

World Order under Stress: Issues and Initiatives for the 21st Century

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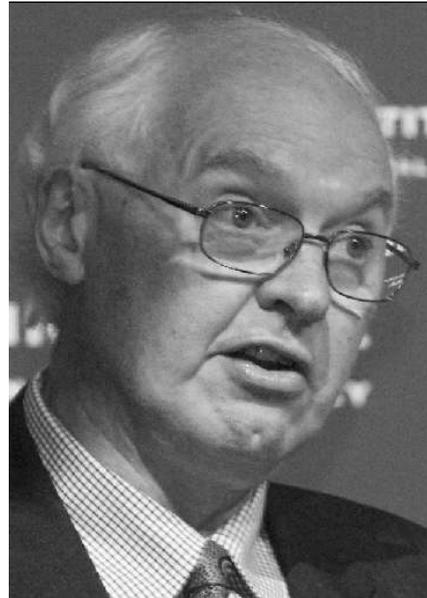
Forty years ago, when I stepped off the aircraft which had brought me back from a year of war in Vietnam, I had the beginnings of an anxiety which has grown more acute since. My worry, in a nutshell, was that the United States for all its wealth and military power, did not know how to respond to a well-conceived insurgency. Many events since then have only confirmed that view. As a result we are now in a serious crisis. In this paper I shall focus on the problems the United States faces as the leading power in the world today, the insurgency of radical Islam, the future of nuclear weapons and the need for closer global cooperation.

Before moving into the substance of my presentation let me offer some words of respect for the man in whose honour this lecture is named. Kenneth Cunningham achieved fame and influence as an educator and especially as the first Chief Executive of the Australian Council for Educational Research. The quality of his work has given the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, and our profession at large in this country, a splendid basis for their development. What is less well known about Cunningham is that he was a front line soldier in the hell of the Western Front, 1916-18, while in his late twenties. He was first a humble stretcher bearer, from whose perspective all of the most ghastly and horrifying aspects of that war must have been only too visible, before rising through the ranks to become a commissioned officer in late 1918.¹

From September 1918 a brighter prospect dawned for Cunningham, when he was selected to take a leading part in the huge civil re-education project which the Australian Imperial Force conducted in France and the UK from November 1918 to May 1919. It was a great feather in Cunningham's cap to be chosen as one of the leaders in this program, as he had yet to complete his bachelor's degree at the University of Melbourne. It would be interesting to know more about why he was chosen, but clearly he had made a strong intellectual mark among the hundreds of thousands of Australian soldiers in France. Such qualities were, of course, not unknown in the ranks of the stretcher-bearers in the Australian Army Medical Corps, for many of whom a medical post was the only acceptable way in which to serve in a war.

It is not easy being Number One

It has been a commonplace since the end of the Cold War to refer to the United States as the world's only super-power. What nonsense this is – and what illusions it fosters! In the currency of effective military power for today's wars, particularly well trained infantry, marines and their supporting arms on the ground, the United States is simply a major power,



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contending with many other powers major and minor – some even at subnational level – who can outmanoeuvre and outlast the American will. The United States does not have the necessary military superiority in a major regional war to ensure victory. It is at full stretch militarily, economically, socially and politically with the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Not even George W Bush is willing to re-introduce the draft. The United States is the strongest power in the world overall, but it has shortcomings in the particular field in which it has chosen to engage militarily.

Experience of the past four years calls into question the widely proclaimed official view that the United States will eventually emerge victorious from Iraq and Afghanistan. Rather, I suggest, we should give some consideration to what will happen to American leadership and prestige if the US is defeated in either place. There will be some major consequences. Let me briefly offer four case studies in the problems of remaining Number One in a turbulent world.

First, Britain after the Seven Years War. By 1763 British power was at its height relative to other major states. Britain had driven the French out of North America and crushed their ambitions in India. While lacking a really large army, Britain still had the power to win major victories on land. The Royal Navy was dominant across the oceans of the world. Rich trade moved with the British flag. Perhaps even more importantly from the perspective of Britain's major rival, France, Britain was widely admired for its moral, social and political standards. Voltaire and Montesquieu had come to England in the 1720s and 30s, and studied British society and politics. Their perceptive books were influential both in imparting specific ideas to French thinkers and political reformers and in increasing respect in France for Britain and the British. Voltaire's *Letters Concerning the English Nation* ran to thirty-five editions and in the words of Robert and Isabelle Tombs, the *Letters* 'made anglophilia not merely fashionable, but essential to an enlightened outlook'.² Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois* was somewhat more balanced than Voltaire's view of Britain but nonetheless Montesquieu saw Britain as the principal bearer of the ideals of freedom, and he contributed to the strengthening of Britain's position as a model for forward-looking Frenchmen and women to adopt.

Sadly for Britain, its moral influence in France was to decline after the Seven Years War because many Frenchmen saw British conduct in that conflict as brutal, selfish and ultimately threatening to France itself in a more direct way. Britain was feared and therefore, many Frenchmen thought, it should be isolated and humbled. This was not merely a French view and soon Britain found itself without allies in Europe. Then it lost North America. Britain's time as Number One was over – not for being evil, but for being powerful, assertive, arrogant and taking on too much.

My second case study is the behaviour of France during and after the wars of the Revolution and the Napoleonic era. There was no shortage of enmity between British and French after the Revolution. By 1800 the revitalised France, led by its military genius from Corsica, had become once again the strongest power in the world. Britain, despite its naval might and wealth, remained a peripheral power in Europe while the French under Napoleon had their years at centre stage. Napoleon's marches of conquest (or pre-emption) frightened too many other nations and peoples for his own good and the result was defeat in the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig in 1813 and at Waterloo in 1815. The French had blown their chances of remaining Number One in Europe by attempting to impose their will and their systems on too many people.

For the next fifty years Europe lacked a dominant power and did not fare too badly under the Concert of Europe. Then in the 1860s came the rise of Prussia under the political guidance of

Bismarck and the military leadership of Moltke – my third case study. Their defeats of Austria-Hungary in 1866 and France in 1870 enabled the Prussians to create a unified greater Germany which in its turn became the greatest power in Europe. Its government also passed some remarkably forward looking social legislation. Americans, Australians and Englishmen came to Germany for ideas on many topics. But German leaders had to face the real *Angst* and the not-so-real paranoias of being Number One. The generation which followed Bismarck after 1890 allowed Germany's cooperative relations with Russia to erode. At the same time Germany saddled itself with the security problems of the Habsburg Empire as it tried to suppress a host of national problems across Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Germany felt forced to go to war pre-emptively against France and Russia in 1914, causing such alarm elsewhere that soon Germany and Austria-Hungary were at war with most of the rest of the world. By 1917, the United States of America was engaged in war on land and at sea for the first time in Europe. Germany soon lost its place in the sun as its enemies deliberately weakened, contained and humiliated it once the Kaiser realised that his forces were over-stretched.

A re-invigorated Germany pre-emptively challenged the status quo again in 1939. Japan seized its moment in 1941-42 to become Number One in the Pacific and similarly destroyed its prospects through frightening too many people and taking on too much. The legacy of these attempts by Germany and Japan to secure their futures by use of force set them back a huge distance in terms of their acceptability around the world. Only now, sixty-two years after the end of the Second World War, are they becoming regarded as desirable partners for the maintenance of order and security around the globe.

My fourth case study is one of two leading powers – the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Each of these helped to legitimise the other in the eyes of their numerous supporters around the world. By 1990 the United States had defeated the Soviet Union through the quality of its political, social and economic systems, its delicacy in alliance management, and its realism in offering no prospect for the Soviets to use force pre-emptively against itself or its allies. The heavy-footed Soviets became isolated. They had no real friends and alongside the US they simply looked bad.

How has the US fared since becoming a single Number One in its turn? As I said at the outset, it is not easy to hold this position for long. Many powerful, well-led states have been Number One in earlier times and they have all been demoted. The principal factors were: causing fear among several individually less powerful states; then applying force pre-emptively and over-optimistically; and finally, discovering that the cost of achieving victory would be unsustainable. In the post-1945 world the delicate balance of terror (to use Albert Wohlstetter's phrase) applied a restraint on Soviet and US use of force which helped them to avoid a major direct clash. But this mechanism did not prevent the Americans from waging a major war in Vietnam and the Soviets from making a large-scale commitment of force in Afghanistan. The Soviets were unable to bear the cost of competition with the United States and they slipped down the ladder.

The United States has not yet lost its position as Number One, nor would most of us want it to, but its influence has declined since 2003. Opinion surveys the world over have shown repeatedly that the moral standing of the United States has been damaged, and that President Bush himself is poorly regarded. American proclivities to use force are deprecated. America's proficiency in counter-insurgency is rated as low. US capacity to administer an occupied country is seen as weak. In short, America's halo has slipped. Regaining the respect and esteem that it has lost will not be easy, and, history tells us, when a national leadership is

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under pressure, judgement is apt to go astray. Terrible consequences can result. Just bear in mind the implications of some of Vice President Cheney's recent remarks on Iran. We all have an interest in persuading the United States to stop weakening itself. We do not need a dominant, autocratic Number One to hold sway for a generation or so, as we had in former centuries. America does not have to maintain world order by itself, but it has to lead by consultation and persuasion or it will fail. Other major powers in Europe and Asia have to be convinced that they will be listened to and their contributions welcomed.

Our challenge is to try to convince more Americans that they are heading into worse danger with the policies of the Bush Administration and to work with them to help change course.

The West and radical Islam

Let me begin my discussion of issues in the Middle East with a few more lessons from history. One of the key assumptions underlying President Bush's decision to go to war in Mesopotamia is the notion that Iraq is a viable country. This needs some critical re-assessment. Iraq was an imperial British creation, put together out of three former provinces of the Ottoman Empire in 1921 when Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill, prompted by his adviser Lawrence of Arabia, had to find a fitting territory over which Prince Faisal could rule once the French had ejected him from Syria. While it was commendable of Lawrence (and Churchill) to recognise some debt to Faisal for his leadership of the Arab revolt against the Ottomans during the First World War, they created a huge conundrum for the future by choosing Mesopotamia to be Faisal's future domain.

This region had been a classical march-land - the scene of battles and wars between neighbouring states - for millennia. Sumer fought Akkad, Assyria fought Babylonia. The Kurds established their hold on the area ranging from present-day eastern Turkey to northern Iran, probably in the sixth millennium BCE, and they have been busily engaged in defending their autonomy and claims to independence ever since – not always successfully, but with determination and credibility. All invaders of the Kurdish region of the Middle East have suffered for their intrusions and even Saddam was unable to suppress them fully. The notion that what is now the eastern part of Turkey is not historical Kurdish territory does not get much of a reception from the Kurds. They have lived there for thousands of years and Turkish attacks on the bases of the PKK are not likely to make the Kurds forget it!

In the first millennium BCE the Persians, the Macedonians, the Seleucids, the Parthians and then the Romans all marched in but after a few hundred years they were gone. The Arab conquest and subsequent mass migrations from Arabia led to the founding of Baghdad as the centre of the Abbasid Caliphate which overlapped three continents, from Spain to India. During the eighth century the Muslims divided into Sunni and Shia. The Mongols took Baghdad in 1258 and ruled until 1335. Thereafter the Kurds and Arabs of Mesopotamia were proud that they had survived the horrors of a Mongol invasion. Could anything have been worse?

The Arabs were unable to stem the Ottomans, who, led by Suleiman the Magnificent, took Baghdad in 1534. Ruling through districts, the Ottomans controlled Mesopotamia until 1916. Their principal vilayets, Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, had a substantial degree of autonomy, and were relatively prosperous, but being composed of very different ethnic and religious mixtures, these three regions did not cohere. The Ottomans had to deal with a number of revolts and insurgencies, despite their relative liberality as rulers. The Kurds, Sunni and Shia were people with proud traditions but collectively they were not a nation. They lived in multi-

ethnic districts, sometimes harmoniously and sometimes not. They each regarded themselves, their history, culture and religion as very special, and were prepared to fight hard and endure great hardships, including death, to have the degree of autonomy that they felt was essential to their continued survival.

The British soon found, once they had put Faisal onto the shiny new but teetering throne of this freshly created state, Iraq, that they faced both a hostile Turkey and a long-running Arab revolt. Colonial Secretary Churchill himself wrote to his Prime Minister Lloyd George on 1 September 1922 that 'we are paying eight millions a year for the privilege of living on an ungrateful volcano out of which we are in no circumstances likely to get anything worth having.'³ Thus had the vision of Iraq soured for Churchill since he had brought it about seventeen months previously. The British experience of attempting to control Mesopotamia over the following thirty years was a most unhappy and expensive one.

The British depended on local strongmen (such as General Nuri es Said and Rashid Ali) and when they gave Iraq up, it was ruled by first the Army and then the Baath Party under Saddam Hussein. And that is the only way that Iraq in its brief life as a state has been controlled. The notion that this non-state could be made into a flourishing liberal Western-style democratic nation as a result of an American invasion is simply ludicrous, and was seen as such by many informed observers in 2002 when US invasion plans began to be discussed openly.

The Bush Administration, and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld in particular, apparently had little idea of the formidable nature of the task that they were about to attempt. Remember Rumsfeld saying on 7 February 2003 'It could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months.' And nine days later Vice-President Cheney expressed these views: 'I think it will go relatively quickly, ..(in) weeks rather than months.' and 'I really do believe that we will be greeted as liberators'.

The Administration's second mistake was in their failure to see that the United States armed forces were not well suited for facing communal resistance. Their third error was in failing to make any prudent preparation for a protracted war should their hopes for rapid victory prove ill-founded. The force sent in was not only inexperienced, but also much too small. The result has been a briefly successful invasion of Iraq by US and allied forces, followed by a period of chaos until it dawned on Administration leaders that they were up against strong and probably enduring resistance from the local people. Then came another period in which blunt force was used relatively heavily, killing tens, maybe hundreds, of thousands of local civilians, maiming hundreds of thousands more, destroying vital civilian infrastructure, buildings and houses, and complicating the regeneration of a thriving civilian economy.⁴ In the last year General Petraeus and some bright young assistants (including one of my own doctoral students) have taken a more considered approach to the development of appropriate counter-insurgency techniques and forces. The jury is still out on their efforts but early victory is not in sight.

Success may not come at all. The challenge is extremely formidable and US armed forces are difficult to retrain and then re-use in a much more sensitive way. As a student of US public opinion in wartime I recognise that the most likely outcome will be that American public opinion will simply give up on this conflict and force the next Administration to withdraw. Then we shall all be in deep trouble as terrorists gain an array of secure bases in Mesopotamia from which they can slaughter their local foes, launch attacks on Arab enemies across their borders and then threaten Israel. Some of this activity is likely to be supported by Iran, and possibly even controlled by it. Other insurgent operations will derive support and direction from the Al Qaeda networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan is likely at best to continue to be a battle zone – I shall forebear from giving you a history lesson on failed

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foreign attempts to control that region. You already know of the experiences of Imperial Britain and the Soviet Union there over the past two centuries.

Pakistan is a dangerously fragile container of destructive forces of many kinds, including nuclear weapons. Current events there are extremely disturbing. Let us not delude ourselves that violent radicals will not try to oust General Musharraf, Benazir Bhutto and others likely to be cooperative with the United States. Prospects for the survival of a stable and friendly Pakistan are hard to read but clearly the less internal pressure that the country has to endure, the better off we shall all be. General Musharraf's recent declaration of a state of emergency simply underlines the seriousness of the plight of one of the West's principal allies in the Middle East. Among other questions arising is who will control Pakistan's nuclear weapons in the longer term and how securely are they now being held?

I could offer some historical observations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which suggest that both peoples face a very difficult future, but that would be to inflict too much on you, my audience, for a 45 minute lecture. Let me simply pass on an appraisal that I heard Henry Kissinger make over breakfast in London one morning in 2001. He said 'The trouble with Americans is that they think that every problem has a solution. But in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian problem that just is not true. There is no solution to this problem. All you can do is try to manage it.' I think he is right and we have to constantly remember the presence of the Israeli-Palestinian tensions – another reason for treating the whole Middle Eastern area with delicacy, forbearance and above all, knowledge of the forces at work there.

So let us not succumb to the optimistic blandishments of Western governments on the future course of the struggle between radical Islam and the West. We have joined combat and we are not doing very well. One of the most disturbing features of the conflict has been the propensity of the leading Western governments participating, including our own, to ignore sound advice at the outset and then, when in trouble, to pretend that everything is going much better than it is. The Iraq War will make a splendid case study in government manipulation of public opinion and disregard of expert advice. I remain reasonably well connected with other international security specialists around the world. A majority of my colleagues has been opposed to the Iraq War from the outset. The US and allied governments simply put their fingers into their ears and took no notice of what experts had to say, while their soldiers and other personnel in Iraq, plus hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, have borne the fearful costs of this disregard. Among the consequences of this decision-making process is the fact that it will be harder to recruit bright young people to the armed forces just when we need more of them. And fairly soon our electorates are going to wake up to the hollowness of the claims made by the current governments in the United States and Australia that they are the best guardians of national security.

The future of nuclear weapons

I have already mentioned nuclear weapons in the case of Pakistan. This country is only one of nine who can inflict sudden death on hundreds of thousands of people and destroy whole cities and major installations. One of the defining characteristics of international security in the 21st century has been the threat of the suicide bomber armed with weapons of mass destruction. We learned to live with nuclear weapons during the Cold War because there was a sense of balance and therefore relative stability between two sides, neither of whom was prepared to risk destruction by the weapons of the other.

Sadly the nuclear non-proliferation treaty regime seems close to collapse and the Bush Administration's attempts to open up the links of trade in nuclear technology with India are undermining it further. Curiously it is now the forces of Indian nationalism which are the main obstacle to the development of a relationship which is well outside those thought fit by the framers of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). What on earth must the Iranians be thinking as the Bush Administration smiles on India and Pakistan, two non-signatories of the NPT, while they, who have signed it, are threatened with sanctions and military attack? If they had not thought about developing nuclear weapons before, the Iranians must surely feel motivated now to acquire their own deterrent.

And what other sources of nuclear weapons proliferation are there? It is too early to cross the North Koreans off the list. And as more states build civil nuclear power stations in the hope of reducing emissions of green-house gases, so the means to build a nuclear weapons capability will spread. Will no government succumb to the temptation to develop their own nuclear weapons? Will no theft of fissile material occur?

When I accepted the Keating Government's invitation to be a member of the *Canberra Commission for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* in 1995, I did not expect that our work would be crowned by short-term success. But it was clear to me that the role of nuclear weapons had changed since the end of the Cold War and it was high time to re-examine their utility. Proliferation had become a greater danger and the possibility of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists was another new factor to be assessed.

When we produced our report, a document which still contains much sound advice, it was interesting to witness the defensive reaction of four of the five 'recognised' nuclear weapons states: the United States, Russia, Britain and France. Only the Chinese seemed willing to talk seriously about the changes recommended by the Commission. Chinese readiness to talk probably had something to do with their relative weakness in nuclear weapons twelve years ago, and their reluctance to bear the costs of a more intense round of competition with the US and Russia. The Americans and the Russians were prepared to talk to each other about their future nuclear weapons policies, and they have. Useful reductions have been made, but also some unhelpful steps been taken such as the Bush Administration's withdrawal from the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty. Both states are on the verge of developing new types of weapons and their policies will place further stresses on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty regime.

I knew personally quite a few people in the British and French Foreign and Defence ministries who were responsible for nuclear weapons policy advice to their governments. We talked eye to eye and in a relaxed way. I got nowhere with them because nuclear weapons are seen by Britain and France as very desirable levers of political influence – although they will rarely admit that this is their main rationale. Without nuclear weapons the British and French cognoscenti feel that their governments would forfeit leverage in Washington, in NATO councils, in the European Union, in Moscow and even *vis à vis* each other. Furthermore the British and French governments and most opposing political parties in both countries had devoted such great efforts to beating down the anti-nuclear lobby during the Cold War that they find it hard now to contemplate preparing their own electorates to face a future without their own national nuclear weapons.

Although the Canberra Commission's report fell on deaf ears in the governments of most of the nuclear weapons states, it raised the issue in a serious way in the new international context. Other experts have taken the debate forward in both nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states. A solid body of support for elimination has developed and it was particularly significant to see last January that former US Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger

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and George Shultz, Defense Secretary Bill Perry and Senator Sam Nunn published a joint call for the elimination of nuclear weapons.⁵ It would be hard to find more authoritative American figures to make that call, and they based it on their own experience. On 24-25 October 2007 these four led a conference at Stanford University on ways of taking the proposal forward. Momentum is building.⁶ On re-reading the Canberra Commission's report today, I believe that it makes even more sense than it did in 1996.

The consequences of not eliminating nuclear weapons will include the encouragement of nuclear terrorism. This is first and foremost a American problem. Terrorists, particularly nuclear ones, do not have many shots in their locker and they are unlikely to want to waste their fire on anyone other than Number One. Many Americans are alive to the dangers they face. My friend Graham Allison at Harvard has written an excellent book, *Nuclear Terrorism: the Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe*,⁷ in which he recommends a considerable strengthening of the NPT regime. But the issue he does not confront so squarely is elimination. Why would all the states currently without nuclear weapons continue to deny themselves this form of power when the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France are all about to update theirs? They have the examples of Israel, India and Pakistan, and also of North Korea and Iran, to give them further encouragement. The double standard built into the NPT is likely to prove fatal to the current regime, while the opportunities for suicidally minded terrorists to strike at their enemies with their own 'big bang' will continue to increase.

The need for strengthened international authorities to maintain security

Thus far I have focused on largely traditional security problems – ones where the initiative is essentially in the hands of national governments, or alliances and coalitions of national governments. In the 21st century another much broader set of issues will challenge humankind as we endeavour to cope with climate change,⁸ maintaining standards in human rights and international law, preventing and alleviating famine, controlling the spread of diseases among people, animals and information technology, facing the consequences of state collapse, and learning to de-fuse various forms of global class struggle of which the confrontation between radical Islam and the West is only one variety.

We are not confronting these challenges for the first time, however. The community of states has implemented many forms of cooperation ranging from collaboration between treaty signatories working together to accepting the authority of global bodies such as the League of Nations and the United Nations – both founded through the ideas of American leaders, to help serve American national purposes.

Sadly the UN does not enjoy a good reputation in the United States and the tensions and splits which arose when the United States went to war with Iraq are still in evidence. The impact of a US attack on Iran is likely to have a profoundly negative effect on the future of international cooperation, just at a time when we need of more of it.

The pernicious doctrine of pre-emptive attack needs to be exposed for what it usually is: a cover story for aggression. Political leaders who employ pre-emption put themselves in the hands of one of the least reliable agencies of government – peacetime strategic intelligence. Great power leaders will lose legitimacy and become rallying points against which committed people will fight. It is time for some straight talking around the Security Council table on pre-emption, and then a report to the General Assembly for open debate. This might help in preventing Number One from becoming more isolated.

Security Council reform, including the admission to permanent membership of states such as Germany, Japan, India and Nigeria, remains an important challenge. The ability of the UN to raise and pay for peace keeping forces of serious strength and capacity needs to be increased. The appointment of senior UN officials requires more careful oversight, as does the whole way in which the organisation conducts its business from day to day. Much needs to be done, and it should be approached in recognition that without the UN the world would be in a much worse condition.

The recent widespread recognition that we all face serious problems due to global warming and climate change reinforces the need for our principal international body to be made more effective. The recently published report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington DC, *The Age of Consequences*, reaches the following conclusions on the challenges to global governance:

Severe or sudden climate change presents a profound challenge to existing social and political organizations in countries rich and poor. International co-operation might increase as people rally to save human civilization, or individuals and groups might become preoccupied with promoting their own survival. Under enormous stress brought on by climate change, the United Nations and other existing international institutions will have great difficulty managing their full range of adverse consequences. The implications of new international alignments driven by environmental factors are uncertain, but the complex and inherently divisive nature of climate change is likely to impede collective responses.⁹

While it is interesting that a leading group of analysts in the United States is taking such a clear-eyed view of the security problems flowing from climate change, it is salutary that they point to international division as a more likely outcome than collective action. We do not need to take this as given however, but rather, making due allowance for a American tendency towards disregard for international organisations, especially the United Nations, it seems wiser to make a stronger effort to develop strength and effectiveness through global and regional bodies. After all, these problems are not likely to be solved by the actions of any one powerful state, even in terms of securing the futures of its own people. Without a much stronger set of international organisations it is hard to see how civilisation is going to survive.

In Conclusion

First, the United States' challenge is to learn from its own recent experience, and the histories of other leading powers, so that it might avoid gradual loss of respect and authority, followed by growing alienation from other states, including its friends. The US needs to show greater awareness of, and sensitivity towards, the views of its colleagues in the world community of states. There are rules and norms to be obeyed, especially with regard to the use of force. Wars are best launched with the sanction of international authority. Also any wars initiated with the UN's support need to be conducted successfully. Armed forces used for the reconstruction of failed or split states need to be relatively large, multi-national in composition and command, specially trained for this very demanding role, and, once committed, kept on station for many years of service.

Second, the United States and its friends face huge problems in the Middle East. Prospects are not good. We need to prepare ourselves to face a much more severe set of problems in the wake of a Western withdrawal from Mesopotamia. We need greater international cooperation and political, social and economic policies which can achieve our ends more

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effectively than has been done in the past four years. General Abizaid, the former US Commander in Iraq, recently said that US armed forces may need to remain in Iraq for fifty years in order to achieve the current Administration's goals. What will happen if they are gone in two years? The United States, its allies and its friends in the Middle East need to work out a viable strategy for coping with the consequences quickly. The incoming US President in 2009 should have this project high on his or her agenda, and be ready to launch a major international conference of relevant parties to reach agreement on strategy for a continuing struggle in the Middle East.

Third, we need to develop more effective policies for reversing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and making them more secure against terrorist use. A two-tier structure of haves and have-nots will not contain nuclear proliferation. There will always be others who want to join the club, a club for which one essentially only has to make one's own tie in order to be admitted, as Israel, India and Pakistan have already shown. We are in a new era in which the most likely users of nuclear weapons are not deterrable nation states but undeterrable shadowy groups of insurgents and extremists who are ready to die for their beliefs. The Western powers, especially the United States, offer large, tempting, high value targets which are extremely difficult to defend. Henry Kissinger pointed out at Stanford last month that in his view nuclear non-proliferation is **the** most important issue facing the world today. Let us develop wider recognition of the seriousness of this danger and stop undermining our best means for dealing with it.

Fourth, we have to deal with the global and regional consequences of the transnational dangers posed by climate change, shortage of resources, disease, uncontrolled emigration, etc. Although these are security issues, the most effective way in which to approach most of them is by civil means, or soft power. We need leadership and coordination by global and regional organisations. We therefore need a phase of revising the rules under which nations participate in the United Nations and regional bodies, before we can utilise those agencies most effectively. Such cooperation may not be sufficient for success but it is an essential foundation.

Finally let me emphasise that this is an era of great challenge to policy makers. We can continue to run downhill, but there will be terrible consequences. We need a new generation of national and international leaders who understand why the policies of the past several years have been so unsuccessful and boldly set out on a new course. These leaders will need sound guidance from the expert communities of academia, the media and government agencies. It is up to us to produce high quality work. It will be up to our leaders to open their ears and their minds to some positive new thinking.

Professor Robert O'Neill AO, FASSA, was born in 1936. He served in the Australian Regular Army 1955-68, including war service in Vietnam 1966-67 and was mentioned in dispatches. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford 1961-65, receiving a Doctorate of Philosophy in Modern History for a thesis on the relationship between the German Army and the Nazi Party. His first book, *The German Army and the Nazi Party*, was published in 1966 with an introduction by Sir Basil Liddell Hart.

He wrote his second book, *Vietnam Task*, while on war service and then taught military history at the Royal Military College of Australia, publishing his third book, *General Giap: Politician and Strategist* (1969). He moved to the Department of International Relations,

Australian National University in 1969, and was subsequently appointed Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1971-82. Between 1970 and 1982 he wrote the *Official History of Australia's role in the Korean War* and from 1970 to 2001 he was the Armed Services Editor of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

From 1982-87 he was Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, where he placed new emphasis on the Institute's work in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In 1987 he became the Chichele Professor of the History of War at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of All Souls College. He was Co-Director of the All Souls Foreign Policy Studies Program, 1991-2001, and chaired the Council of the IISS 1996-2001, Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, London, 1998-2001, Council of the Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, London 1991-96 and Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies in the University of London 1990-96. He was also a director of the International Peace Academy, New York, and the Ditchley Foundation, Oxfordshire. He was a member of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons established by the Australian Government in 1995-96.

On retirement from Oxford in 2001 he returned to Australia to chair the Council of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, until 2005. He was also Deputy Chair of the Board of the Graduate School of Government, University of Sydney, 2003-05 and remains a board member of the Lowy Institute for International Policy. He was Planning Director of the United States Studies Centre of the University of Sydney 2006-07. His research interests focus on war and warfare in the past and present, and ways of resolving international tensions.

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- ¹ Bean, CEW (1942). *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, Vol VI, *The AIF in France 1918*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney: 1065.
 - ² Tombs, Robert and Isabelle (2007). *That Sweet Enemy; Britain and France the History of a Love-Hate Relationship*. Pimlico, London: 60.
 - ³ Gilbert, Martin (1989). *Winston S Churchill*, Volume IV 1916-1922. Heinemann, London: 817.
 - ⁴ Casualty estimates for the civilian population in Iraq vary widely. Two important sources are the Iraq Body Count, www.iraqbodycount.org and the Bloomberg School of Public Health of Johns Hopkins University, www.jhsph.edu/publichealthnews.
 - ⁵ (2007). 'A world free of nuclear weapons', *The Wall Street Journal*, 4 January.
 - ⁶ For an example of a committed private citizen's initiative see the work of Bruce Roth's Daisy Alliance (www.daisyalliance.org) and read his book *No Time To Kill* (2005) which is available from the Daisy Alliance.
 - ⁷ Allison, Graham (2005). *Nuclear Terrorism: the Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe*. Henry Holt and Company, New York.
 - ⁸ Center for Strategic and International Studies (2007). *The Age of Consequences: the Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Global Climate Change*. Washington DC.
 - ⁹ *Ibid*: 107.

