

The NATIONAL STRATEGY FORUM REVIEW

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Chapter 1: History of the "National Security Strategy of the United States"

The "National Security Strategy of the United States" was mandated by Section 603 of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986, and requires:

A comprehensive description and discussion of the foreign policy worldwide commitments and national defense capabilities of the United States; the proposed short-term and long-term uses of the elements of national power required to protect and promote the interests and achieve the stated goals and objectives; and to provide an assessment of the capabilities of the United States to implement its national security strategy.

The legislation was motivated by the National Strategy Forum's founder, Morris Liebman.

Sun Tzu, the classic military strategist, once wrote that a leader should never reveal his strategy to a competitor, lest he lose the advantage of surprise. Why would the U.S. want to reveal its national security strategy to the world? Isn't such a revelation a certain way to lose a competitive advantage? What benefits could the U.S. gain by doing so?

The world we live in today is very different from that of Sun Tzu. The United States operates in an interdependent world, where friends, allies, competitors, adversaries, and enemies all hold the ability to affect the fate of other states. No single state can expect to thrive alone. Moreover, in an era where public and private information is widely available, few things are kept secret from determined prying eyes.

The National Strategy Forum (NSF) believes that disclosing the national security strategy—if done in a managed, purposeful manner—allows the U.S. to convey its intentions and capabilities to a networked world in the hope that other states will be interested in partnering to achieve common security-related goals. Rather than operating in a vacuum, it is better to have access to multiple sources of information to reduce or minimize misunderstanding, as occurred in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Disclosure of U.S. national security strategy becomes less about losing the element of surprise and more about adapting national security strategy to the realities

of the world stage and working with other states to create security strategies that reinforce one another.

Beginning in 1987, the “National Security Strategy of the United States” was published in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002, and 2006, during which time opportunities for serious discussion and long-term strategy creation have been missed. The next report will likely be published in Spring 2010.

The purpose of the NSF's "U.S. National Security Strategy 2010" is two-fold: to provide NSF members, affiliates, and readers with a guide for independent thinking about national security strategy; and to encourage U.S. government national security policymakers and editors to think strategically as they make decisions.

The NSF believes that strategy must be carefully thought through and explained before policy actions should occur. Traditionally, U.S. national security policy has been ad hoc, reactive, and impelled by the need to put out today's fires. Tactics trumped strategy. This orientation persists.

The NSF's report identifies U.S. strengths, opportunities, and threats, and anticipates future unforeseen matters that may affect U.S. national security strategy. The report defines the issues and addresses strategy rather than developing policy prescriptions.

Conflicting views regarding subject categories and future issues are valuable because they engender informed, robust discussion, and provide an array of options. Too often, national security discussion is based on partisan political interests. A nonpartisan national security policy may be a goal too far, but the NSF U.S. National Security Strategy could be a step in the right direction.

There are several analytical approaches to the U.S.-world relationship: global affairs, international relations, foreign policy, and foreign affairs, all of which are valid. However, the value added by the NSF approach is that, since our inception in 1983, we have focused on national security strategy, broadly defined. In redefining national security, we expand the focus of national security to include the following:

- American Ethos
- National Economic Planning
- Education and National Security
- Energy Security
- Cyber Security
- Military Strategy
- International Relations: Complementary Strategy
- Public Diplomacy
- Management of National Security

All of these subjects in our U.S. National Security Strategy have been examined in depth by the NSF in the National Strategy Forum Review (NSFR), our monthly NSF lecture series, and by annual national security conferences sponsored by McCormick Foundation.

A fundamental principle of our approach to national security strategy is *complementary strategy*. This is based on the common sense principle that U.S. strategy must be created congruent with the strategic objectives of other states. This process emphasizes listening to others, rather than transmitting U.S. policy in a vacuum.

While U.S. strategic objectives compete with other states' conflicting objectives, it is important to recognize that U.S. strategy is interdependent and relies, in large part, on coordination with other states. In this regard, U.S. objectives must be carefully calibrated with the goals of other states so far as possible.

The U.S. has common interests with adversaries, competitors, friends, and allies – even enemies, although such interests are more limited. These interests vary in degree of commonality and can shift based on the nature of the situation. Continuity of relationships is desired, but constancy on most future issues is unlikely. The overarching strategic objective is to identify the common interests of the U.S. and other states and to initiate an implementation plan that will address mutual interests. Major examples include:

- Conflict Avoidance
- Energy Dependence
- Scarce Natural Resources: (e.g. water, minerals, fish).
- Terrorism (domestic and international)
- Nuclear Proliferation
- Radical Nationalist Movements
- Piracy and Cyber Security
- Global Economic Security

A primary strategic objective of complementary strategy is to convert enemies into adversaries; adversaries into competitors; and competitors into friends.

Is there one sentence that identifies an all-inclusive national security strategy organizing principle? Our working answer is: national and personal safety and security.

The National Strategy Forum is competent to propose a U.S. National Security Strategy. The NSF frames issues as questions rather than answering them, and we provide options for common sense, informed, civil, nonpartisan discussion. We have focused solely on strategy since 1983, and developed strong relationships with governmental and nongovernmental leaders and analysts in the U.S. and abroad. In a series of Forum lectures, NSFR articles, and conferences, we have closely examined virtually all of the issues referenced in the following document. We do not

present them as the final word on the issues discussed, but to highlight issues and options that we believe should be considered in the development of U.S. national security strategy.