Is There a Doctrine in the House?

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WHAT policy should the United States adopt toward China's rise? How should we greet India's emergence, Japan's new assertiveness, Europe's drift or the possible decline of Russia? How can the United States reduce terrorism, promote trade, stop nuclear proliferation and increase freedom?

These are among the toughest questions on the foreign policy agenda, and right now Washington is trying to answer them without a compass. Containment, the doctrine of resisting Soviet and communist expansion, survived some four decades of challenge, but could not survive its own success. What we need is a foreign policy for both the post-cold-war and the post-9/11 world.

That a guiding principle is needed cannot be doubted. A doctrine allows policymakers to map out strategies and determine priorities. Those strategies and priorities in turn guide decisions of long-term importance, like where to invest the country's intelligence and diplomatic assets, as well as how to deploy its military forces and channel its assistance programs. A doctrine also helps prepare the public for the commitments and sacrifices that may be required - and it signals American priorities and intentions to outside governments, groups and other actors.

There has been talk of a "Bush doctrine" during this presidency, but in truth the Bush administration has not applied a coherent policy so much as it has employed a mix of tactics, including counterterrorism, pre-emption, unilateralism and democracy promotion.

Counterterrorism is narrow in scope and provides no guidance for dealing with the opportunities and challenges globalization poses, like expanding trade or combating disease. Pre-emption (or prevention, to be more precise) is relevant to an even narrower set of circumstances and cannot be a regular feature of policy given the uncertainty and controversy it entails. Unilateralism is not viable because most of today's pressing problems are global ones that cannot be met by the United States alone, given the limits of its power.

Democracy promotion is a more serious proposition, but to make it a doctrine would be neither desirable nor practical. Too many problems, including some that threaten the lives of millions, will not be solved by the emergence of new democracies. Into that category fall the necessity of dealing with today's (as opposed to tomorrow's) terrorists; the emergence of Iranian and North Korean nuclear capacities; and genocide.

Promoting democracy is one American foreign policy goal, and rightly so, but when it comes to relations with China, Egypt, Russia or Saudi Arabia, other national security interests must bear equal or greater weight. Moreover, promoting democracy is too difficult to be a truly viable doctrine. In Iraq, where the United States used military force to oust a regime and occupy a country, the costs have been too high and the results too uneven to furnish any kind of model for future operations.

What, then, is the appropriate foreign policy doctrine for the United States? I would suggest "integration." Based on a shared approach to common challenges, it means that we cooperate

with other world powers to build effective international arrangements and to take collective actions. And those relationships would be expanded to include other countries, organizations and peoples, so that they too can come to enjoy the benefits of physical security, economic opportunity and political freedom. Finally, we should offer rogue states the advantages of integration into the global economy in exchange for fundamentally changing their ways.

Containment was the right doctrine for the cold war. But for the current era, we must find a way to bring others in, not keep them out. Integration meets that criterion, along with all the others required of a new doctrine. It reflects existing international realities, addresses American national security challenges, sets forth ambitious but achievable objectives and provides "first order" guidance that policymakers can consistently apply. It is also domestically supportable.

By adopting integration as United States doctrine, policymakers would acknowledge and adapt to a new reality - namely, the fact that the principal threat to American security and prosperity does not come from a great-power rival, because the gap in abilities is too large and the chance of conflict too remote. Rather, our greatest menace stems from what can best be described as the dark dimension of globalization, which includes terrorism, nuclear proliferation, infectious disease, protectionism and global climate change.

What would a foreign policy guided by integration look like? The United States would forge partnerships with China and Russia, accept India's nuclear status, welcome a more assertive Japan, and encourage a more capable and active Europe. We would jettison hopes for rapid changes of regime in Iran and North Korea. Instead we'd offer those countries security guarantees and substantial political and economic incentives (along with access to nuclear power but not control of nuclear fuel) in exchange for abandoning their nuclear weapons programs.

We would propose to extend the World Trade Organization to cover virtually all aspects of manufacturing and services, and we'd reduce or eliminate tariffs, quotas and subsidies. The United States would sponsor worldwide efforts to counter AIDS and avian flu, as well as to bring about a post-Kyoto arrangement to slow global climate change. We would spearhead a diplomatic offensive in support of the principle that governments conducting or supporting either genocide or terrorism forfeit their sovereign rights.

If much of this looks familiar, that's because it is. The Bush administration is clearly moving in this direction. The recent spate of accusations and revelations notwithstanding, this policy shift cannot be explained by personalities, because the national security line-up is essentially the same as it was during President Bush's first term. Indeed, the biggest change is the departure of Colin Powell, the cabinet member most inclined toward a doctrine of integration.

No, what accounts for the changed approach to the world is reality. Iraq has stretched the United States military to the breaking point, cost hundreds of billions of dollars, alienated would-be partners around the world (as evidenced in Argentina last week), and curtailed the enthusiasm of the American people for a missionary foreign policy.

It is hard to escape the paradox: Iraq, a classic war of choice, has constrained the administration's choices in its second term. Choices are further constrained by tax cuts, extravagant spending and the absence of a policy to reduce American dependency on imported

oil. The result is that the United States is moving - haltingly and reluctantly, but inexorably - toward a more pragmatic and multilateral foreign policy appropriate to the era in which we live.

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