Middle East. Inherent in this position was the belief that the United States has become not only the greatest power in history, but that it is also, as stated David From and Richard Perle, the world’s greatest force for good (Perle, R., From, D., 2003, p.11).

While the United States had always reserved the right to act preemptively in the past, the 2002 formal codification of a new doctrine of attack based merely on the perceived malevolent identity of an adversary was a qualitative change in U.S. strategic thinking. It appeared to be the geopolitical formalization of George W. Bush’s apparent hyperbolic claim about the need to “*rid the world of evil*”. This use of theological categories to make sense of the world political map reached a notable apogee in George W. Bush’s 2002 *State of the Union* address when he condemned an “*axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world*”, comprising Iraq, Iran and North Korea, three states that had minimal relations with each other, two of them neighbors that had fought a bloody war, one despotic, the other a theocracy, and the third a relic communist dictatorship. That they were in alliance was absurd. That they were “evil” was a theological truth to the neoconservatives running the Bush Administration.

There were many geopolitical justifications for the belligerence in U.S. foreign and military strategy in the last decades. Among those worthy of note we can mention the justification for an imperial American foreign policy and the war in Iraq made by Thomas P.M. Barnett, one of a community of radical neoconservative defense intellectuals who have long hyped a “*revolution in military affairs*” as a means of transforming Pentagon organization, strategy and appropriation expenditures. In his 2004 book, *The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty First Century*, world politics revolves around a singular plot that Barnett reveals as globalization and the “rule sets” and connectivity it produces. The book is written with plenty of techno-futurist discourse and attitude. World political space is like the operating space of a computer system: there are certain zones that are properly formatted and run well, and there are other bad sectors that need repair through intervention, reformatting and reconnection to the central operating system. That system is globalization, its operating system neoliberal rule sets and its chief “system administrator” the United States (Barnett, T.P.M., 2004, p.315). The world political map is divided into two clashing spatial zones, a *Functioning Core* that has a stable rule set and thick connectivity, and a *Non-Integrating Gap* where rule sets are arbitrary, dysfunctional or non-existent. This is mapped in a graphic manner with a seamless line helpfully distinguishing the zone.

Barnett stated that the following parts of the world can be considered *Functioning Core*: “North America, much of South America, the European Union, Putin’s Russia, Japan and Asia’s emerging economies (most notably China and India), Australia and New Zealand, and South Africa, which accounts for roughly four billion out of a global population of six billion...If we map out U.S. military responses since the end of the Cold War, we find an overwhelming concentration of activity in the regions of the world that are excluded from globalization’s growing Core – namely the Caribbean Rim, virtually all of Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and Southwest Asia, and much of Southeast Asia. That is roughly the remaining two billion of the world’s population. Most have demographics skewed very young, and most are labeled, “low income” or “low middle income” by the World Bank. If we draw a line around the majority of those military interventions, we have basically mapped the *Non-Integrating Gap*. Obviously, there are outliers excluded geographically by this simple approach, such as an Israel isolated in the Gap, a North Korea adrift within the Core, or a Philippines straddling the line. But looking at the data, it is hard to deny the essential logic of the picture. If a country is either losing out to globalization or rejecting much of the content flows associated with its advance, there is a far greater chance that the U.S. will end up sending forces at some point. Conversely, if a country is largely functioning within globalization, we tend not to have to send our forces there to restore order to eradicate threats” (Barnett, T.P.M., 2003 in Tuathail, G.O et. al., 2006, p.152-153). The implications of the thesis for the United States are then explained: America will fight its future wars in the *Non-Integrating Gap*, not against large modern states like itself. Finally, the message is captured in a catchy slogan: “*disconnectedness defines danger*” (Barnett, T.P.M., 2004, p.15). While articulating the imperial fantasies of neoconservatives, Barnett’s fantasy map of U.S. imperial domination (benignly spun as “system administration”), also amply demonstrates its hubris, self-delusion and overreaching impracticality. The Pentagon’s new map encountered the real world when the United States invaded Iraq and Afghanistan and fail to stabilize these relatively small countries.

Drawing the entirety of the *Convergence Zone* into the American geostrategic orbit has become a major U.S. military, economic, and political policy objective, much of which has been undertaken unilaterally. This was reflected in Washington's promotion of NATO's expansion eastward into the Baltic, the *Silk Road Strategy Act* of 1999, and military penetration of the Balkans, the Black Sea area, the Trans-Caucasus, and Central Asia. While there are overwhelming obstacles to accomplishing this goal, given that the economic and strategic interests of the other major powers are so directly involved, the U.S. has thus far largely ignored or overridden these interests. From Saul B. Cohen's point of view unless the U.S. abandons unilateralism in favor of a multilateral approach to the Convergence Zone, America "*is likely to precipitate the creation of a vast new Shatterbelt – an arena of unrestrained competition and conflict, in which internal rivalries and fragmentation are exploited by outside powers to gain advantage in pursuit of their self-interests. Such a Shatterbelt would be subject to two sets of forces: (1) the measures taken by the Eurasian powers individually and collectively to counter U.S. influence; and (2) the increased competition between and among the Eurasian abutters to stake out their own respective spheres of influence. This is a recipe for global geopolitical disequilibrium*" (Cohen, S.B., 2005, p.4)

The U.S.-lead intervention in Afghanistan has changed the geopolitics of the entire region. It has begun to force new relationships linking the U.S. with Russia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, while placing new pressures on Pakistan and China. The prospect of rebuilding Afghanistan as a viable and stable state is one of the most challenging and promising prospects for all of Eurasia, but this has not be an easy task. Afghanistan, in spite of some slow moves towards stability, has suffered from attempted political assassinations, efforts by the Taliban to reestablish themselves, local warlordism and smuggling, a slow building up of infrastructure with only small amounts of aid actually having arrived in the ravaged country, problems of competition for influence by neighboring countries, the slow progress in building up a truly unified, non-partisan army, and concerns that a true democracy will not readily emerge. Likewise, the changing balance of power in Central Asia, with increased U.S. and European influence in the region, has sparked concerns both within Russia and China about their future place within Eurasia.

Furthermore, with the U.S. intervention in Iraq, there are also potential spill-over effects on Iran, Syria, Turkey, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan in moving towards political and security stabilization. The war in Iraq has reconfigured the global geopolitical landscape in many ways, some which may not be apparent for years or even decades to come. It has certainly altered the U.S. relationship with Europe and the Middle East. But its impact goes well beyond this. More than anything else, the war reveals that the new central pivot of world competition is the south-central area of Eurasia.

Stability in Eurasia will be dependent to the relationships between the United States and Russia, China and India. These relationships will be strongly related to the America's ability to deal especially with China and India, in the given circumstances that the United States entered the 21st century hoping to boost its ties to China financially and India strategically. That is why it is important that the United States "*must wake up to the reality that they will have to deal with India and China as equals rather than supplicants – as players rather than playthings*" (Sieff, M., 2009), p.9). There are enormous potential rewards for

effectively managing these relationships. But the history of U.S. engagement with both nations, especially through the second half of the 20th century, is replete with examples of excessive hostility and demonizing on the one hand, and naïve, uncritical romanticism on the other. A prosperous 21st century America, buttressed by wise and lasting strategic relationships with major Asian nations, requires that its policy-makers learn from and avoid the many mistakes of their predecessors.

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