

The NATIONAL STRATEGY FORUM REVIEW

An Online National Security Journal Published by the National Strategy Forum

Executive Summary

For many years, the National Strategy Forum (NSF) has undertaken periodic reviews of U.S. national security strategy. The NSF institutional objective is to provide our members and readers with a nonpartisan and objective view of the fundamental elements of contemporary U.S. national security strategy. The anticipated result will be an informed citizenry able to engage in discussion and communicate their ideas to policymakers on issues regarding U.S. national security policy.

American national security policy is derived from the “inalienable rights” described in the Declaration of Independence: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In national security terms, these are personal security, civil liberties, and economic prosperity. These are the three pillars of the National Strategy Forum’s “U.S. National Security Strategy 2010.”

Four assumptions underlie this effort:

- First, U.S. national security principles must be revisited and refined to meet the challenges now before us. National goals must have clear means for their achievement. U.S. frustrations in Iraq and Afghanistan speak to this eloquently. Strategy considers both goals and the means to achieve them. Actions unrelated to strategic objectives may be counterproductive. As Sun Tzu noted, tactics without strategy are simply the noise before defeat.
- Second, the concept of national security must be expanded to be congruent with the challenges and opportunities that America faces today. The U.S. must compete in a globalized world – a world in which our competitive edge is deteriorating rapidly.
- Third, U.S. national security strategy must be proactive in nature. By the time a threat becomes apparent, it may be too late to address it effectively. Current and foreseeable threats are far too serious for a reactive strategic approach. National security strategy should be proactive and forward thinking in perspective. Strategy—as an instrument of achieving national goals—should aim to put in place the infrastructure, laws, ideas, and capabilities that will enable the U.S. to be flexible in adapting to current and unforeseen threats

- Finally, the National Strategy Forum has broadened the concept and application of national security policy, and has attempted to link national goals with the means to achieve them. The NSF national security strategy includes topics relating to economic security, the American ethos, educational development, military preparedness, American leadership, public diplomacy, cyber security, and management.

Clear objectives are essential for national security strategy. What is it that America needs, wants, and can afford? A national discussion with full public participation is needed before policymakers construct a U.S. national security strategy. This may be perceived as counterintuitive, particularly by policymakers. However, an informed public could provide common sense guidance to policymakers in support of fundamental objectives. In essence, this is the objective of the NSF national security strategy report.

The following articles are intended to provide the reader with context for an array of national security strategy issues. We seek to identify emerging trends and ask pertinent questions.

Our report calls attention to the following issues which should be considered by those responsible for the national security strategy of the United States:

1. **American Ethos:** The concepts that we introduce as “American Ethos” are the driving force behind creating national security strategy. What is it that America values? How do we, as a people, want to define our security? What measures are we willing to take to pursue security? What tradeoffs in civil liberties are required? Answers to these questions will aid policymakers in crafting national security policy that the American people will understand and support.
2. **Economic Security and National Planning:** Economic security is one of the most important elements of a national security strategy. Without growth, our economy sputters, we lose our competitive edge, standards of living decrease, and our outlook on life is weakened. Therefore, America must ensure a strong, adaptable, and competitive national economy. Globalization heralded a new age in which American competitiveness is now challenged by emerging economies. Outsourcing, for example, is causing many domestic industries to reexamine their business models and to cut costs by moving overseas. This situation is unacceptable. A national economic strategy must be considered to ensure that our future economic security does not slip while others gain the upper hand.
3. **Energy Security:** America's addiction to oil and coal raises our expenses, shackles our foreign policy, and threatens our environment. Achieving effective reforms will require a careful balance between short-term and long-term tradeoffs. Hard choices are ahead, but with the innovation and drive of the American people the necessary infrastructure and policies can be laid for a future without undue dependence on foreign energy.

4. **Education and National Security:** An educated citizenry is crucial for creating a robust and competitive nation. Three issues should be considered: effectively educating young people to compete in a changing world; making education affordable and accessible to students; and engendering competition within the school system.
5. **Military Component of National Security:** National security policy options are directly linked to the availability of military capabilities. Military capabilities are linked to the appropriate weapons mix, as outlined by the defense budget, procurement schedules, and armed forces planning. Military preparedness is a fundamental pillar of national security: without a strong, flexible military, the U.S. cannot hope to safeguard both our domestic and international security.
6. **Cyber Security:** Global technology is rapidly developing. Private citizens, businesses, critical infrastructure, military installations, and government services are all networked with one another. While these developments bring a multitude of positive results, a growing possibility exists for individuals and states to hijack the system. America must think critically about its cyber security infrastructure and safeguard this critical component of our way of life.
7. **International Dimension of National Security:** The NSF emphasizes the importance of *complementary strategy* – the common sense principle that U.S. strategy must be sensitive to the strategic objectives of other states. This process emphasizes listening to others, rather than transmitting U.S. policy in a vacuum. A key goal of complementary strategy is the ability to shift countries along the spectrum—enemies, adversaries, competitors, allies, friends—from lower-order, negative categories to higher-order, positive categories. Listening to and calibrating national objectives among countries at all points of the spectrum helps to achieve this goal. The U.S. has many common interests with enemies, adversaries, competitors, friends, and allies. These interests vary in degree of commonality and shift based on the nature of the situation. Continuity of relationships is desired, although agreement on some 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.
8. **Public Diplomacy:** Managing America's international image is a difficult task for the government. As normal citizens gain power to shape America's image abroad, this brings both great benefits and great costs. One message is clear: America should listen more and transmit less.
9. **American Leadership:** America's position as the leader of the free world is in danger. The U.S. must reevaluate both who it can lead and where they should be led to. Remembering our friends, encouraging our allies, partnering with our competitors, and overcoming our adversaries and enemies are important considerations for returning America to its rightful position: as the leader of the free world.

10. **Management of National Security:** An overarching infrastructure is needed to turn strategy and goals into a functioning system. Therefore, national security management is a particularly important topic. What principles guide our national security management? How do we structure our national security agencies? What is the cost of national security, and how much is too much? Are there any tradeoffs required in constructing a cost effective, efficiently run, and productive national security infrastructure?