

Preface

Five years ago, I had the privilege of conducting a study as a consultant to the U.S. House of Representatives Small Business Committee. Congress asked me, as a systems scientist, to look at a number of defense industrial base issues and their national security implications. The Nation is not well prepared to plan for or establish policy or “grand” strategy in a holistic or long-term sense, and the national security implications of that shortcoming remain very disturbing. I recommended the establishment of a center in the Executive Office of the President for “whole of government” and interagency “foresight capability and grand strategy development” and execution, along with an interagency committee of Congress to have oversight responsibility for the center because the Nation has no means to do this.

Then, in my work with the Project on National Security Reform over the last few years, the Vision Working Group that I led recommended the establishment of a Center for Strategic Analysis and Assessment to provide the mechanism to conduct foresight studies and the development of the grand strategies that would follow—the kind of studies that would look at an entire system, such as the economy and its relationship to national security.

At the end of World War II, General George C. Marshall said, “We are now concerned with the peace of the entire world, and the peace can only be maintained by the strong.” But how does the United States remain strong? What does that mean in a world of globalization? And how do we even define what national security is in such a complex and interdependent world? Can we survive, let alone remain a superpower, if we no longer control any means of production? If we remain a major debtor nation? If we continue our dependence on unstable countries for our energy supplies? If we invest insufficient amounts of our resources in research and development, science and technology? Or if we perceive the training and education of people as a cost as opposed to an investment?

Recently, I spoke about the national security implications of a downturn in the economy and the auto industry to some colleagues in Detroit. They said, “What are you talking about? What does the economy have to do with national security?” Most people in our country equate national security with military readiness, homeland defense, and generally protecting American interests at home and abroad. And

they would be right, but not entirely. National security has other dimensions. It is a broad description of the elements in our society that make it “secure,” and that goes much further than providing for “a common defense.” It can include *anything* that adds to the strength of the Nation. It is about being strong in the sense General Marshall intended.

Historically, *national security* includes the strength of our nation’s infrastructure, the foundation upon which the continuous growth of our society depends. This includes our strong societal and moral codes, the rule of law, stable government, social, political, and economic institutions, and leadership. Also included are our nation’s schools and educational programs to ensure a knowledgeable citizenry and lifelong learning—a must for a democracy. Our nation’s strength also requires investments in science, engineering, research and development, and technological leadership. We cannot be strong without a viable way to power our cities, feed ourselves, and move from one place to another. Most of all, a strong economy is an essential ingredient of a global superpower. Without it, we will lose our superpower status, and quickly.

National security must include a healthy market-based economy, with a strong base of globally competitive products and services that produce jobs. This economy must include sound government policies to promote responsible choices and reduce our debt, and grand strategies for energy and environmental sustainability, science and technology leadership (at least in some areas), human capital capabilities, manufacturing, and the industrial base. And these are not the only components.

National security goes to the very core of how we define who we are as a people and a free society. It concerns how we view our world responsibilities.

Economic security is a major element of national security, even as borders are less important than ever. No matter how we look at national security, there can be no question of the need to include the economic viability of our nation. Without capital, there is no business; without business, there is no profit; without profit, there are no jobs. And without jobs, there are no taxes, and there is no military capability.

The viability of a nation’s industrial infrastructure, which provides jobs for its people, creates and distributes wealth, and leverages profits, is essential. Without jobs, the quality of peoples’ lives deteriorates to a point where society itself can disintegrate. It can also lead to strife on many different levels. As a nation, we need to find a strategy to deal

with this, and we will discuss the ideas of expeditionary economics. But poverty is not only a problem in Third World countries. It can occur at home, too—especially during a deep recession. No community, local or global, can sustain indefinitely whole populations of “haves” and “have nots.” And that gap is now growing within the United States.

There is no question that a part of the infrastructure of a nation must include a sound economy. It was the relative deterioration of the Japanese and German economies that led those nations into World War II. Poverty around the world is a global systemic issue that frequently can and does lead to political instability. But we cannot help others if we cannot help ourselves, and our current economic crisis is a warning.

National security is societal, political, and economic strength. In today’s world, national security for a superpower is meaningless without a strong military capability as well. The sovereignty and security of the United States, and the protection of its citizens and property around the world, remain the bedrock of national security. The execution of U.S. national security strategy is conducted in a highly volatile global environment characterized by quantum changes in technology; unprecedented social, economic, and political interdependencies; broadened opportunities to foster democratic principles; and allegiances and alliances frequently founded on interests other than traditional nationalism.

Understanding the complex systems nature of national security and why the economy is a part of the equation is crucial. The world is a very small place, and world peace may depend upon our ability to understand and articulate these issues—and in particular to recognize the importance of the economic element of national power.

—Sheila R. Ronis