

Assuring the Survival and the Success of Liberty:
An Assessment of the Influence of International, Bureaucratic, and Domestic Politics on US
Grand Strategy

By

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The challenges faced by the United States in the international system today has led to the rise of many think pieces and much commentary on the state of US grand strategy. Mired in ‘endless’ wars, as some pundits have put it, in the Middle East, faced with the uncertainty of a rising China and a revisionist Russia, along with the generally schizophrenic approach to foreign policy by the Trump administration, grand strategy has seemingly become an essential aspect of US statecraft. Scholars, analysts, and practitioners alike have reflected on the state of US grand strategy and have offered frameworks for future considerations. This analytical essay intends to examine the historical record in search of traditions in US grand strategy, what theoretical forces influence grand strategy, and how US grand strategy has changed over time. The scope of work for this project is not to make any groundbreaking theoretical contributions to grand strategy, but to find patterns for future work on the topic, and to analyze the implications of those forces that influence US grand strategy.

Section 1: What is Grand Strategy?

Grand strategy, in the plainest terms, acts as a standardized method for the deployment of political tools in the realm of international politics. It is a concept that is the subject of a wide array of literature, drawing the interest of international relations scholars, civilian and military strategic planners, and foreign policy practitioners alike. The study of grand strategy has evolved over time, producing no precise definition or methods of formulation and implementation. Lukas Milevski says that, “the modern literature, emanating from multiple disciplines, does not adhere to a single overarching understanding of the term, which is frequently invoked without any definition at all.”¹ In the same sense, Rebecca Friedman Lissner points out that the field of scholarship is disjointed, due to “the proliferation of academic and policy analytical work,” leaving the study of grand strategy ‘conceptually inconsistent.’² Despite conceptual inconsistency and varying degrees of definitions of grand strategy, common themes can be found amongst the literature. In order to better understand the historical role of US grand strategy and how it has impacted and will continue to impact the American experience in the international political arena, it is essential to survey the theoretical underpinnings of grand strategy.

The Origin of Strategy

To understand grand strategy as a concept, it is important to explore what strategy means, where it comes from, and how it has evolved into grand strategy. Coming from the Greek word *strategia* (στρατηγία) meaning generalship, strategy first entered modern lexicon in 1771 when Paul-Gédéon Joly de Maizeroy published a translation of Byzantine emperor Leo VI’s *Taktika*.³ When Carl Von Clausewitz’s *On War* was published in 1832, strategy had emerged as an important tenet of theoretical military thought.⁴ Strategy, Sir Lawrence Freedman argues, gave a name to the ‘higher’ parts of war, including “the art of forming the plans of a campaign and directing its operations.”⁵ If war is conducted to achieve political aims, the planning of and the success of military campaigns itself becomes inherently political. According to Basil Liddell-Hart, strategy equals ends plus ways plus means⁶, and since that formula can be applied to not only military strategic planning, but national strategic planning as well, strategy itself evolves into something higher: grand strategy. Several nineteenth century military theorists wrote on the idea of strategy evolving into a higher concept, laying the foundation for key interwar period theorists. Field Marshal Helmuth Graf von Moltke wrote on the dichotomous relationship between tactics and strategy, stating that while tactics drive victory in battle, strategy accounts preparations for battle and serves as a guide in the aftermath of

¹ Lukas Milevski, *The Evolution of Grand Strategic Thought*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.

² Rebecca Friedman Lissner, “What is Grand Strategy? Sweeping A Conceptual Minefield,” *Texas National Security Review* Volume 1, Issue 2 (November 2018), 53.

³ Lawrence Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy, Part 1: The Origins,” *Texas National Security Review* Volume 1, Issue 1 (November 2017), 93.

⁴ *Ibid*, 93.

⁵ *Ibid*, 99.

⁶ Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, (New York, Meridian, 1991), 322.

battle.⁷ Strategy, he argued, must be responsible for deciding when and for what object battle should be fought, as well as the assembly of the necessary forces, and taking advantage of the results.⁸ The purpose of strategy was to provide an overarching guide to one or more brief moments of extreme violence. G.F.R. Henderson wrote of the dependence that good strategy had on good statesmanship, and that it was nearly impossible to “divorce soldiering and statesmanship.”⁹ He also argued that strategy should account for both war itself and the preparation for war, calling the preparation a ‘peace strategy.’¹⁰ The idea that strategy had a role in both war and peace would be bolstered by theorists at the end of the nineteenth century.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, two influential naval theorists made significant contributions to the theoretical foundation of grand strategy. American naval officer Alfred Thayer Mahan and British civilian maritime strategist Sir Julian Corbett both argued for the need to separate strategy from a ‘higher’ strategy.¹¹ Mahan’s work on sea power and naval strategy led him to conclude that strategy is not solely limited to war, and extends beyond war into peacetime.¹² Future grand strategy theorists would build upon this as the connection between grand strategy and policy became clearer. Corbett in a different sense, did not argue that strategy spans across times of war and times of peace, but that it extends up the chain of command to the highest levels of national government.¹³ He posits that there is a clear difference between grand strategy and strategy; grand strategy is holistic, dealing with all the resources of the nation for war including military, economic, diplomatic, and political.

The Interwar Period

The end of World War I fostered a new way of thinking about grand strategy. Military theorists, influenced by the widespread violence and devastation, fundamentally changed the meaning of grand strategy, particularly regarding the use of force and the limits of war.¹⁴ Grand strategy became just as much about the other levers of national power as it had been about the use of force, to achieve and maintain policy aims. This period saw a divergence in grand strategic thought, a British school of thought and an American school of thought.

Colonel John Fuller developed a theory of grand strategy that was influenced by economics, as well as the carnage of the Great War. He argued that war, should that be the necessary policy choice, ought to “enforce the policy of the nation” at the lowest possible cost to itself, the enemy, and the world.¹⁵ The capacity for a government to safeguard its national interest in the international political arena extends beyond military means to include economic, diplomatic, informational, and cultural means. According to Fuller, the grand strategist must understand commerce and finance, as well as politics, culture, and history.¹⁶ Fuller, further developing the work of Corbett, advocated for a holistic approach to a higher level of strategy, grand strategy, to better guide the use of military force.

Like Fuller in the British school, Liddell Hart’s concept of grand strategy centers around the highest levels of government aligning all the means of statecraft to pursuing interests. It is the purpose of strategy, Liddell Hart posits, to reduce fighting to the slenderest possible proportions.¹⁷ His theoretical work in tactics, strategy, and grand strategy illustrates the intimate connection between policy and strategy, and that the “object of war is to attain a better peace,” and that “the military’s aim should be to subdue the enemy’s will to resist, with the least possible

⁷ Lawrence Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy, Part II: The Objectives,” *Texas National Security Review* Volume 1, Issue 2 (February 2018), 47.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹ Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy, Part II: The Objectives,” 49.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹² Milevski, *The Evolution of Grand Strategic Thought*, 36.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁵ Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy, Part II: The Objectives,” 53.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷ Basil Liddell Hart, “The Indirect Approach” in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, edited by Thomas G. Mahnken and Joseph A. Maiolo (New York: Routledge, 2008) 83.

human and economic loss.”¹⁸ Essentially, “it should be the aim of grand strategy to discover and pierce the Achilles’ heel of the opposing government’s power to make war.”¹⁹ Liddell Hart, according to Layton, says grand strategy involves “undertaking a planned series of successive actions to create a preferred world at some defined future time.”²⁰ In other words, grand strategy is a method for shaping the international world. The legacy of Liddell Hart’s work in strategic thinking is resounding. While his experience was inherently British, his ideas would influence many in the post-Cold War era who were thinking critically about US Grand Strategy.

While interwar period grand strategic thought amongst British military theorists centered around the deployment of national resources to limit war and its impact on society, an American school of thought centered around the formulation of grand strategy to avoid war altogether.²¹ Edward Mead Earle, an American historian, proposed that, “the highest type of strategy— sometimes called grand strategy— is that which so integrates the policies and armaments of the nation that the resort to war is either rendered unnecessary or is undertaken with the maximum chance of victory.”²² Unlike Frost, Earle viewed grand strategy as an essential function in both peace time and war time, echoing the theoretical musings of Liddell Hart. Earle recognized the continuity of politics as a condition which required the continuity of grand strategy. He considered grand strategy to be the utility of policy as an instrument of war, to avoid if possible and to wage if necessary.²³ Earle’s theory along with Liddell Hart’s formed a foundation for modern grand strategy theorists.

Renowned classical realist, Hans Morgenthau, was one of the first international relations scholars to define grand strategy. In *Politics Among Nations*, he calls grand strategy ‘the art of bringing the different elements of national power to bear with maximum effect upon those points in the international situation which concern national interest most directly.’²⁴ This is a significant addition to the literature, because until this point, the theoretical work on strategy and grand strategy had been done by military theorists, usually experienced combat officers, or historians. The evolution of strategy into grand strategy, the concerted effort to muster all the resources of the nation to achieve political ends, made it an important field of research for political scientists.

The interwar period was important for the theoretical evolution of grand strategy and grand strategic thought. While British theorists and American theorists had differing perspectives on the ultimate function of grand strategy due to varying experiences in World War I, three major themes emerge. First, strategy governs the conduct of war and the execution of military campaigns, therefore, a ‘higher’ strategy or grand strategy is necessary to guide the use of the military means to the political objectives. After all, there are other methods that complement the use of force and must be coordinated at the national level. Second, since war is inherently political, it is used to achieve some political ends. Finally, grand strategy and coordination of a nation’s tools of statecraft transcend war time and peace time. These ideas are important to keep in mind when grand strategy reemerges as a topic of study among scholars at the end of the Cold War into the post-Cold War era.

Grand Strategy, Defined

In political science and international relations, theory makes the conceptual thought of politics accessible to scholars and analysts. Theory is designed and tested to help create frameworks for assessing the behavior of the units of analysis. However, grand strategy theory is inconsistent in that there are differing definitions, and theorists have not yet formed a consensus of what it universally entails. One scholar’s grand strategy may not be grand strategy to another scholar. As it stands, theory does not distinguish between strategic thought, or the analysis of specific ends, and ideological thought, or how the United States should engage the world.²⁵ For the purpose of this

¹⁸ Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy, Part II: The Objectives,” 53.

¹⁹ Milevski, *The Evolution of Grand Strategic Thought*, 54.

²⁰ Peter Layton, *Grand Strategy* (2018), Kindle Edition, 14.

²¹ Milevski, *The Evolution of Grand Strategic Thought*, 68-69.

²² *Ibid.*, 71.

²³ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 141.

²⁵ Milevski, *The Evolution of Grand Strategic Thought*, 1-2.

exercise, a thorough survey of the literature can shed light on some of the inconsistency of the research field and help craft a broader definition of grand strategy.

Paul Kennedy's seminal work, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, was not written with an original definition of grand strategy. Kennedy draws upon the foundational study of the theory of war, tactics versus strategy, and since tactics can be understood in levels, so too can strategy. He examines the works of interwar period military theorists Earle Mead and Liddell Hart, and uses their definitions of grand strategy to present a series of case studies that survey the grand strategic experiences of European great powers, so that US policymakers can use those experiences to enhance their long-term strategic thinking.

Upon examination of Liddell Hart's theoretical work, Kennedy concludes that the 'crux of grand strategy lies in policy,' or 'the capacity of the nation's leaders to bring together all of the elements, both military and nonmilitary, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation's long-term best interests.'²⁶ Kennedy emphasizes the importance of balancing means and ends and concluded that 'formulating grand strategy to balance economic and manpower resources to both sustain a fight and avoid damage to a future state of peace, the ultimate end goal.'²⁷ Like Liddell Hart, Kennedy also recognizes the duality of grand strategy in times of peace and times of war. His work ties Liddell Hart's theory of strategy to the policy sciences, in that effective grand strategy is characterized by the evolution and integration of policies that should operate for decades or even centuries.²⁸ While the policy process is perpetual, the international system is anarchic and grand strategy must therefore be flexible enough to adapt to changing scenarios. Kennedy's work is essential because he provides keen insight and provides important historical evidence to complement Liddell Hart's theoretical work.

During the Clinton Administration, international relations scholars Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross sought to sharpen the public debate on US grand strategy, citing the need for a new grand strategy to guide the United States out of the Cold War. The work identifies four frameworks for grand strategy, rooted in international relations theory, that focus on the *when* and *where* of using military means.²⁹ Posen and Ross argue that if policymakers understand how and why actors in the international system behave the way they do, then it becomes clear when and where the use of military means would be most effective.³⁰ The frameworks then allow for the political, economic, and cultural means of grand strategy to fall into place. Posen and Ross present less of a technical definition of grand strategy than other scholars but make an important contribution to the literature by connecting political theory to the alignment of means, ways, and interests to determine grand strategic ends.

To Christopher Layne, another international relations scholar, the definition of grand strategy is more technical. While most scholars argue that grand strategy is very convoluted, Layne sees it differently. "Grand strategy" is an important sounding term but the concept is simple; it is the process by which a state matches ends and means in the pursuit of security.³¹ In peacetime, grand strategy encompasses the following: "defining the state's security interests; identifying the threats to those interests; and allocating military, diplomatic, and economic resources to defend the state's interests."³² Layne poses that the grand strategy debate for the United States is centered around a series of questions:

- What regions of the world are important to US security?
- Will new great powers rise to threaten American interests?
- What alliance commitments should the United States undertake?

²⁶ Paul Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 2-3.

²⁷ William C. Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Kindle Edition, 55.

²⁸ Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, 168.

²⁹ Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, "Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy," *International Security* Volume 21, Issue 3 (Winter, 1996-1997), 7-8.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 52.

³¹ Christopher Layne, "Rethinking American Grand Strategy: Hegemony or Balance of Power in the Twenty-First Century?" *World Policy Journal* Volume 15, No. 2 (Summer, 1998), 8.

³² *Ibid*, 8.

- Does the United States have a stake in regional "stability" (and, if so, in which regions), and in economic interdependence?
- What military forces does the United States need to defend its interests?
- What is the proper balance between America's external commitments and its domestic needs?

In his research, Layne also sets forth two criteria for evaluating grand strategy. First, grand strategy must be assessed by the amount of security it provides and second, by its sustainability.³³ The sustainability component factors in cost, the amount of risk involved, and tangible and intangible domestic effects.³⁴ Layne echoes some of Kennedy's findings, and provides a comprehensive, well-rounded definition of grand strategy, as well as frameworks for formulating and evaluating policy. It is an important contribution to the scholarship.

Williamson Murray argues that grand strategy is not just an overarching guide, but a tool for managing risks, as well as balancing resources, will, and interests. Both resources and will are finite, and interests govern where to dedicate those resources, making grand strategy essential for making hard choices. After all, grand strategy is the intricate intertwining of political, social, and economic realities.³⁵ Leaders that develop and execute grand strategy—Williamson argues citing Abraham Lincoln and Otto von Bismarck specifically—must have an eye on the past, as well as beyond the demands of the present.³⁶ By nature, grand strategy exists in an anarchic environment that is subject to constant change. The recognition of time as an intervening variable in the policy process is an important component to the understanding of grand strategy. Murray also recognizes the murkiness of grand strategy. Every state possesses different national capabilities, has different historical experiences, utilizes different political apparatuses, and is subject to varying geography. Grand strategy, therefore, cannot be an exact science, and has no distinct 'recipe.'³⁷ Previous scholarship does not necessarily recognize this fact, and this murkiness certainly contributes to the disconnect in the literature in which Lissner and Milevski allude.

Peter Trubowitz says that grand strategy refers to the purposeful use of military, diplomatic, and economic tools of statecraft to achieve desired ends.³⁸ Like most of the scholarship, Trubowitz recognizes the importance of all tools of statecraft and aligning those tools to meet ends. His scholarship diverges from the rest, however, upon presenting the two faces of grand strategy: *realpolitik* and *innenpolitik*. The first face, *realpolitik*, posits that grand strategy is determined by a nation's geopolitical circumstances and position within the international system, while *innenpolitik* accounts for domestic pressures exhibited on grand strategy and foreign policy choices.³⁹ The examination of both internal and external factors in the study of grand strategy is essential to the research question of this work.

William C. Martel describes grand strategy as a "coherent statement of the state's highest political ends to be pursued globally over the long term."⁴⁰ Martel provides perhaps the most comprehensive definition for grand strategy thus far in the literature review, as his definition includes six major tenets. First, grand strategy is a coherent statement of national purpose.⁴¹ Whether implicit or explicit, grand strategy identifies what the state seeks to achieve in foreign policy. Second, grand strategy articulates the state's highest political ends, or the most vital priorities of the state.⁴² This includes identifying interests and threats to those interests. Third, grand strategy operates on a global scale, encompassing friendly, neutral, and adversarial state and non-state actors, as well as all the variables at

³³ Layne, "Rethinking American Grand Strategy," 26.

³⁴ Ibid, 26.

³⁵ Williamson Murray, "Thoughts on Grand Strategy," in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War* edited by Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and James Lacey (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Kindle Edition, 5.

³⁶ Ibid, 2.

³⁷ Ibid, 9.

³⁸ Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy: Partisan Ambition & American Statecraft* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 9.

³⁹ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁰ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 32.

⁴¹ Ibid, 33.

⁴² Ibid, 33.

play within the international system.⁴³ Fourth, like Murray, Martel recognizes the importance of time, as grand strategy has a long-term horizon.⁴⁴ Grand strategy must be both ‘sustainable’ and ‘stable’ as well as flexible in the ever-changing arena of international politics.⁴⁵ Finally, echoing Liddell Hart, Martel states that grand strategy encompasses all instruments of national power. Grand strategy is, ultimately, a flexible application of all the tools of statecraft to issues of varying degrees of interest to the state, in accordance with principles and priorities of the state. Martel also states that grand strategy requires four functions: prioritization, coordination, balancing, and integration.⁴⁶ The fusion of these concepts into an operational procedure helps to cut through some of the ambiguity of grand strategy, and Martel’s work is highly influential for ensuing case studies in this work.

According to John Lewis Gaddis, grand strategy is the “calculated relationship of means to large ends” and while the definition is purposefully broad, as most grand strategy definitions are, the use of the term calculated implies a very ‘deliberate approach.’⁴⁷ According to Gaddis: if you seek ends beyond your means, then sooner or later you’ll have to scale back your ends to fit your means.⁴⁸ Limitations in foreign policy exist because the means of statecraft are finite, and interests and desired ends can be infinite. Grand strategy helps realize limitations.

Peter Layton’s scholarship recognizes that the term ‘grand strategy’ and even ‘strategy’ are terms that have evolved over time and are constantly evolving.⁴⁹ He draws on the works of early twentieth century strategic thinkers like Alfred Thayer Mahan, Sir Julian Corbett, Sir Frederick Maurice, J.F.C. Fuller and B.H. Liddell Hart to illustrate some of the inadequacy associated with just strategy, and the need for a higher strategy to coordinate ends and means.⁵⁰ Layton ultimately defines grand strategy as the “art of developing and applying diverse forms of power in an effective and efficient way to try to purposefully change the order existing between two or more intelligent and adaptive entities.”⁵¹

Writing extensively on US statecraft, Hal Brands has made significant contributions to the literature of grand strategy. He observes that grand strategy is the intellectual architecture that lends structure to foreign policymaking and statecraft.⁵² Like many others, he also recognizes that it is a complicated, slippery concept that is difficult to define.⁵³ Elements of Liddell Hart’s work on grand strategy can be found in Brand’s work, in that grand strategy is about balancing essential goals with limited resources:

Grand strategy is a purposeful and coherent set of ideas about what a nation seeks to accomplish in the world, and how it should go about doing so. It requires a clear understanding of the nature of the international environment, a country’s highest goals and interests within that environment, the primary threats to those goals and interests, and the ways that finites resources can be used to deal with competing challenges and opportunities. From this intellectual calculus flows POLICY, the various concrete initiatives- diplomacy, the use of force, and others- through which states interact with foreign governments and peoples.⁵⁴

Brands, elucidating further, calls grand strategy the logic that ensures the instruments of national power are employed in ways that maximize their benefits for a nation’s core interests, and links short-term actions, with medium and long-term goals.⁵⁵ This explanation of grand strategy again illustrates the relationship between means,

⁴³ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 34.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 34.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 34.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 34.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 32.

⁴⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy* (New York: Penguin Books, 2018), Kindle Edition, 21.

⁴⁹ Layton, *Grand Strategy*, 9.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 11-12.

⁵¹ Ibid, 35.

⁵² Hal Brands, *What is Good Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), Kindle Edition, 1.

⁵³ Ibid, 1-2.

⁵⁴ Brands, *What is Good Grand Strategy?*, 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 4.

ends, objectives, and capabilities. Unlike Gaddis, whose definition of grand strategy is very broad, Brands gives grand strategy a very specific purpose, with very specific characteristics.

But there's more to strategy than just planning. Grand strategy is not a rigid process to control history or eliminate uncertainty. It is an ecological worldview, formed from a mix of different influences—experience, study, values, ideology—that helps officials make sense of complexity and bring resources and commitments into alignment. It consists not of a detailed roadmap to the desired destination, but of a set of core ideas that lend basic coherence to policy and improve the improvisation that is inevitable in world affairs.⁵⁶

Policy planning fails, because there is no grand strategy to guide it. The absence of cohesive grand strategy can have detrimental effects on a nation's foreign policy, at least Brands seems to be making a compelling case in that regard.

Perhaps pulling apart the essence of grand strategy requires a different way of examining it. Most scholarship thus far has described grand strategy as a singularity; an abstract and ambiguous concept that exists somewhere within the policy process of the highest levels of government. Nina Silove makes the case for describing grand strategy in three distinct concepts. Silove describes these concepts as 'grand plans,' 'grand principles,' and 'grand behaviors.' Each of these concepts, the result of the natural evolution of the term strategy, provides a distinct, valuable framework for research and policy prescription.⁵⁷ Silove says that grand strategy is "like a plan devised by commanders to win the war, except it extends beyond the war to prepare for the future peace and includes consideration of the use of all the state's resources, not just military force."⁵⁸ This, the first of three conceptual categories for grand strategy, aligns with the early works of Liddell Hart, extending to the work of Kennedy. The second conceptualization views grand strategy as more of an organizing principle or set of principles. The 'grand principles' framework rejects the theory that grand strategy should be a detailed plan of action.⁵⁹ Principles constitute propositions that define the role of the government in its interaction with the rest of the world, what its goals are, and how it should go about achieving those goals. This approach has been particularly popular among some of the United States' greatest foreign policy practitioners: John Quincy Adams, George F. Kennan, and Henry Kissinger.⁶⁰ Grand principles have led to the establishment of security doctrines, and grand principles tend to transcend administration. Lastly, grand strategy can be conceptualized as grand behaviors. This refers to a pattern of behavior exhibited by a state in the distribution of resources towards interests and ends.⁶¹ These patterns of behavior may or may not be evidence of a plan or set of principles.⁶² While plans and principles tend to deal in the formulation of 'grand strategy,' 'grand behaviors' provides a framework for analyzing the implementation of the strategy. The three conceptualizations of Grand Strategy according to Silove:

1. Grand plans are the detailed product of the deliberate efforts of individuals to translate a state's interests into specific long-term goals, establish orders of priority between those goals, and consider all spheres of statecraft (military, diplomatic, and economic) in the process of identifying the means by which to achieve them. Given their level of detail, grand plans are likely to be—but are not necessarily—set down in written documents.
2. Grand principles are overarching ideas that are consciously held by individuals about the long-term goals that the state should prioritize and the military, diplomatic, and/or economic means that ought to be mobilized in pursuit of those goals. They tend to be expressed in single words or short phrases.
3. Grand behavior is the long-term pattern in a state's distribution and employment of its military, diplomatic, and economic resources toward ends. In this context, the ends that receive the greatest

⁵⁶ Hal Brands and Patrick Porter, "Why Grand Strategy Still Matters in a World of Chaos," *National Interest*, December 10, 2015.

⁵⁷ Nina Silove, "Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of Grand Strategy," *Security Studies* Volume 27, Issue 1 (August 2017), 27.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 43.

relative resources can be deemed to be priorities, but the concept implies no inference that those ends were necessarily prioritized as a result of a grand plan, a grand principle, or any other factor.⁶³

Since the expansion of the study of grand strategy in the post-Cold War, different scholars have made distinct contributions to the understanding of grand strategy. Over time, scholarship has called grand strategy many things; a coherent statement, a theory or logic, a framework, an art, and beyond. The literature, while providing a wide variance of definitions, has a few general themes consistent among the scholars. Grand strategy and strategy are no longer terms just for military campaigns. According to R.D. Hooker, “at its best, grand strategy is not always or fundamentally about fighting or the military application of force, but rather an appreciation of its potential, along with the other instruments of power, in the mind of the adversary.”⁶⁴ At its core, grand strategy, whether it be a statement or an actual plan, is about balancing means and ends, as well as having an eye for long-term engagement with international system. Finally, grand strategy is pluralistic, as demonstrated in a comparative study of grand strategy by Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski, and Simon Reich. “We conceive of grand strategy as a polythetic concept. It combines elements which recur in political processes- through which a state articulates its ways, means, and ends. Task and form vary by country.”⁶⁵ Balzacq, et. al recognize four common themes themselves in the literature of grand strategy which helps to build a comparative framework for analyzing grand strategy:

1. The natural pathologies that form the basis for a country’s grand strategy, historical/collective memory
2. The linkage between grand strategy and the prioritization of long-term objectives
3. The adjustments by states for their limited resources to serve those ends.
4. Agency and process, not simply structure.⁶⁶

Those four elements will be crucial as this work analyzes US grand strategy across time.

For this work, the accepted definition is largely based on Martel’s own definition, including his six principles. It is comprehensive, and accounts for all the various components of grand strategy: interests, means, ways, and ends across time and space. Infusing the concept of grand principles into Martel’s definition is also important. As Silove points out, ‘grand principles’ are used widely by US policymakers and typically drive policymaking across administrations through doctrine and other statements of policy.⁶⁷ Most theorists, Liddell Hart being one, think of grand strategy as an equation, strategy = means + ways + ends.⁶⁸ This analysis considers grand strategy in these terms:

Means + Interests + Desired Ends



‘Grand’ Principles



Ways (Policy)



Actual Ends

⁶³ Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword,” 49.

⁶⁴ R.D. Hooker, ed., *Charting a Course: Strategic Choices for a New Administration* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2016), PDF E-book Edition, 12.

⁶⁵ Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski, and Simon Reich, ed., *Comparative Grand Strategy: A Framework and Cases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 16.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁶⁷ Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword,” 40.

⁶⁸ Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy, Part II: The Objectives,” 35.

It is true that grand strategy can be many things, but it is essential that any grand strategy thinks about balancing means, interests, and desired ends. The balancing of those concepts coupled with the penchant for US policymakers to arrive at ‘grand principles’ that guide policy outputs creates a grand strategic ecosystem that includes evaluating threats and interests, understanding limited means and desired ends, and applying ‘grand principles’ that guide specific policy outputs. Ultimately it is a process that does not have one output, such as a plan of action, but many outputs that mold cohesion among a government’s foreign policymaking actors. The study of grand strategy is important because understanding grand strategy conceptually can help connect the dots to theory of international relations, foreign policy, and public policy.

Section 2: The Theoretical Forces Behind US Grand Strategy

Since grand strategy is an inherent part of the policy process and a key component to a nation’s engagement with the rest of the world, there are forces that exert significant pressure on it. Because strategy ‘links policy to action,’ more focused policy presumably leads to prudent strategy and effective action.⁶⁹ Any analysis of US grand strategy throughout history requires an understanding of these forces and the profound effects they have on policy.

As Kenneth Waltz famously explained in his work, *Man, The State, and War*, there are three images in which scholars and practitioners can analyze state behavior in the international system. The first image, the individual, examines the effect of human behavior and human nature on a nation’s policy choices.⁷⁰ The second, the state, examines internal constructs of a nation and the third analyzes the effects of the nature of the international system on a nation’s policy choices.⁷¹ These levels of analysis have key theoretical underpinnings that may help explain the nature of US grand strategy, and how it has come to be throughout the history of American interaction with the world.

International Constraints

Theory suggests that there are certain characteristics and conditions of the international system that affect how states engage with other actors in the system. Structural realism contends that the international system is anarchic, meaning there is no higher power above the nation state to govern the nation state. Since the international system is anarchic, nations seek to ensure their own survival.⁷² Nations ensure survival either through maintaining a delicate balance-of-power or through maximizing power and achieving hegemonic status, or through strategies that avoid attracting hostilities. The competition for power among states creates an inherent balance-of-power wherein shifts can cause seismic changes in the polarity of the system, or the number of great powers that exist within the international system at a given time.⁷³ Realists contend that there are three system polarities: multipolar, bipolar, and hegemonic.⁷⁴ Multipolar systems are composed of multiple great powers of roughly equal capabilities. History shows that conflict proneness varies in multipolar systems, considering Europe during the exponentially violent years of the Coalition Wars (1792-1815) and Europe under the Congress of Vienna system (1815-1914), which saw scattered great power conflict during the last half of the nineteenth century. Bipolar systems contain two great powers of roughly equal capabilities, the most notable example being the Cold War era with the United States/Soviet Union rivalry. Different system structures present different competitors with potent capabilities which present challenges to be traversed by the policymaking community. It is not unreasonable to see that system structure can impact the policy choices a state makes. International constraints dictate the policy outcomes. Policy outcomes act as a prescription to the nature of international politics. Policy prescriptions are focused on maximizing

⁶⁹ Colin S. Gray, *The Future of Strategy* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015), 28-29.

⁷⁰ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, The State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), Kindle Edition, 16.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 80, 159.

⁷² Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 91.

⁷³ John J. Mearshiemer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton and Company, 2001), Kindle Edition, location 1003.

⁷⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 130.

security and ensuring survival. The choice to go to war or to seek other means of obtaining objectives in the international system at times can very well depend on the capabilities of other nations.

International system structures can often contain so-called revisionist and status quo powers, as well as sometimes volatile power shifts and transitions. Status quo powers seek to maintain the international system as it is because the current system is of the greatest benefit to them. Revisionist powers seek to alter the system to be of the greatest benefit to them, often coming to blow with a status quo power. Some states are a mixture to some extent, not completely satisfied or dissatisfied. As the case studies will demonstrate, US grand strategy in the early Republic became an exercise of navigating the dangers of a status quo Great Britain and a revisionist France. Understanding when, or even if, revisionist and status quo powers will come into conflict is expounded in predation theory.⁷⁵ During great power shifts, rising powers—revisionists—choose to either prey upon or support declining great powers.

Paul C. Avey, Jonathan N. Markowitz, and Robert J. Reardon lend more credence to the role of international relations theory in grand strategy more so than other scholars, arguing that theory provides logical baselines for creating ‘frameworks’ for grand strategy, which in turn cut through some of the conceptual confusion that comes with the many definitions of grand strategy.⁷⁶ There is a clear connection between grand strategy and international constraints. Avey, et. al. argues that the core disagreements on the proper grand strategy framework hinge on varying persuasions of international relations theory.⁷⁷ International relations theory provides conceptual understanding of the behavior of actors in the international system. Grand strategy is a set of guiding principles and adaptive planning for policymakers to advance national objectives. The grand strategic ecosystem can be influenced by behavior of other actors in the international system, as well as influence conditions of the international system. Grand strategy is both an independent variable, of what effects is grand strategy the cause, or a dependent variable, what causes grand strategy. For this analytical work, grand strategy is the dependent variable (Y), making international constraints (X) a condition of the Y variable.

Bureaucratic Politics

A second image theory, according to Waltz, the bureaucratic politics or state level model assesses how so-called national characteristics (size, population mix, power level, resources, etc.) and different national security agencies interact to formulate and implement national security policy and foreign policy. According to Graham Allison, foreign policy is not understood as choices or outputs, but the outcomes of various bargaining games among players arranged hierarchically in the national government.⁷⁸ Participants perceptions and priorities are influenced significantly by their respective organization and their organization’s mission, and they choose strategies and policy goals based on different ideas of what outcomes will best serve their organizational interests.⁷⁹ If bureaucratic politics influences foreign policymaking, then it influences the crafting of US grand strategy if there is one. The different agencies within the national security enterprise each bring their own expertise, along with professional civil servants to formulate, implement, and evaluate the policy choices. This expertise can be beneficial for effective implementation. Since grand strategy aligns all the resources of national power, each player within the enterprise has an important stake in the crafting of grand strategy. However, since participants in the bargaining game are driven by agency interests instead of rational choice, it may result in suboptimal outcomes that fail to fulfill the objectives of any of the individual participants. David C. Kozak makes twelve observations about the bureaucratic process and outcomes in Figure 1.⁸⁰ These observations are important for developing criteria for assessing the impact of

⁷⁵ Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, *Rising Titans, Falling Giants: How Great Powers Exploit Power Shifts*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 13.

⁷⁶ Paul C. Avey, Jonathan N. Markowitz, and Robert J. Reardon, “Disentangling Grand Strategy: International Relations Theory and US Grand Strategy,” *Texas National Security Review* Volume 2, Issue 1 (November, 2018), 29-30.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁸ Graham T. Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *The American Political Science Review* Volume 63, Issue 3 (September 1969), 690.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 690-91.

⁸⁰ David C. Kozak and James M. Keagle, ed., *Bureaucratic Politics and National Security: Theory and Practice* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988), 6-10.

bureaucratic politics on grand strategy.

Figure 1: 12 Observations of Bureaucratic Politics

1. Bureaucracy makes policy through the exercise of discretion.
2. Administration is the eighth political process.
3. Bureaucrats and bureaucracy are driven by agency interests.
4. Agencies and bureaucracies are involved in an incessant competition, struggling for various stakes and prizes.
5. Competition produces a common intra-agency bureaucratic culture and patterned role playing.
6. Certain resources and strategies are associated with successful bureaucratic politics.
7. Policy made in an arena of bureaucratic politics is characterized by bargaining, accommodation, and compromise.
8. Bureaucratic politics involves strong political ties to clientele groups.
9. Bureaucrats play politics as they interact with political institutions.
10. Executive processes essentially involve efforts to coordinate, integrate, and synthesize bureaucratic politics.
11. Proposals for organizational change and reform are politically motivated.
12. By its very nature, bureaucratic politics raises profound questions concerning control, accountability, responsiveness, and responsibility in a democratic society.

It is important to consider that bureaucratic politics can result in both interagency cooperation and rivalry, it can introduce the influence of clientele and interest groups to the policymaking process and drives the competition for resources. Resource constraints can impact policymaking at any level, and those constraints naturally limit the means of grand strategy. Bureaucratic politics and the grand strategy ecosystem are intimately intertwined.

The US National Security Enterprise

If grand strategy is the theory of how a state consistently aligns means and interests and turns principles into policy, then it is important to understand the process of foreign policymaking, as well as the bureaucratic structure, particularly in the case of the US national security enterprise. After all, process is what operationalizes a grand strategic framework, and focuses interests and means toward objectives to reach desired ends. Understanding the actors and agencies, and the evolution of the US national security enterprise over the course of time lends credence to the bureaucratic politics model.

The ability for the national government of the United States to manage foreign affairs and craft foreign policy starts with the adoption of The Constitution in 1789. The government formed under the Articles of Confederation during the years of fighting for independence from Great Britain had no power to regulate commerce and had very little ability to negotiate treaties.⁸¹ Concern over an inability for the national government to maintain its prestige in foreign courts, as well as impediments to a coherent set of domestic policies, led to a call for a convention to form a new government. The result was the formation of a new federal republic with a stronger central government.

The Constitution, while enumerating a wide array of powers to the legislative branch under Article I and to the executive under Article II, does not expressly state that the President, or anyone else, has the authority to conduct foreign relations.⁸² Congress, specifically, is vested with the power to raise armies and navies, and to make rules for their regulation; to regulate foreign commerce; to confirm ambassadors; to ratify treaties and trade

⁸¹ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: US Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 48.

⁸² Phillip R. Trimble, *International Law: United States Foreign Relations Law* (New York: Foundation Press, 2002), 10-11.

agreements; to appropriate funds for all means of foreign policy, as well as oversight of the executive branch.⁸³ By purposeful design, Congress is responsible for checking the executive. Congressional committees were established in 1816 and were organized around oversight of specific departments; the Foreign Relations committee overseeing the Department of State and the Military Affairs over the War Department for example.⁸⁴ This structure allows for the legislative branch to exert influence with the executive branch and to reflect constituent concerns while in turn departments can work through appropriations.⁸⁵

Executive power for foreign policymaking laid in the Constitution includes the power to appoint ambassadors, to make treaties, and to wage war, but only with the consent of the Senate and House in the case of war. The executive also serves as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, has the power to receive ambassadors and to ensure the laws, including treaties and international law, are upheld.⁸⁶ Over time, US presidents have carved out a role in foreign policy as the head of state, beginning with George Washington and the establishment of the Departments of War, State, and Treasury. The executive, due to its enhanced diplomatic and military powers, dominates the policy agenda in the US government.⁸⁷ This means the executive also has a tremendous influence on the grand strategy ecosystem, from establishing the principles of grand strategy to the application of means or implementation of policy. However, there developed and remains a place for Congress in such matters supporting strategy, use of force, foreign sanctions, foreign aid, and alliances.

The *means* of grand strategy include diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic and have corresponding components of the US National Security Enterprise. The key policy players within the executive branch include the National Security Council, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Treasury. The departments created under Washington were designed to carry out the day to day business of foreign affairs, and the cabinet level officers provided advice on the issues to the president.⁸⁸ The foreign policy arm of the US government would maintain its form until after World War II, with the exception of the creation of the Department of the Navy in 1798 and the Department of Labor and Commerce in 1903.⁸⁹ The National Security Act of 1947 revolutionized US foreign policymaking and national security, not least in developing and engaging functions of intelligence and information acquisition.

Civilians and bureaucrats play an integral role in the US national security enterprise. The apparatus formed by those policy players through the executive branch are intertwined by a dedicated and professional bureaucracy that adheres to professional standards and ethics. Since the Constitution establishes civilian control of the military, both civilians and military personnel are intimately integrated with each other at all stages of the policy process. From formulation to implementation to evaluation, in both times of war and times of peace, both civilian-military relations and the bureaucracy add layers of complexity to US grand strategy.

Figure 2: Characteristics of the National Security Policy Process as Seen from the Bureaucratic Politics Perspective⁹⁰

- The national security policy process is fragmented, nonhierarchical, and non-monolithic.
- It is best conceived of a confederation of functional and organizational constituencies and subsystems- a bargaining arena rather than a command structure.
- Decision-making requires inter- and intra-agency coordination and the integration of components.

⁸³ Trimble, *International Relations Law*, 11.

⁸⁴ Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof, ed., *The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 15.

⁸⁵ George and Rishikof, *The National Security Enterprise*, 15.

⁸⁶ Trimble, *United States Foreign Relations Law*, 11.

⁸⁷ Jeffrey S. Peake, "Presidential Agenda Setting in Foreign Policy," *Political Science Quarterly Review* Volume 54, Issue 1 (March, 2018), 69-70.

⁸⁸ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 58.

⁸⁹ Interior and Agriculture also created in 19th century, however Navy and Commerce are part of the grand strategic picture.

⁹⁰ Kozak and Keagle, *Bureaucratic Politics and National Security*, 12.

- Bureaucratic professionalism, politics, particularism and parochialism, and outside affected groups color the process. Policy proposals bubbling out of the bureaucracy are influenced by these factors.
- Patterned role playing pervades. Adversarial advocacy is best explained with the dictum “where you stand depends upon where you sit.”
- Policy is hammered out in a political atmosphere with important inputs from the president and Congress. Hence, the name of the game is to influence those external institutions.
- Decision-making is constrained by fiscal, organizational, political, and cognitive limitations.
- Decisions are driven by standard operating procedures, incrementalism, muddling through, satisficing, compromise, and accommodation.
- Crises and salience centralize organization to the NSC, Defense Review Board, budget process, and the White House.
- Declaratory policy can steer and guide but is not equivalent to policy programs and actions.
- Budget considerations drive strategy rather than vice versa, producing a strategy/resource mismatch.
- The policy process is personality dependent.
- Policy implementation is not automatic. It requires continuous negotiations and follow-through.
- Reorganization issues are intensely political, raising questions of authority, influence, and access.

Domestic Politics

While the state, as a second image lens of analysis, manifests bureaucratic politics as an impactful force on policymaking, it also contributes to the evaluation of other components of domestic politics. Policymakers must simultaneously account for both domestic pressures and international pressures.⁹¹ Public opinion and national morale can influence policymakers, especially in the face of electoral politics. Kennedy notes that public support or opposition for certain policy choices, particularly war, is a central component of grand strategic decision making.⁹² Research suggests that foreign policy may be contested both vertically (between elites and masses) and horizontally (among elites) and that these conflicts affect foreign policy decision making and foreign policy behavior.⁹³ Policymakers sometimes need to enlist public support for foreign policy initiatives. If there is disagreement between policymakers and credible elites, or if there is potential for extensive media coverage on an issue, policymakers seek public support.⁹⁴ Political ideals and norms influenced by past experiences can have an impact on both policymakers and the masses alike. Balzacq, et. al. suggest that historical memory is often synthesized into strategy and policy.⁹⁵ The ensuing case studies will seek to demonstrate if historical memory does impact contemporary policymakers. Political parties in the United States are as old as the Constitution itself, with initial factions disagreeing over the scope of a centralized government. Whether grand strategy transcends party affiliation or not is worth examining in the case studies. Electoral politics also is an important component of domestic politics that can influence foreign policy. The timing of elections, the desire to stay in power, and political rivalry affect budgetary decisions (guns versus butter), the use of force, de-escalation of conflicts, and the pursuit of peace.⁹⁶

All these forces can have a simultaneous impact on grand strategy. In order to understand the effects of these forces on US grand strategy, this work will proceed to examine the historical record in search of evidence of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. International constraints, bureaucratic politics, and domestic politics serve as the independent variable and US grand strategy as the dependent variable. The forthcoming methodology section will discuss criteria for determining a causal mechanism between the

⁹¹ Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games,” *International Organization* Volume 42, Issue 3 (Summer, 1998), 431.

⁹² Kennedy, *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, 5.

⁹³ Cristian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo, “Contested Roles and Domestic Politics: Reflections on Role Theory in Foreign Policy Analysis and IR Theory,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* Volume 8, Issue 1 (January, 2012), 5.

⁹⁴ Philip J. Powlick and Andrew J. Katz, “Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus,” *Mershon International Studies Review* Volume 42, Issue 1 (May, 1998), 26.

⁹⁵ Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, *Comparative Grand Strategy*, 26.

⁹⁶ Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen, *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making*.

variables, as a process tracing approach will help to determine which, if any, theoretical force has the greatest impact on grand strategy.

Section 3: The Case Studies

“No grand strategy can provide flawless coherence and foresight in foreign policy. What it can do is help a country achieve better results than would be possible without the overarching guidance that grand strategy provides.”⁹⁷ Keeping that reflection of Brands and Patrick Porter in mind, this work will present a series of case studies intended to demonstrate the use of guiding principles as a framework for US grand strategy throughout history. The research questions this work intends to answer include:

1. What principles guide US grand strategy, when and where it exists, and how, if at all, have they evolved over time?
2. What factors cause US policymakers to formulate such grand strategy?
3. What are the implications of the causes?

Methodology

The purpose of the case studies in this work is to act as an analytical framework for identifying US grand strategy, so that the process tracing analysis can be applied to find connections between the independent variables and US grand strategy. Admittedly, ‘international constraints’ as a notion is far too obscure for hypothesis generation and testing, as is bureaucratic politics and domestic politics. This analysis will present a series of case studies covering a breadth of episodes in US international affairs history, that uses a process tracing or black box approach to discover a ‘causal mechanism’ that exists between X (international constraints, bureaucratic politics, domestic politics) and Y (US grand strategy). It is important to consider before diving into the research question, that grand strategy has changed over time. The analysis needs to determine if there is grand strategy for each case, what is the grand strategy, what are the principles, and what has changed, the principles or the outputs.

The cases utilize qualitative evidence from the historical record to determine interests, means, and desired outcomes to piece together what US grand strategy is during the time period covered by the case. Interests and means, as demonstrated in the grand strategy literature, influence ‘grand principles,’ which influence policy outputs, or ‘grand plans.’ National interests, on the surface, can be quite ambiguous. However, Donald Nuechterlein has established a set of criteria for identifying kinds of interests and the varying intensity of national interests. Since interests are a vital component of grand strategy, using this framework to identify different US national interests in the case studies becomes equally as vital. Nuechterlein identifies interests in four different intensities: survival, vital, major, and peripheral.⁹⁸ Survival interests deal in existential threats to the state and vital interests deal in threats that could result in serious harm to the nation if left unchecked. Major interests deal in serious challenges to US interests abroad.⁹⁹ These interests are important for determining what issues get what resources, and how closely policymakers monitor the issues. Interests prioritize problems a nation faces in international politics, and therefore influences the grand principles that guide their statecraft.

Means, determined in the literature review of grand strategy, include diplomatic means, information/intelligence means, military means, and economic means. Preferred means can change over time as well. As a nation grows, so does its capabilities in all phases. Each case study will describe the means at the United States’ disposal. Essentially, interests, means, and desired ends create grand principles, determining the what and how of a nation’s approach to international politics. This grand strategy, in turn, generates policy outputs that operationalize the means of a nation. It is worth noting, that the scope of work for this analysis makes examining

⁹⁷ Brands and Porter, “Why Grand Strategy Still Matters in a World of Chaos,” *National Interest*, December 10, 2015.

⁹⁸ David Nuechterlein, *United States National Interests in a Changing World* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1978), 10-11.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 10-11.

every single policy output impossible, so this work will cover major policy outputs such as security doctrines, treaties, declarations of force and authorizations of use of force, as well as trade sanctions and embargoes.

Process tracing will be used to determine which of three independent variables have an impact on the formulation of a grand strategy. According to David Collier:

Process tracing can make decisive contributions to diverse research objectives, including: (a) identifying novel political and social phenomena and systematically describing them; (b) evaluating prior explanatory hypotheses, discovering new hypotheses, and assessing these new causal claims; (c) gaining insight into causal mechanisms; and (d) providing an alternative means—compared with conventional regression analysis and inference based on statistical models—of addressing challenging problems such as reciprocal causation, spuriousness, and selection bias.¹⁰⁰

Essentially, process tracing entails an examination of the black box between X and Y. That black box is the causal mechanism, which is the manifestation of theory as a force that leads to the outcomes. The theory used to determine the independent variables cannot themselves be tested but through different agents and processes. Theory requires the establishment of some criteria to determine what agents are influencing the outcome.

The causal mechanisms are the clues for the analysis. It can be events, actors, policy processes, etc. The criteria are important because “the descriptive component of process tracing begins not with observing change or sequence, but rather with taking good snapshots at a series of specific moments. To characterize a process, we must be able to characterize key steps in the process, which in turn permits good analysis of change and sequence.”¹⁰¹ Like the initial part of the case study, the historical record also provides evidence for our independent variables. The evidence of political, social, and economic phenomena provides a road map for examining the interconnectedness (the black box) of the independent variables and US grand strategy.

Case Study 1: The Early Republic

Undoubtedly a critical moment in US history, policymakers were faced with the task of ensuring the survival of the young republic facing a multipolar system with familiar dangers in Great Britain, as well as new ones like Napoleonic France. The United States was faced with the challenge of securing and expanding trade opportunities with the warring nations of Europe, protecting said commerce, and enhancing national prestige. Compounding the task, was a general distrust of large standing armies and navies, as well as taxation. In other words, the means of national defense. According to Herring, the new nation depended on trade with Europe, and European powers were inclined to use the United States as a pawn of their own grand strategy, respecting its neutrality only when expedient.¹⁰² US policymakers would find themselves navigating a Quasi-War with France, internal factions within the cabinet promoting Pro-British and Pro-French sentiments, Barbary Pirates, European imperial ambitions, and strenuous relations and eventually war with Great Britain. It is important to note that the grand strategy that emerged in the time of the early republic carried US policymakers through much of the nineteenth century.

Interests

The primary interest of the United States during this time, driven by issues of survival, was avoiding a direct military confrontation with the European great powers. Based on the lack of military and latent power compared to the great powers, the use of force as a policy choice could have catastrophic implications for the United States. As George Washington put it, “if the United States could avoid war for a generation, the growth in population and resources combined with its favorable geographic location would enable it defy any power on earth.”¹⁰³ The United States also sought to carve out its own sphere of influence in the western hemisphere, and saw this sphere of influence as a ‘buffer’ against the old world politics of Europe.¹⁰⁴ This vital interest started US

¹⁰⁰ David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* Volume 44, Issue 4 (2011): 824.

¹⁰¹ Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” 824.

¹⁰² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 68.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 56.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 160.

policymakers down the path towards building the framework of a regional hegemony. A major interest of the United States included expanding international commercial ties, including negotiating for full access to the Mississippi River extending to the mouth of the river at the Port of New Orleans from Spain. This interest was not necessarily a matter of survival for the United States but required enough attention to alter the status quo in order to enhance the economic prosperity of its citizens.

Means

Practitioners of the time relied heavily on both diplomatic and economic policy to achieve objectives to advance the interests of the nation. Military means were only effective to an extent. The relative discrepancy in military strength between the United States and its European rivals made the use of force a fool's gambit. The advent of 'total warfare' corresponded with the rise of Napoleon and made direct confrontation with great powers that much more dangerous. Under Washington, the military establishment was 'hampered by finances and anti-militarist traditions.'¹⁰⁵ According to Herring, because of limited funds in the treasury and no army, the infant government was painfully aware that it could not afford and might not win any kind of war.¹⁰⁶ Washington's Federalist successor, John Adams, however, would oversee the growth of the US Navy by six heavy frigates, and established the US Marine Corps by act of Congress. That force structure gave the United States the ability to fight back against French aggression during the Quasi-War without exceeding a certain threshold of conflict. Twelve years of Federalist rule led to slow but committed growth the regular Army and Navy. When the executive branch changed hands to the Republicans in 1800, the focus of military policy shifted from the regular army to militias while maintaining the current assets in the navy.¹⁰⁷ Diplomatic means were handled by the newly created Department of State, as well as special diplomatic envoys, such as the appointment of Chief Justice John Jay to negotiate a commercial treaty with Great Britain in 1794. Economic means included both establishing new trade agreements as well as expanding existing partnerships. It also included retaliatory measures such as trade embargoes.

'Grand' Principles

This era of US foreign policy has a very particular set of organizing ideas about the long-term goals that the state should prioritize and the military, diplomatic, and/or economic means that ought to be mobilized in pursuit of those goals. The 'grand principles' served as a guide for national government to formulate and implement foreign policy, that served the vital interests of the United States, across multiple administrations of differing political ideology. George Washington's Farewell Address stated explicitly the principles that guided his administration's approach to foreign policy and the alignment of interests, means, ways, and ends.¹⁰⁸ The Washington administration had established neutrality:

"It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it..."

But not isolationism:

"Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies." ¹⁰⁹

A secondary 'grand' principle established a globalist approach to engaging with the international system. US grand strategy in the early Republic sought "harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations are recommended by policy,

¹⁰⁵ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 57.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 59.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 95.

¹⁰⁸ McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 47.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 47.

humanity, and interest” and “equal and impartial trade policy.”¹¹⁰ These principles carried over into the subsequent administrations, Federalist or Republican.

Jefferson’s first inaugural address explicitly stated that the Republican party was to uphold the grand principles of the previous Federalist regimes. While Republican ideology would influence policy outputs, the overarching grand strategic approach to the international realm would remain the same. “Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.”¹¹¹

While non-entanglement characterized US grand strategy regarding European affairs, US policymakers held that the western hemisphere was off limits to the European powers. In alignment with US interests, policymakers began the work of establishing the western hemisphere as an American sphere of influence. The great paradox of expanding that sphere of influence, is that in order to increase the strength of the United States, the institution of slavery grew with it. That is, until the Civil War, when the Union exorcised slavery through internal conflict.

Policy Outputs (Ways)

Early republic policy makers were able to translate interests, means, and their ‘grand principles’ into several effective policy outputs. The ratification of the Jay Treaty in 1794 marked a sign of rapprochement between Great Britain and her former colonial possession. The treaty granted the United States most-favored-nation status for trading with the British Isles and her colonial possessions, including access to the lucrative West Indies trade. The British also agreed to vacate a series of forts in the Northwest territory that they had failed to vacate after the 1783 Treaty of Paris. Chief Justice John Jay, however, was unable to coax the British to cease impressment and boarding of American shipping, which was the primary catalyst for entering negotiations with Great Britain. The unexpected byproduct of Anglo-American diplomacy was a ‘panicky Madrid government’ that envisioned Anglo-American expeditions against Spanish America, thereby pressuring them into appeasing the Americans with an agreement that granted US merchants access to the port of New Orleans.¹¹² With one diplomatic mission, the US government had satisfied two vital trade interests.

Deterioration of Franco-American relations after the ratification of the Jay Treaty forced the Adams administration into a different type of policy output, under the same *grand strategy*. It was in the best interests of the United States to utilize force as a response to French depredation of American merchant shipping. Congress, upon the recommendations of Adams, passed a series of legislative measures that gave the President the authority to use the US Navy as an instrument for waging undeclared war on the French Navy and merchant marine. Following the grand principles put forth by Washington, policymakers sought to limit the use of force in order to prevent escalation into a full-scale war with France. Congress authorized, at Adams’ bequest, an embargo on trade with France, the creation of the Department of the Navy, the expansion of navy, including the construction of six heavy frigates, the arming of merchant vessels, the commissioning of privateers, and permitted US ships to attack any armed French vessel on the high seas.¹¹³ These policy initiatives brought France to the negotiating table as early as 1798.

The Louisiana Purchase was ultimately the result of diplomatic maneuvering by Jefferson and his special envoy James Monroe. Concerned over renewed French imperial ambitions in North America and the revocation of American access to the port of New Orleans forced Jefferson to employ his own particularly belligerent brand of diplomacy against Spain and France.¹¹⁴ When war once again became imminent between France and Great Britain, Napoleon sold the whole of the Louisiana territory to the United States for fifteen cents an acre. The Jefferson

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 47.

¹¹¹ Thomas Jefferson, “First Inaugural Address,” March 4, 1801, Avalon Project, Yale Law School, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau1.asp.

¹¹² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 80.

¹¹³ Ibid, 87.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 102.

administration had doubled the total land area of the United States and acquired complete control of the Mississippi River, including the vital port of New Orleans.

Like the Adams administration concluded regarding depredation of American shipping by the French, Jefferson used the same limited-scale warfare in waging war on the Barbary pirates. Obtaining an authorization of the use of force from Congress to ‘subdue, seize, and make prize of all vessels, goods, and effects belonging to the Bey of Tripoli,’ Jefferson acted to protect American commercial interests in the Mediterranean Sea.¹¹⁵ This policy choice was a departure from the previous Federalist administrations, which made peace with the North African beys by purchasing it.¹¹⁶ Jefferson’s misunderstanding of the beys culturally, drove the choice to fight instead of paying tribute.

When it became clear to the Madison administration that the affronts to American merchant shipping and national prestige by the British Empire could not be negotiated through diplomatic means or rectified through economic policy, military means became the primary focus of US policymakers. In choosing military means, Madison was attempting to alter British behavior at a time when Britain was focused on fighting Napoleon. For two years, the United States and Great Britain fought to a stalemate on the North American continent, despite the United States having a force structure that decayed under Republican policymaking.

Perhaps the landmark policy output of the era was authored by John Quincy Adams and pronounced by President James Monroe and would influence US foreign policy well into the twentieth century. The Monroe Doctrine established policy of non-interference by the United States in European affairs and close the western hemisphere off to interference by European powers, particularly regarding colonial ambition. Monroe and Quincy Adams shrewdly leveraged British naval power to enforce the policy, which reaffirmed United States preeminence in the western hemisphere.¹¹⁷ If Washington’s farewell address established policy for American involvement in European affairs, then the Monroe doctrine established policy for European involvement in western hemisphere affairs¹¹⁸ The Monroe Doctrine played a role in US grand strategy for the rest of the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth century.

Desired Ends, Actual Ends, and Major Policy Shifts

Desired ends for the policymakers in the early republic era included avoiding direct military confrontation with European great powers, and growing trade and economic power. For the most part, the United States was able to avoid entanglement in the wars of Europe, and only faced a great power in a direct military confrontation once. Even then, the War of 1812 was fought at a time when Great Britain was otherwise preoccupied with fighting wars with Napoleon on the European continent, thus the United States avoided all the power and resources of the British Empire. Whether it was indirect confrontation with France in the Quasi-War, fighting “Barbary pirates,” or the British on land and sea in 1812, the United States did not fight particularly well, but nonetheless proved important for the growth of American fighting capabilities.¹¹⁹ These conflicts underscored the necessity of a well-trained officer corps that was fluent in tactics and strategy. It was an important series of events for the development of military means, an essential component of any grand strategy.

The growth of trade and economic power proved slow because of war on the European continent. Those conflicts proved costly not only to belligerents, but trade partners as well.¹²⁰ However, policy outputs such as the Jay Treaty which expanded trade with Great Britain, and agreements with Spain on access to the port of New Orleans

¹¹⁵ US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications*, by Jennifer K. Elsea and Matthew C. Weed, RL31133, (2014), 6.

¹¹⁶ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 98.

¹¹⁷ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 152.

¹¹⁸ McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 109.

¹¹⁹ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1977), 59-60.

¹²⁰ Donald R. Adams, “American Neutrality and Prosperity, 1793-1808: A Reconsideration,” *The Journal of Economic History*, Volume 40, Issue 4 (1980): 735.

proved effective measures. The growth of naval resources to protect trade meant the ability to fight back against the depredation of American trade.

The grand strategy presented in this case contains one significant policy shift. As tensions rose between the United States and Great Britain during the Jefferson administration and into the Madison administration, it became clear that the harassment of American shipping and the incitement of Native American frontier raids could no longer go on without a show of force. The United States and Britain essentially fought to a stalemate and came to terms in the Treaty of Ghent, which restored *status quo ante bellum*. This policy shift did not mark a departure from the principles of grand strategy, as it sought to resolve affairs of the western hemisphere and continue the work of creating a US sphere of influence through trade and frontier protection.

Assessing the Causal Mechanism

Policymakers of this era were highly influenced by the world around them, which for a young republic, held inherent dangers. Grand strategy provided a pathway for navigating those dangers. Examining the evidence, international constraints and political memory especially influence US grand strategy of the time.

International Constraints

The structure of the international system during the age of the early American republic had a tremendous bearing on US grand strategy during the period. The relative strength, power projection capabilities, and war proneness of Europe's great powers had tremendous impact on the US policymaker's grand strategic outcomes. Washington's principles have often been misconstrued as isolationism, but conditions of the international system dictated that a 'unilateral' approach to foreign affairs was the best guarantor of security.¹²¹ The military and economic strength of the European powers forced the United States to carefully balance diplomacy and use of force on a limited scale as the means of achieving objectives in the international system. The downfall of Napoleon in 1815, and the rise of a relatively stable international system brought a renewed imperial fervor among the European powers. The dangers posed by imperial powers forced the United States to issue the Monroe Doctrine. While the United States remained hands-off in the affairs of Europe, they (and Britain) expected hands-off in the western hemisphere.

Bureaucratic Politics

Bureaucratic politics, while not as prevalent as international constraints, still had some influence on US grand strategy of the early republic. Congress mostly followed the lead of the executive on the policy initiatives that were necessary for achieving political objectives. From authorizations of the use of force, to the approval of treaties and trade agreements, cooperation between the branches of the federal government proved to be an effective tool for maintaining a long-term grand strategy. One aspect of bureaucratic politics that proved detrimental to US grand strategy was strife in Washington's own cabinet due to an intense rivalry between Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton and Jefferson clashed over US policy toward Great Britain and the new French republic. Favoring rapprochement with Great Britain because of the economic potential of trade, Hamilton blamed Jefferson for having 'a womanish attachment to France.'¹²² Meanwhile, Jefferson, who favored diverting trade to a fellow republic, blamed Hamilton for 'trying to restore the monarchy.'¹²³ Both rivals had tremendous sway in American politics as the voices of the Federalist and Republican factions, and could have done serious damage to US grand strategy if not for the strong executive in Washington.

Domestic Politics

The second image theoretical lens of domestic politics suggests that there are powerful influences on US grand strategy. With a long memory that hearkened back to the days of colonial America, both political elites and

¹²¹ McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 48.

¹²² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 66.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 66.

the masses were suspicious of standing armies and excessive taxation. This memory influenced policy and grand strategy in the days of the early republic, dictating force structure and relying on the militia system and naval assets as low cost, low profile military means. As far as public opinion, the impact seems minimal. The Jay Treaty was wildly unpopular—at least until Americans reaped the windfall of increased trade with Great Britain and access to the port of New Orleans—but Congress ratified it anyway. Public opinion did not play a role in deciding to fight the Quasi War with France and the War of 1812 against Great Britain, and both conflicts only galvanized public opinion.¹²⁴

Case Study 2: An Emerging Empire

The abolition of slavery from the ever-expanding United States, coupled with the industrial revolution would put the United States on a path toward great power status. By 1895, the United States, by most measures of national capability, from economic output to population growth, had surpassed most of its European rivals.¹²⁵ The expulsion of Spain from the western hemisphere following victory in the Spanish-American war had solidified the United States as a regional hegemon and established a new American empire that extended across the Pacific Ocean. Completing the work of their predecessors in establishing dominance in the western hemisphere, the Cleveland, McKinley, and Roosevelt administrations successfully used all the tools of statecraft to forge success in the hierarchy of the international system.

Interests

With the rise of an American economic and military behemoth, combined with vast distances between its shores and those of its rivals, threats to American survival were minimal. This era of US grand strategy was dominated by vital, major, and peripheral interests. Vital interests included using American strength to quell the final imperial ambitions of European powers in the western hemisphere, and the establishment of a regional hegemon. This included defending economic interests and liberal, as well as mercantilist values in the Caribbean Sea. Other interests saw the United States extending influence further into the Pacific, expanding economic and security interests all the way to the Philippines.

Means

In 1865, given its civil war militarization and despite heavy losses in that war, the United States was arguably the preeminent military power on earth, both on land and sea.¹²⁶ However, the return of the citizen-soldier to private life would immensely diminish the power of the army, upholding the tradition of Jeffersonian defense policy. The industrial age brought about a revolution in military affairs focused on the growing the strength of the US Navy into a 'new' navy of 'steam and steel.'¹²⁷ A military posture of a strong navy and a dormant citizen-soldier army certainly influenced the grand strategic approach for a rising great power. For contextual purposes, in 1890, the total military personnel for the United States was 39,000 while Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia all exceeded 400,000 persons.¹²⁸ In the mid-century, the US fleet forced the opening of Japanese trade. It was the latent power of United States that allowed the Cleveland administration to throw its weight into enforcing the Monroe Doctrine. The United States in 1890 ranked first globally in iron and steel production, in energy consumption, and was well on its way to passing Great Britain in both total industrial potential and manufacturing output.¹²⁹ Diplomacy, again, was the primary means of foreign policy during the rise of the United States as a great power, while military means became a viable option in expelling a decrepit Spanish empire from the western hemisphere. Economic means complemented both diplomatic and military means.

¹²⁴ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 87.

¹²⁵ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, 200-203.

¹²⁶ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 167.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 169.

¹²⁸ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* 203

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 200-202

Means were significantly impacted by the Theodore Roosevelt administration, as he devoted attention and resources toward modernizing instruments of national power, which included professionalization of the military and diplomatic services.¹³⁰ The impression that a modern world filled with tension required modern war and diplomatic capabilities prevailed and enhanced the ability of the United States to implement grand strategy.¹³¹

'Grand Principles'

The principles of grand strategy in this case study mark a stark departure from the principles of Washington, but the aims were one and the same. Attempting to finalize the work of the founders in establishing American dominance in the western hemisphere, US policymakers during this era followed a principle of 'progressive imperialism' as McDougall put it.¹³² The United States would affirm, through hard power, American primacy in the western hemisphere, and would expel all threats and notions of imperial designs from European powers back across the ocean. In a message to US Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Thomas Bayard, US Secretary of State Richard Olney initiated the era of progressive (liberalist) imperialism, although never explicitly stated, during the Venezuela crisis:

*"Today the United States is practically sovereign on the continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition."*¹³³

In the same spirit, Theodore Roosevelt would offer his own corollary to the Monroe Doctrine that established a US policy of intervention should any country from outside the western hemisphere interfere in the affairs of a western hemisphere actor. This 'big stick' policy was precisely the heavy-handed policy necessary for a freshly minted regional hegemon to maintain that hegemony. Grand strategy during this era was constructed around the principles of progressive imperialism, balance-of-power, and United States dominance of the western hemisphere. The same principles the founders held prevailed, with the spirit of the progressive era, for expanding security for a liberal democracy now cleansed of slavery, as well as spreading influence across the hemisphere. Americans were, as McDougall puts it, "driven by a do-gooder impulse."¹³⁴

Policy Outputs (Ways)

The Venezuela Crisis in 1895 marked yet another reemergence of the Monroe Doctrine. By intervening in a border dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain over control of the Orinoco River in eastern Venezuela, the Cleveland administration 'rendered a new and expansive interpretation of Monroe's policy of non-interference in the western hemisphere.'¹³⁵ The aggressive posture which Great Britain held in South America was a conflict of interest to American aspirations for dominance in the western hemisphere, and the United States was prepared to utilize its own tools of statecraft to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. The Cleveland administration employed assertive diplomacy and effective threats of force to influence the British into appeasing American interests. US policymakers made an appropriate estimation of British will to fight, as crises in Middle East, South Africa, and rising powers on the European continent certainly played into the calculus of British response to the assertiveness of the United States.¹³⁶ No longer a defensive doctrine, the Monroe Doctrine was now an instrument to back American hegemony in the western hemisphere.¹³⁷

The trend of growing American assertiveness in the affairs of the western hemisphere did not end with the Venezuelan crisis. Cleveland's successor, William McKinley, led the nation through a war with Spain in 1898 that had enormous implications for the international system. While Spain was a shell of its former days as an imperial power, war marked another opportunity for US policymakers to cement its status as a regional hegemon and a great

¹³⁰ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 348-9

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 348-9.

¹³² McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 101.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 109.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 110-111.

¹³⁵ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 306.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 306.

¹³⁷ Heiko Meierntons, *The Doctrines of US Security Policy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 32.

power. The war itself stemmed from a colonial revolution in Cuba, which had flourished economically by way of a reciprocal trade agreement with the United States in 1890 but faced economic devastation due to sugar tariffs in 1894.¹³⁸ Intervention on behalf of the colonial insurgents was dictated by the desire to protect US security and economic interests.

A US grand strategy centered around progressive imperialism continued under Theodore Roosevelt. Perhaps the original American *realpolitik*, Roosevelt was cognizant of issues such as balance-of-power and power projection capabilities. However, like his immediate predecessors, he embodied some of progressive ideals in expanding American influence and promoting liberal values that later characterized Wilsonian grand strategy.¹³⁹ Roosevelt's internationalism and sense of balance-of-power led to his administration negotiating the end of the Russo-Japanese War—a product of a greater world peace movement of the time, as well as a desire to leave a defeated Russia relatively intact to balance Japan on the United States' western flank.¹⁴⁰ A joint blockade of Venezuela by the European powers of Great Britain, Germany, and Italy led to Roosevelt issuing his famous corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. This corollary claimed the right for the United States to 'international police powers' and established a policy of intervention in any affair of the western hemisphere it deemed essential to its security.¹⁴¹ Following the lead of the British, Germany and Italy backed off after Roosevelt's veiled threats. Ultimately, the Roosevelt administration's ventures in foreign policy embraced the principle of progressive imperialism, channeled military, diplomatic, and economic means into such objectives as managing imperial holdings in the Philippines and the Caribbean, building the Panama Canal, and balancing great power disputes on the periphery of the American sphere of influence.¹⁴²

Desired Ends, Actual Ends, and Major Policy Shifts

The Cleveland administration's approach to diplomacy in South America intended on reducing British influence on the continent. By using threats of military action, the United States forced Great Britain to acquiesce to their demands due to the imminent threats from great powers in Europe. In this case, the desired ends met the actual ends. The defeat of Spain in 1898 meant that the United States achieved its desired ends and then some, gaining control of Cuba, Puerto, and the Philippines. While the McKinley administration did not want to keep the Philippines, that was the cost of Admiral Dewey's annihilation of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay.¹⁴³ It could not go back to Spain, and McKinley did not want it to fall in the hands of another East Asia trade rival. No major policy shifts are found during this era. Policymakers were focused on not only enforcing the Monroe Doctrine, but deepening the understanding of what preeminence in the western hemisphere should entail. Grand strategy in this case study was designed to capture the latent power of the United States, as well as guide the United States as it established a regional hegemony. Under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt, this brand of grand strategy was infused with a deep sense of internationalism.

Assessing the Causal Mechanism

Policymakers of the time fully embraced American power that had increased over the last half of the nineteenth century and channeled it into a grand strategy that guided the ascendance of American preeminence in the western hemisphere and its arrival as a great power. US grand strategy infused the principle of unilateral expansion with internationalism and added a measure of muscle to the Monroe Doctrine. Examining the black box, there are characteristics of the independent variables that influence the grand strategic outputs.

¹³⁸ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 309.

¹³⁹ Christopher Hemmer, *American Pendulum: Recurring Debates in US Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 24.

¹⁴⁰ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 360

¹⁴¹ Meiertons, *Doctrines of US Security Policy*, 33.

¹⁴² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 337.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 316.

International Constraints

The state of affairs in Europe provided the United States an opportunity to firmly establish its dominance in the western hemisphere. Great power competition on the European continent led to the emergence of a multipolar system from the unipolar system that characterized much of the nineteenth century. Germany's emergence as the strongest continental power and the ensuing alliance between France and Russia commanded the attention of Great Britain, who operated under a policy of offshore balancing.¹⁴⁴ The shift in the European balance of power as well as the emerging strength of the means of statecraft allowed the United States to pursue an aggressive and successful grand strategy. The aggressive approach by the United States in the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine was the result of Europe riding a new wave of imperial fervor that started in around 1870.¹⁴⁵

Bureaucratic Politics

Grand strategy during this era was ultimately dictated by the conditions of the international system, the expedient growth of American power, and public opinion. Bureaucratic politics itself had little impact. President McKinley did not seek a declaration of war from Congress. Being stuck between wanting a more neutral intervention and the *jingoist* fever that was taking hold of the nation, abdicated the traditional role of the executive. However, the lead up to war with Spain, and the disparity between foreign policy roles was driven more by public opinion than bureaucratic politics. The emergence of the strong executive in foreign policy that characterized the executive during the twentieth century under Theodore Roosevelt marked one of the few impactful measures of the bureaucratic politics. Internationalism, and the expansion of the American role outside of the western hemisphere, required Roosevelt to work sometimes in secrecy, manipulate Congress, and to stretch presidential powers.¹⁴⁶

Domestic Politics

The spirit of the age certainly influenced the US approach to foreign affairs. According to Herring, Americans were conscientious of their growing power and because of that, policymakers felt that it was their prerogative to pursue and defend interests.¹⁴⁷ According to Herring, the rise to world power led to increased citizen activism on foreign policy.¹⁴⁸ Public opinion favored what was very much a pro-activist foreign policy approach, and it was, much like the early nineteenth century, the desire of the American people to extend American ideals throughout the western hemisphere. Further illuminating the influence of public opinion on the grand strategy of the age, President Cleveland, himself 'cautious and anti-expansionist,' interjected diplomatically in South America to advanced US interests.¹⁴⁹

Case Study 3: A World at War

European politics and shifting structure in the international system would again draw the attention of US policymakers, not once but twice in the thirty years between 1914 and 1945. The scale in which industrial warfare consumed the world required policymakers to carefully 'prioritize, coordinate, balance, and integrate' interests and means with policy outputs.¹⁵⁰ Balance-of-power politics came into conflict with old traditions of US grand strategy, as the opportunity to wield American power to shape international politics came into focus. During World War I, a revisionist Germany forced the United States to reconsider the Washingtonian tradition of distancing itself from becoming entangled in the conflicts of Europe— as US policymakers advanced Washington's non-entanglement

¹⁴⁴ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 173-175.

¹⁴⁵ McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 103.

¹⁴⁶ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 346.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 303.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 343.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 306.

¹⁵⁰ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 210.

principles into a strict neutrality.¹⁵¹ Fast forward to the 1940s, and despite near economic ruin, the world needed American power once again with revisionist totalitarians on the march.

Interests

During both World Wars, the United States found itself uniquely positioned an ocean, or oceans, away from the fighting. While the stopping power of water afforded the United States the luxury of not facing an existential threat from two iterations of a revisionist Germany and an imperial Japan with hegemonic aspirations, the survival of liberal democracy from autocratic war machines emerged as a vital interest of the United States. It was of vital interest to the United States to bring stability to the international system, thus enhancing the security of the western hemisphere. This case study will focus on the decision to enter the war on both occasions, the timing of the decisions, and supplemental policy decisions leading up to the declarations of war.

Means

Since early twentieth century US defense posture held on to the tradition of small peace time forces, the ability to mobilize ground forces in the face of pending conflict became an inherent part of US policymaking. The growth of the US Navy under Theodore Roosevelt increased national prestige and increased the ability for the United States to project military power.¹⁵² The manpower and economic power of the United States allowed policymakers to field massive expeditionary forces. Diplomatic means could not prevent Europe from spiraling into conflict on either occasion, but at best could affirm American neutrality until the United States was ready and willing to join the fight. Despite the increased professionalization of the foreign service in the very early twentieth century, United States intervention in great power conflict was all but inevitable.¹⁵³ Economic means, particularly material aid, served as an important steppingstone for a shift from US neutrality to US intervention during World War II. World War II also marked the rise of organized human intelligence gathering, counterespionage, and covert operations for the United States. The establishment of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency, was largely responsible for executing clandestine missions with partisan resistance groups in order to create chaos behind enemy lines.¹⁵⁴ The intelligence and information component of national power acted in tandem with military means to defeat the Axis powers, thus it accomplished the desired ends of US grand strategy.

'Grand Principles'

The principles guiding US grand strategy during the era of the World Wars mostly resemble the traditional principles of US grand strategy. Non-entanglement beyond the western hemisphere, preeminence in the affairs of the western hemisphere, and the promotion of liberal democratic values in the near-abroad. Industrial and technological advancements, especially when integrated into the military forces of nations, meant that devastating great power conflicts posed much greater security threats to the United States.

The United States in both World Wars acted as an 'offshore balancer,' meaning it was in its best interest to remain out of the war until it was abundantly clear that the coalitions of liberal democracies in Europe could not win the war on their own.¹⁵⁵ Martel classifies the principle of US grand strategy during the World Wars as one of being a 'system stabilizer.'¹⁵⁶ US grand strategy was designed to restrain resources and dedicate those resources to stabilize the international system undergoing volatile changes.¹⁵⁷ US policymaker's reluctance to join the war efforts was

¹⁵¹ Neutrality as a legal status, determined by the Hague Conventions V and XIII in 1907, establishing the rights of neutral states to territorial integrity, the right to diplomatic communications with all belligerents, as well as the requirement that belligerents not interfere with the commercial intercourse of neutral states.

¹⁵² Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 212.

¹⁵³ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 517.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 543. (Herring)

¹⁵⁵ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, location 832.

¹⁵⁶ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 209.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 209.

reflective of years of Washingtonian neutrality, intended on staying out of the affairs of Europe. However, the industrial revolution brought the world closer together. Strategic location in the western hemisphere, along with emergence of the power capabilities of the United States made it a potent candidate to act as a system stabilizer. With the rise of hostile, totalitarian governments on the march threatening the delicate balance-of-power established at the Congress of Vienna, the idealistic Woodrow Wilson sought to make the world 'safe for democracy.'¹⁵⁸ Upholding liberal ideals and defending democracy abroad was an explicit grand strategy principle that seemingly marked a stark departure from the principles of the past, however implicitly acting as a system stabilizer helped ensure security and liberty in its own hemisphere.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt would follow the same principle of bringing stability to the international system, with the caveat of having to rebuild the American economy during the Great Depression. Roosevelt argued that the United States had markedly global interests, issues that manifested themselves across 'five continents and seven seas,' therefore policymakers could no longer think in hemispherical terms.¹⁵⁹ The interwar period marked a return to a 'unilateral' grand strategy, which eventually decayed into isolationism during the depression.¹⁶⁰ FDR, unlike Wilson, believed that the only way to influence the growth of democracy abroad was to set an influential example to others, "to stir their ancient hope."¹⁶¹ He did believe, however, that revisionist totalitarian threats in Europe and East Asia must be met, marking a return to the principle of system stabilization. FDR's post-war system envisioned a permanent commitment to a multilateral order, picking up from Wilson, and the idea that no continent (besides its own) should be dominated by one single power.

Policy Outputs (Ways)

US policymakers decided it was time to use military means against the Central Powers in February of 1917, and against the Axis Powers in December of 1941 after provocation by the two factions. Unrestricted submarine warfare preying on American shipping and citizens aboard cruise liners like the Lusitania by Wilhemine Germany pushed the Wilson administration over the edge. Roosevelt during World War II was also compelled to declare war after the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Empire of Japan on December 7, 1941.

The outset of World War I in 1914 invoked a state of neutrality from the Wilson administration. It was the policy of the United States to continue trade with all the belligerents, favoring none over the others. A growing imbalance of trade between the United States with Great Britain and France, and the United States and Germany led to the use of unrestricted submarine warfare by the Germans.¹⁶² Atrocities committed against neutral shipping, as well as the infamous Zimmermann telegram forced the United States to reckon with the threats to its own security in the western hemisphere.

In similar fashion, the conditions of the Great Depression and the social memory of the sacrifice of the First World War had left the masses and policymakers alike favoring non-intervention during the rise of Adolf Hitler. Acknowledging those national moods, but recognizing the potential security threats, Franklin Roosevelt developed policy outputs that utilized perhaps the American's best asset: time. Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbor' policy marked a new approach to relations with the United States' Latin American neighbors. This policy sought to insulate the United States and its sphere of influence from the rising tensions in East Asia and Western Europe by strengthening its dominant position in the hemisphere through increased commerce and good will.¹⁶³ It was an opportunity for the United States to straighten out its own backyard and to jump start the economy.

In 1935, in response to German rearmament and Italian incursions into Ethiopia, Congress passed legislation to affirm strict neutrality. The Neutrality Acts of the last half of the 1930s severely limited US policymaker's ability to have a hand in the deterrence of overt aggression abroad, to the dismay of Roosevelt.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 209.

¹⁵⁹ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 33-34.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 33-34.

¹⁶¹ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 36.

¹⁶² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 409.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 497-502.

However, Roosevelt, envisioning the ‘long game,’ was not willing to trade his social programs at home designed to jump start the American economy for the political powers to confront future threats to US security.

When the German war machine conquered Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1938 and 1939, Roosevelt understood that the time to start pushing back against Hitler’s growing power and ambition was now.¹⁶⁴ It started with what Roosevelt called a ‘Peace Bill,’ in which he traded the permittance of US ships to war zones for a repeal of the arms embargo from earlier in the decade.¹⁶⁵ This allowed the United States to begin shipping arms to the Allies in Europe. The shocking fall of France in the late spring of 1940 only increased the urgency in which the United States became engaged in the conflict. Next, he crafted a deal with Britain in which he traded ‘obsolete’ Navy destroyers for leases of US Naval bases on British-held western hemisphere possessions.¹⁶⁶ Shortly after, Roosevelt crafted the Lend-Lease deal. Spun as a deal for the United States to send any material of war to any nation whose defense we deemed necessary for the defense of the United States without it having to go to war directly, Roosevelt used it to send aid and material to Great Britain without displeasing the non-interventionists in Congress.¹⁶⁷ The next step for the United States would be war itself—to bring balance to the international system, to prevent threats to US security and interests for spilling over into its own sphere of influence, and to assure the survival of liberal democracy.

Desired Ends, Actual Ends, and Major Shifts

The desired end for the United States was to restore stability and balance to the international system. Certainly, this was accomplished, as the US armed forces pushed back—doing so through informal association, adhering to its policy of neutrality, during WWI and through formal alliances during WWII— against Imperial Germany in 1917 and Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in 1941, and defeated them. It also exhausted the capabilities of Great Britain to continue acting as the balancer in Europe and required the United States to take European security matters into its own hands in the subsequent international system.

Assessing the Causal Mechanism

The era of the World Wars marked a time of intense conflict between the great powers of the world. Both President Wilson and President Roosevelt saw the inherent dangers of unchecked totalitarian powers, both in Europe and in East Asia. Intervention in order to balance those threats and maintain the status quo, which guaranteed safety in its own hemisphere, became the principle of US grand strategy.

International Constraints

The World Wars were, essentially, inevitable. John Mearsheimer posits that “the unrelenting pursuit of power means that great powers are inclined to look for opportunities to alter the distribution of world power in their favor.”¹⁶⁸ The structure of the international system suggests that the rising power in Germany and the status quo power in Great Britain, who was committed to a policy of balancing the system, were destined to come to blows.¹⁶⁹ Due to developments in power project capabilities, the United States had to be aware of the rising threats outside of the western hemisphere.

Bureaucratic Politics

In this era, bureaucratic politics certainly obfuscated US grand strategy. Policymakers split over what role the United States should play in the world. Non-interventionists certainly dictated most of the policy in the run up to both world wars, but eventually the necessity to act as a system stabilizer trump non-interventionism in Congress

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 517-18.

¹⁶⁵ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 518.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 522.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 524.

¹⁶⁸ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, location 201.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, location 201.

and the United States was able to channel all the means of statecraft into a grand strategy that restored balance to the international system. Ultimately, it was forces in the international system, not bureaucratic politics that compelled the United States to enter the wars.

Domestic Politics

Debates between isolationists and internationalists raged during the 1930s, not only in political arenas but in public squares as well. Public opinion was a powerful force during the 1910s and 1930s, and certainly demanded the attention of policymakers. Mired in the worst economic depression in history during the 1930s, the desire to stay out of the affairs of Europe was made even more prevalent. US grand strategy of the time was impacted by public opinion. Franklin D. Roosevelt was hamstrung by non-interventionist feelings, and grand strategy was based on the gradual implementation of the policies that allowed him to further develop American power and lend aid to US allies.¹⁷⁰

Case Study 4: The Cold War

At the end of World War II, the landscape of international politics had changed drastically. What had previously been a strong multipolar system was now very much bipolar, with two reigning superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, left standing. Former allies against Nazi Germany, the United States and the Soviet Union became embattled in a bitter rivalry between liberal democracy and capitalism on one side, and authoritarian communist on the other side. This rivalry engulfed the entire world. The days of Pax Britannica (1815-1914) saw a preeminent British Empire become the guarantor of the peace and security for Continental Europe. The post-World War II system saw the United States take up that mantle from the British Empire, much like the United States had become a system stabilizer when Great Britain was called upon to ‘offshore balance’ in the previous case study. The advent of nuclear weapons also significantly altered international politics. This new era of international politics demanded a new approach to statecraft. This era of US foreign policy would see the rise of the National Security Council, the creation of the modern Department of Defense, and the rise of other bureaucratic mechanisms like the Department of State Policy Planning teams. The competition with the Soviet Union spilled over to every region of the world, from South America to the Middle East and East Asia. It even reached the Arctic regions of the globe and beyond the earth’s atmosphere. Grand strategy proved essential for connecting the means of statecraft to desired objectives, driven by the principles of containment.

Interests

During the Cold War, the single most vital interest of the United States was containing the influence of Soviet communism, which considered itself to be locked in a perpetual war with capitalism.¹⁷¹ The impossibility of long-term peaceful coexistence with capitalism, paired with aggression rooted in Russian nationalism led US policymakers to consider the Soviets an existential threat to the liberties and way of life of the American liberal democracy.¹⁷² The United States directed all the various means of statecraft into this single interest.¹⁷³ This included deterring any Soviet nuclear attack, confronting Soviet power indirectly—sometimes through proxies—ensuring the successful survival of free markets, and backing any regime that was anti-Soviet.

Means

The means of statecraft during the Cold War had significantly changed from even the earlier parts of the twentieth century. Evolutions in intelligence gathering, economic tools, as well as force structure changed, out of necessity, the essence of US grand strategy to counter the expansion of Soviet influence.¹⁷⁴ Diplomacy, by now a tested and tried method of statecraft for US policymakers, remained as vital as ever. Diplomatic means came to

¹⁷⁰ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 236.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 123.

¹⁷² George F. Kennan, “Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1947.

¹⁷³ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 245.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 245.

include the utilization of the influence of international organizations, like the United Nations, which the United States leveraged when the numerical advantage favored it.

The importance of intelligence gathering and counter espionage proved vital during WWII. While several agencies oversaw some of the essential functions of the now dissolved Office of Strategic Services, the intelligence community was officially established under the National Security Act of 1947, which created the Central Intelligence Agency. Formalized intelligence gathering as a means of statecraft acted as a vital component of the formulation of grand strategy during the Cold War. Evolution of US intelligence continued through the course of the last half of the twentieth century. The CIA was a tool of covert operations in places like Iran and South America throughout the Cold War, by all administrations.

US military means underwent significant changes during World War II and in the immediate aftermath. From the rise of aircraft carrier battle groups to nuclear weapons, the force structure required to wage a cold war against the Soviet Union was expedited as the nature of warfare itself changed.¹⁷⁵ In support of the military means of statecraft, the federal government realigned the bureaucratic mechanisms with the creation of the Department of Defense, combining the Departments of War and the Navy, among others with the National Security Act of 1947.

The nature of the economic means of statecraft also changed significantly. No longer were the economic means of statecraft utilized exclusively to enhance economic security at home, via trade agreements and mercantilist sanctions like embargoes and boycotts. Trade, sanctions, and financial assistance, including the landmark Marshall Plan, were weaponized to aid the spread of free markets, which in turn choked off the Soviet Union from the ‘free world.’¹⁷⁶

‘Grand Principles’

In February of 1946, George F. Kennan analysis of Soviet behavior and the nature of their foreign policy that served as a cornerstone of US grand strategy during the Cold War. Kennan’s ‘Long Telegram’ and his ensuing *Foreign Affairs* article “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” helped outline a long-term approach for dealing with an adversarial Soviet Union. Ultimately, containment ‘was an organizing principle for US foreign policy to which leaders expressly subscribed.’¹⁷⁷ Containment essentially calls for using economic and political tools to prevent the expansion of communism in the international system. Kennan argued that through indirect confrontation and competition with the Soviet Union would lead to, in the long-term, collapse.¹⁷⁸

Policy Outputs (Ways)

The grand principles that guided the coordination of US means, interests, and desired outcomes resulted in the spin-off of several key policy outputs. These outputs took the form of national security doctrines that would guide policy through the Cold War. Different leaders during the Cold War had different ideas of what means were necessary for the containment of communism, leading to a variety of policy outputs, including security doctrines. “It [containment] did not mandate a specific set of means to be mobilized for particular ends, as evidenced by the multiple variants of ends sought using various means by successive administrations.”¹⁷⁹ The Truman Doctrine marked the first policy output in the implementation of the grand strategy of containment. This called for appropriations to be made to send economic and military assistance to Greece and Turkey, to support anti-communist governments.¹⁸⁰ Bolstering anti-communist governments on the periphery of the Soviet Union certainly followed the principles of containment. To bolster economic recovery in the aftermath of World War II on the Soviet Union’s western flank, and to curb a leftward drift in European politics, the Truman administration issued The Marshall Plan.¹⁸¹ NSC-68, otherwise known as ‘rollback,’ drafted later in the Truman administration, made

¹⁷⁵ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 367-68.

¹⁷⁶ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 251.

¹⁷⁷ Silove, “Beyond of the Buzzword,” 40.

¹⁷⁸ George F. Kennan, “Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1947.

¹⁷⁹ Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword,” 40.

¹⁸⁰ Meiertons, *The Doctrines of US Security Policy*, 101-102

¹⁸¹ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 617.

military means an important policy lever in the grand strategy of containment. It quadrupled the defense budget and outlined parameters in which the use of force would be necessary for containment. 'Rollback' guided the Truman administration's decision to seek a United Nations authorization for use of force to support South Korea against an invasion from the communist North Korean regime.¹⁸² Truman also oversaw the creation of two mutual defense pacts, one in the western hemisphere, the Rio Pact, and one with Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which became an important deterrent to potential Soviet incursion into Central Europe.

In a shift away from the policies of the Truman administration, the Eisenhower administration adopted a 'New Look' strategy. Eisenhower's national security strategy was designed to relieve the pressures on the economy caused by increased defense budgets under Truman.¹⁸³ It called for a shift of defense spending from the Army and Navy to the Air Force and strategic nuclear weaponry. The U.S, he believed, could keep the Soviet Union in-check through deterrence and a guarantee of massive retaliation.¹⁸⁴ 'New Look' also called for the use of the Central Intelligence Agency to carry out covert action aimed at checking the Soviet Union, as well as reinforcing strong alliances.¹⁸⁵

During the Eisenhower administration, the Middle East became a prominent 'front' in the Cold War. The Eisenhower Doctrine committed the United States to a policy of utilizing military force to protect the 'territorial integrity and political independence' of Middle Eastern nations in the face of declining western prestige, which might result in a power vacuum for the Soviet Union to fill.¹⁸⁶ Eisenhower's pledge occurred on the heels of the Suez Crisis of 1952, in which Eisenhower had to use economic means, sanctions and frozen British assets, in order to prevent US allies from seizing the Suez Canal, which had been nationalized by Egypt's Nassar.¹⁸⁷ This jeopardized US interests and risked Soviet gains in the region. NSC 162/2, the product of Project Solarium, established a military posture of 'massive retaliation.' In the event of an attack, the US policymakers committed to a strategy of retaliating with greater force, including the use of nuclear weapons, in hopes that such a commitment would deter an attack at all.¹⁸⁸ Eisenhower, like Truman, was able to align interests, means, and desired ends around the principles of containment, and US grand strategy evolved to confront the challenges of the Cold War.

Under the Kennedy administration, 'flexible response' shifted, yet again, resources for military means. Believing that the Eisenhower administration's over reliance on nuclear weapons created pitfalls in US grand strategy, Kennedy ordered build ups in both conventional and unconventional forces. Sufficient conventional and unconventional forces allowed for the United States to be able to respond to a variety of threats with a variety of military means, ergo, 'flexible response.'¹⁸⁹ Kennedy balanced military means of containment with diplomatic measures in the third world (the Peace Corps), which served to counter Chinese and Cuban regional revolutionary ideas, and new domains of competition (Apollo missions to the Moon).¹⁹⁰ After the Bay of Pigs fiasco, Kennedy's soft power applications proved effective in countering Soviet influence. The use of economic assistance and the appointment of language proficient diplomats marked the Kennedy administration's commitment to 'winning the war' for the Third World. The utilization of soft power applications, and the balanced approach to the means of statecraft was almost for naught. The Bay of Pigs invasion plus the presence of Jupiter missiles in Turkey led to the Cuban Missile Crisis. The tensions in October of 1962 brought the world dangerously close to World War III. Faulty diplomacy in the failure of Kennedy's own state department to remove so-ordered Jupiter missiles from Turkey in a timely manner, as well as the public perception that Kennedy was weak further exacerbated the crisis.

Conflict in French Indochina between rebels and French colonial administration became a contentious situation during the Eisenhower administration, and resulted in the rebel victory over France in 1954. The subsequent split of the former French colony into a communist North Vietnam and anti-communist South Vietnam

¹⁸² Ibid, 617.

¹⁸³ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 132.

¹⁸⁴ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 66-67.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 66-67.

¹⁸⁶ Meiertons, *The Doctrines of US Security Policy*, 123.

¹⁸⁷ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 677.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 705.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 705.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 711.

drew the attention of US policymakers. In 1962, the Kennedy administration launched a series of policy measures to counter the rise of left-wing governments around the globe, which included what was called ‘US Overseas Internal Defense Policy.’¹⁹¹ This policy committed US military advisors, as well as scientific and economic power to counter-revolutionary forces combatting communist movements around the globe.¹⁹² Eventually military advisors in Vietnam escalated into a full scale military intervention under the Johnson administration. Lyndon B. Johnson’s decision to go to war in Vietnam was very much driven by existing US policy, especially NSC-68.¹⁹³ The Vietnam conflict raged for 11 years to nothing more than a stalemate in Southeast Asia before US withdrawal.

When Richard M. Nixon ascended to the presidency in 1968, he inherited the Vietnam conflict and proceeded to widen the war, while pursuing a policy of *détente* with the Soviet Union and rapprochement with China.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps more in line with Kennan’s vision than any other US policymaker during the Cold War, Henry Kissinger crafted a strategy that focused on easing tensions with the Soviets, and using the Sino-Soviet rivalry to pit the two communist giants against each other. China, Japan, and Western Europe had become nominally powerful, so Nixon and Kissinger sought to solidify the position of the US in the international order and ‘freeze’ the status quo.¹⁹⁵ According to Kissinger, the idea of *détente* was to find areas in which the United States and the Soviet Union could compromise, and to use that cooperation as leverage against the Soviets in areas in which the two nations were at odds.¹⁹⁶ Arms control and trade were two areas of compromise. Both sides saw anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems as a threat to second-strike capabilities, in which acted as a deterrent to any first nuclear strike.¹⁹⁷

The Nixon/Kissinger alliance transformed US grand strategy through the combination of Kennedy-like tactical flexibility, with the structure and coherence of Eisenhower, avoiding the ‘shortsighted fixations’ that resulted in Vietnam and ideological rigidities.¹⁹⁸ The conflict in Vietnam spurred Nixon’s declaration of his own security doctrine. In 1969, he outlined three guidelines for US foreign policy in Asia; the United States would uphold its treaty commitments, provide a nuclear shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of an allied nation, and would furnish military and economic assistance when requested but mandated that the threatened nation provide the manpower for defense.¹⁹⁹ The third pillar of the Nixon doctrine was implemented through the identification and support of regional hegemon that acted as security partners to stabilize a region. Kissinger was highly influenced by the anti-revolutionary, balance-of-power based Metternich system of the post-Napoleon era in Europe, which had brought stability to the system. Like the Metternich system focused on suppressing anti-monarchical revolutions and sought to prevent the rise of another nationalistic Napoleon-like leader, Kissinger sought to counter any revolution that could potentially collapse into a communist regime or work against the interests of the United States.

Ronald Reagan, much like Kennan, understood the economic strain that security competition had on the communist economy. Shifting US grand strategy back to what Gaddis calls ‘symmetrical containment,’ ‘peace through strength’ became the slogan of the Reagan administration.²⁰⁰ The Reagan administration began a massive military buildup, committed to ‘outspend the Soviets’ to plunge the Soviet Union into economic ruin.²⁰¹ Despite the buildup, US policymakers were committed to small, well-defined operations when the use of force was necessary, in places like Grenada and Lebanon.²⁰² The Reagan doctrine, an extension of the Truman doctrine, declared a policy of sending covert and overt support to ‘freedom fighters’ pushing back against communist forces.²⁰³ Just like Kennan predicted in the 1950s, the collapse of the Soviet Union due to the stresses of economic competition—and perhaps

¹⁹¹ Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War’s Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper, 2018), 181.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 181.

¹⁹³ Chamberlin, *Cold War Killing Fields*, 209.

¹⁹⁴ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 770.

¹⁹⁵ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 82.

¹⁹⁶ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, location 13380.

¹⁹⁷ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 770.

¹⁹⁸ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 273.

¹⁹⁹ Meiertons, *The Doctrines of US Security Policy*, 143.

²⁰⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 342.

²⁰¹ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 99.

²⁰² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 865.

²⁰³ Meiertons, *The Doctrines of US Security Policy*, 155.

due to a significant change in Soviet grand strategy to become more competitive commercially around the globe—became imminent at the end of the Reagan administration.

The abundance of key policy outcomes during this time reflect the complexity of the Cold War, as well as the new role in the international system for the United States. Despite interventions in both World Wars, the US had not ventured far outside of the western hemisphere. The Soviet Union posed a global threat to American interests, and the seismic shift in US foreign policymaking had tremendous implications for both present times and the future.

Desired Ends, Actual Ends, and Major Shifts

While some policy outputs certainly put the United States into a few quagmires, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War, containment was relatively successful in ushering in the fall of the Soviet Union. Kennan correctly predicted that the centrally planned economy of the Soviet Union paired with its expansionist foreign policy vision would eventually cripple the nation. A grand strategy of containment, the alignment of means and ends, and policy outputs successfully kept the United States out of a direct military confrontation with its powerful adversary. Grand strategy during the Cold War displayed a distinctly flexible quality, fluctuating to fit different political views, resource constraints, and challenges. Precisely what Martel argues, adaptability of grand strategy helps to keep desired ends and interests in focus and coordinates the means of statecraft appropriately according to the nation's principles.

According to Gaddis, the idea of containment was to prevent the Soviet Union from using the power and position it won as a result of World War II to reshape the postwar international order in their favor.²⁰⁴ Each Cold War era administration held different views on what 'containment' ought to be, and were influenced by political views, public opinion, varying challenges across the international system. Containment represented the middle ground between appeasement and war, and each administration, and allowed for a degree of flexibility in strategy.²⁰⁵

Assessing the Causal Mechanism

During the Cold War, US grand strategy, for the first time in its history, focused on global political objectives. It displayed a distinct adaptability, that allowed the United States to confront new challenges posed by the international system. The historical evidence suggests that international constraints, bureaucratic politics, and domestic politics all exerted influence on the crafting of US grand strategy during this tumultuous period.

International Constraints

The emergence of a bipolar system following World War II was the primary influence on US grand strategy during the Cold War. Since the Great Britain and other European nations expended significant amounts of blood and treasure to defeat Nazi Germany, the onus of maintaining a balance-of-power now fell to the United States. The system that emerged after the end of World War II looked significantly different from the systems that existed before World War I and even during the interwar period. Traditional great powers found themselves in new roles, France was 'prostrate,' Great Britain was exhausted, and Germany, having haunted Europe with its strength since 1871, was being divided into four military occupational zones.²⁰⁶ Kennan argued that in the years following World War II, the Soviet Union was not a short term military threat, but a long term political threat seeking to fill the power vacuums left behind by the defeats of Germany and Japan.²⁰⁷ While a relatively unstable peace emerged between the two superpowers, the periphery of two spheres of influence and the third world presented complex security challenges.²⁰⁸ The relative strength of both superpowers meant the two would confront each other through diplomatic, economic, and intelligence means, as well as indirectly using military means.

²⁰⁴ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 4.

²⁰⁵ Brands, *What is Good Grand Strategy*, 17.

²⁰⁶ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, location 7799.

²⁰⁷ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 44.

²⁰⁸ Chamberlin, *Cold War Killing Fields*, 2-3.

In what Christopher Hemmer calls the ‘Twin Shocks of 1949,’ two external events influenced the rise of a more hawkish policy in NCS-68. The victory of Mao Tse-Tung’s communist forces in the Chinese Civil War and the first successful Soviet test of an atomic bomb and both events had US policymakers feeling like they ‘were losing the peace.’²⁰⁹ Likewise, during the Nixon administration, a growing rivalry between Moscow and Beijing allowed for the implementation of policy that capitalized on a schism between the two communist nations.²¹⁰ Khrushchev’s political maneuvers away from Stalinism created an ideological rift in Soviet-Sino relations and resulted in a Soviet military buildup on China’s border.²¹¹ Nixon used the rift to normalize relations with China, in hopes that better relations with one side of the American-Soviet-Sino triangle created leverage to use on the other side.²¹²

Bureaucratic Politics

The Cold War led to a landmark piece of national security legislation known as the National Security Act of 1947. The development and professionalization of the national security policymaking enterprise enhanced the United States’ ability to formulate and implement grand strategy. The bureaucratic process also brought about pitfalls that meant potential harm for the effectiveness of policymaking. These trade-offs appeared to each administration differently, because each administration had a different approach to the bureaucracy. Early in the Cold War, policy altered ever so slightly from Kennan’s original premise that focused on economic means as the chief tool of containment to the policy of ‘rollback’ under NSC-68. This change was driven by the retirement of Secretary of State George Marshall, who was replaced by the hawkish Dean Acheson. As James M. Keagle argues, real people run the bureaucracy and their own personal perceptions impact bureaucratic outputs.²¹³ A change in political perception from Marshall to Acheson marked a paradigm shift in grand strategy driven by bureaucratic politics.

Perhaps a most effective practice of bureaucratic politics and national security during the Cold War was Project Solarium. This national security exercise during the Eisenhower administration brought together experts from every corner of the national security enterprise to help the administration evaluate, and perhaps alter, US grand strategy.²¹⁴ This exercise created a cohesive forum where the President was able to communicate with the various departments, and as Kennan put it, Solarium was able “to prod a lot of people in the Washington bureaucracy—military and civilian— into taking a new look at the things we had been trying to do, to see whether they could improve on the previous performance.”²¹⁵

John F. Kennedy’s bureaucratic preferences was one of ‘a free-wheeling apparatus, that left him in the center of decision-making.’²¹⁶ Kennedy had a deep mistrust of top military brass, and during his time in office, civilian-military relations deteriorated greatly.²¹⁷ The mistrust was mutual and these characteristics of the bureaucracy under the Kennedy administration made the implementation of ‘flexible response’ difficult.²¹⁸ In a study of decision making during the Cuban missile crisis, Graham T. Allison illustrated that there is evidence to support the role of organizational and bureaucratic models, and that state actors are not ‘monoliths.’²¹⁹ The organizational model illustrated the influence of organizational outputs on decision making, as well as the organizational role in implementation. The Air Force and the Navy presented plans for strategic bombing or a blockade of Cuba, which is the result of the ‘organizations’ particular area of expertise. A bureaucratic model suggests that decision making is the result of a series of overlapping bargaining games, and Kennedy’s preference to

²⁰⁹ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 52-53.

²¹⁰ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 279.

²¹¹ Kissinger, *On China*, 162.

²¹² Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 82.

²¹³ Kozak and Keagle, *Bureaucratic Politics and National Security*, 17.

²¹⁴ William B. Pickett, *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower’s New Look: An Oral History of Project Solarium*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 2.

²¹⁵ William B. Pickett, *George F. Kennan and the Origins of Eisenhower’s New Look*, 21.

²¹⁶ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 703.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 704.

²¹⁸ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 74-75.

²¹⁹ Allison, “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” 716-717.

soliciting advice from ExCom put all the players of the national security enterprise at the table, opposed to Nixon's reliance on a dichotomous model of himself and Kissinger.

Gaddis, in his evaluation of *détente*, makes an interesting observation about the Nixon/Kissinger relationship with the bureaucracy. Nixon and Kissinger were successful together in the implementation of grand strategy because they were able to concentrate power in the White House unseen since the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration.²²⁰ This left the bureaucracy “uninformed, sullen, and at times sabotage-minded” and a Congress “determined to reassert its eroded constitutional authority.”²²¹ Yet Nixon and Kissinger's policies, the fundamental elements of grand strategy, survived the upheaval.²²² However, *détente*, would eventually be undermined by Nixon's undoing in the Watergate Scandal and impeachment proceedings.²²³

Domestic Politics

One of the biggest influences of domestic politics on US grand strategy is electoral politics. In previous case studies, US policymakers generally followed the grand strategy of their predecessors, simply adding a policy subscription or two here and there. The Cold War marks a stark departure from that policymaking, as each newly elected administration brought their own views and perceptions of the Soviet threat into the policymaking process, as evidenced by the shifting ‘ways’ of grand strategy. Partisan ideology also brought differing budgetary views to the formulation of grand strategy, as Eisenhower and Nixon attempted to control defense spending, whereas the strategic visions of Truman, Kennedy, and Reagan expanded defense spending.

Public opinion also played a significant role in grand strategy during the Cold War. Vietnam demonstrated the limits of conventional military force applied under constraints imposed by public opinion.²²⁴ The unpopularity of the Vietnam conflict influenced Nixon to use the tools of diplomacy, thus leading to a policy *détente*. Historical memory of the Vietnam conflict made the use of the military force impacted the Reagan administration's willingness to use an expanded armed force.

Case Study 5: The Post-Cold War Era

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1991 once again put the United States in an unprecedented position in the international system. The political and economic demise of the world's only other superpower meant the United States was the preeminent power in the international system. Due to the nature of the ideological tension that was an inherent part of the Cold War, many scholars and policymakers attributed victory to the triumph of liberal democracy.²²⁵ For as intense as the US-Soviet Union competition was during the Cold War, the impact of the fall of the Soviet Union reverberated through the international system with just as much intensity. Transnational terrorism, new civil wars, globalization, nuclear proliferation to ‘rogue’ states among others presented new and complex challenges for the United States. The United States also had to reckon with an economy shifting from a manufacturing-based economy to an information-based economy, destabilizing the base of American power.²²⁶ This new era saw the rise of humanitarian interventions, the Global War of Terror in the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, and the rise of a militaristic foreign policy. The US acted as system stabilizer without any true adversaries to stabilize against, fulfilling the vision of Woodrow Wilson to ‘make the world safe for democracy.’ This has led to an era of over commitments, specifically post-Iraq Wars. Incoherent strategy has led to reckless hostilities with Iran, inconsistent reactions to the Arab Spring, leaving the international system in a seemingly more chaotic place than it was during the Cold War.

²²⁰ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 273

²²¹ Ibid, 273.

²²² Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 273.

²²³ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 86.

²²⁴ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 275.

²²⁵ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 918.

²²⁶ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 300.

Interests

After a century of balance-of-power oriented grand strategy, the newly minted US global hegemon turned its attention to the spread of liberal democratic values. As Secretary of State James Baker put it, “beyond containment lies democracy.”²²⁷ The George H.W. Bush administration, however, focused on ‘enlightened realism,’ in that the ‘world could be a better place’ but ‘let’s not get carried away.’²²⁸ The Clinton administration expanded US interests to include defending liberal values, in what Hemmer calls ‘values-based engagement.’²²⁹ This particular interest included overseeing the growth and expansion of free markets, and allowing globalization to run its course. A vital interest in the post-Cold War era included preventing the rise of a peer or near-peer competitor to challenge the preeminence of the American hegemon, thus preventing an existential threat to US security. Post-September 11th turned the focus of US interests to counterterrorism, both in domestic law enforcement and military doctrine.

Means

The means of statecraft in the post-Cold War era remained focused on the four important means of the previous era: diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic. As the preponderant power in the post-Cold War system, the military means of US statecraft were, and remain, unsurpassed. With global reach, the superiority of US conventional and unconventional forces allowed the United States to shape the international order in their own image, much like the era of Pax Britannica. This era also brought about revolutions in military technology, particularly in the most recent decade, with the rise of two new fighting domains in cyber and space to accompany land, sea, and air. The use of drones rose in prominence during the Obama administration. Diplomatic remained focused on the utilization of the foreign services in traditional diplomacy and the continued use of foreign aid and economic development in impoverished parts of the world. Economic means evolved yet again. Administrations utilized economic sanctions as punitive measures against rogue states to coerce those nations into changing their behavior. Notable sanctioned states include Russia, North Korea, Venezuela, and Iran. Free trade agreements, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (ratified 1993) and the United States, Mexico, Canada Agreement (drafted 2018) helped to integrate the rest of the world into the United States’ network of trade. Intelligence means saw the elevation of the Director of National Intelligence to a cabinet-level position in 2004 with the intention improved cohesion between the executive branch and the Intelligence Community.

‘Grand Principles’

Identifying principles of grand strategy in the post-Cold War era proved to be a difficult task. US grand strategy proved adaptable during the Cold War to various elements of change but remained true to basic principles of containment. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, US grand strategy entered a period of drift and imbalance, often in the direction of being highly reactive to events.²³⁰ Trapped by what was referred to as the ‘Kennan Sweepstakes, policymakers became enamored with the model of containment and assumed that any new grand strategy must possess a similar sweep, elegance, and focus.²³¹ However, this new era of international politics contains powerful consistencies, yet radical discontinuities which contribute to an elaborate array of challenges, and lacked the equivalent of the applicable conditions of containment.²³² Martel attributes failure to articulate a grand strategy during this era to a failure of policymakers to examine the traditions of US grand strategy beyond containment.²³³

The post-Cold War era of US grand strategy can, and should, be characterized as the era of the liberal hegemon. In its preeminence, the United States has sought to maintain the liberal international order that emerged after World War II. Thus, every region of the world has become of strategic importance and every perceived threat

²²⁷ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 111.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 111.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 111-12.

²³⁰ Martel, *Grands Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 300.

²³¹ *Ibid*, 301.

²³² Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 301.

²³³ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 301.

is of dire importance. The United States has used means of statecraft to protect liberal democratic values and has often found itself exporting democracy through a rifled barrel. The general promotion and protection of liberal democratic has taken various forms among the administrations, hence a grand strategy adrift as Martel alluded to, of the post-Cold War era ranging from multilateral humanitarian interventions to unilateral regime change and subsequent nation-building.

Policy Outputs (Ways)

In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, the H.W. Bush policy team had the first shot at the challenge of formulating a post-containment grand strategy. The primary objective of the Bush administration's post-Soviet strategy was to prevent the reemergence of a rival power that posed the same threat to order that was posed by the Soviet Union.²³⁴ Bush envisioned a multilateral approach to establishing a 'new world order' with agile, rapid deployable forces designed to meet threats wherever they arose.²³⁵ However, threats became unclear and undecipherable in the new world order and created incoherence in US strategy.²³⁶ Despite enjoying success in facilitating the Persian Gulf War and managing the fallout of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the H.W. Bush administration lost a bid for reelection before truly making sense of what a new grand strategy ought to be. The incoherence that characterized the outset of the post-Cold War era continues into the present.

Under Bill Clinton, the United States opted for a multilateral approach, placing US power and money at the disposal of the United Nations for nation building projects in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia.²³⁷ Disasters in Somalia and Haiti paralyzed the administration from responding to, and intervening in a preventable humanitarian crisis in Rwanda in 1994.²³⁸ This strategy of enlargement, as Hemmer puts it, also saw the Clinton administration expanded membership to NATO.²³⁹ These enlargement policies were designed to enlarge the community of democratic and free market nations.²⁴⁰ Yet somehow, enlargement failed to integrate the new Russian federation into a regional security operation right on their doorstep.

Less than a year into his first term in the White House, George W. Bush used the tragic and devastating terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 to transform US foreign policy yet again. While Bush originally campaigned on the idea that the United States was not the world's 9-1-1 call, the neoconservative faction his administration set the country on the path to war in Iraq and Afghanistan in what became known as the Global War of Terror.²⁴¹ Unilateral regime change and nation building became the policy tools of the administration, and it would also use its supreme military strength to root out and destroy terrorist cells and training camps.²⁴² Two subsequent Authorizations for the Use of Military Force were passed by Congress. The first was the Authorization for the Use of Military Force in Response to the 9/11 Attacks (PL 107-40) in which authorized the President to use necessary and appropriate force against nations, organizations, or persons that were involved in the 9/11 attacks.²⁴³ This authorization is still in effect. The second authorization was the Authorization of the Use of Military Force against Iraq 2002 (PL 107-243).²⁴⁴ These AUMFs authorized the executive branch, then and now, to use force when deemed necessary.

The Obama administration was faced with the complexities of inheriting the Global War on Terror from the Bush administration and with that a series of military and political quagmires in the Middle East. In contrast to his

²³⁴ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 114.

²³⁵ Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice*, 301.

²³⁶ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 114.

²³⁷ McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, 201-202.

²³⁸ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, location 915.

²³⁹ Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 123.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 128.

²⁴¹ Herring, *The American Century and Beyond: US Foreign Relations, 1893-2014* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2008), 642.

²⁴² Hemmer, *American Pendulum*, 138-9.

²⁴³ Congressional Research Service, *Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications*, by Jennifer K. Elsea and Matthew C. Weed, 14-15.

²⁴⁴ Congressional Research Service, *Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Force*, 17.

predecessor, Barack Obama sought a cautious and deliberative approach to foreign policy decision making.²⁴⁵ He also took office with an agenda of scaling back the US role in the Middle East, and refocusing American resources on East Asia, a region with vast economic importance and potentially dangerous rising powers.²⁴⁶ Obama also sought rapprochement with Russia, as well as engagement with the rogue states of Venezuela, North Korea, and Iran.²⁴⁷ This strategy showed shades of Nixon's *détente* strategy, however remaining on track proved a challenge for the administration.

As fast as the Obama administration ended the occupation in Iraq, the vacuum left behind was filled by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a caliphate driven terrorist organization. The rise of ISIL created yet another quagmire that the United States determined was necessary to allocate resources towards a solution. Overt warfare against terrorist organizations elsewhere evolved into covert warfare, using extensive drone operations to attack cells. Complicating Middle East policy during the Obama administration was the Arab Spring in 2011, in which liberal revolutions surfaced from Tunisia to Syria. In response, the administration aided rebels in Libya by deposing Muammar Gaddafi, which had led to a renewed cycle of violence between rebels and loyalists that is still going on today.²⁴⁸ Further exacerbating matters, the Arab Spring also plummeted Syria, a former Soviet and now Russian client state, into a bloody civil war that still rages today. With close ties to Iran and Hezbollah, the opportunity to end the reign of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad posed an attractive opportunity for US policymakers that dedicated military resources and advisors to the rebel factions.²⁴⁹ The Obama administration's preference for multilateralism, evident in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal with Iran and coalition building regional power to combat ISIL, represented attempts to build a new grand strategy, but were subsequently torn up by the Trump administration's unilateralism.

Desired Ends, Actual Ends, and Major Shifts

The incoherence of grand strategy during this era has resulted in discrepancies between desired ends and actual ends. US policymakers sought to bring liberal democracy to the rest of the world, yet there has been democratic backsliding and authoritarian strongmen are still prevalent in the international system. The nation-building effort in Afghanistan has stymied, and after 18 years of a US presence, the Afghan government cannot provide for the security of its own nation. As a result, the Taliban, the Afghan government, and the United States are in peace talks to establish a post-US Afghanistan. American misunderstanding of tribal dynamics in the Middle East, as well as balance of power politics in the region, are largely responsible for nation-building failures.²⁵⁰ Authoritarianism is seemingly on the march again, despite a world that was supposed to be getting more democratic, in Russia, China, Turkey, Hungary, and the Philippines.²⁵¹ North Korea now has nuclear weapons and localized delivery systems endangering US forces in the region and Iran is on the path toward nuclearization, perhaps the only preventative measure against US policies of regime change.

The United States desired to prevent the rise of peer or near-peer competitors, yet Russia and China are closing the gap on American preponderance. Both Russia and China, as rising great powers, have marked their territorial spheres of influence—China in the South China Sea and Russia in its historical sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia. Further exacerbating the Russian challenger has been the eastward expansion of NATO, and quite frankly, the failure to integrate Russia into NATO. after the fall of the Soviet Union.²⁵²

²⁴⁵ Herring, *The American Century and Beyond*, 672.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 672.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 672.

²⁴⁸ Herring, *The American Century and Beyond*, 577. See also <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-libya>

²⁴⁹ Stephen M. Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), 7.

²⁵⁰ Mark F. Cancian, *Tell Me How This Ends: Military Advice, Strategic Goals, and the "Forever War" in Afghanistan*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019), 23-4.

²⁵¹ "Autocracy Now," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2019.

²⁵² John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2014.

This case study then becomes about determining, if possible, the reasons for the enormous gap between desired ends and actual ends in the post-Cold War era. A lack of grand strategy is a contributing factor. Understanding interests, realizing the limitations of means, and prioritizing objectives brings cohesiveness to the foreign policymaking process. US grand strategy during the Cold War essentially brought all the regions of the world into focus—certainly a wide scope for foreign policymaking— yet concentration of the limited objectives of containing communism simplified a complex world full of diverse groups of peoples and cultures that were emerging from the age of colonialism. In the post-Cold War era, the United States remained focused on the wide scope of the entire world yet lacked the limited objectives of the Cold War and thus every tribal clash, every rogue state seeking security, every authoritarian government became the object of US attention. Failure to prioritize threats, and even threat inflation obfuscates interests, which are an essential cog in the grand strategic ecosystem. Threat inflation, as described by Trevor Thrall and Jane Cramer, is the result of policymakers coping with uncertainty in the international system exacerbated by insufficient intelligence and the opacity of other state's intentions.²⁵³ Policymakers, both knowingly and unknowingly, create concern for a threat that goes beyond the scope and urgency that a disinterested analysis would justify.²⁵⁴ A prime example is the Bush administration stoking fear among the public of Iraq's connection to al-Qaeda.²⁵⁵ The inability to properly decipher threats, knowingly or unknowingly, can result in the misalignment of means, and an inefficient allocation of resources.

The means of statecraft are also an essential cog in the grand strategic ecosystem. The post-Cold War era has seen the rise of 'kinetic' diplomacy and the decay of the Department of State. According to Monica Duffy Toft, kinetic diplomacy is the use of primarily military resources— such as drones and special operations— to coerce by violence.²⁵⁶ With vast military commitments around the globe, a defense budget in the \$730 billion range, and a State Department budget around \$68 billion, it is not difficult to see that an imbalance in the means of statecraft has occurred and that there is an over reliance on the military means to achieve objectives in US foreign policy.²⁵⁷ This is problematic because military force is designed to compel outcomes that the adversary naturally opposes, whereas diplomacy is designed to persuade an adversary to act on interests as though it wants the same outcomes as those doing the persuading.²⁵⁸ Kori Schake posits that the US Department of State punches well below its weight-class, and its lack of programmatic evaluation and advocacy is a detriment to its own success.²⁵⁹ Bad interagency practices and the belief that global military supremacy is the key to foreign policy success has left the State Department in a decaying state. Sound grand strategy is designed to strike the right balance between diplomacy and force, and current quagmires, such as the civil war in Syria, might 'be better served by seasoned diplomats than by 19-year old Marines.'²⁶⁰ Military means have the ability to coerce, they are not equipped and do not have the means to build governments from the ground up, nor the wherewithal to achieve all the objectives of foreign policy. In fact, the militarization of US foreign policy comes with unintended consequences, like the nuclearization of Iran and North Korea, who realize that US policy and reliance on the military force has become a threat to their own existence.²⁶¹ Perhaps, grand strategy is non-existent in this era because means are not properly balanced, and perhaps the ends of statecraft exceed the means. To revisit Gaddis: if you seek ends beyond your means, then sooner or later you'll have to scale back your ends to fit your means.²⁶² Again, grand strategy helps policymakers realize the limitations of the statecraft and focus it to attainable objections.

²⁵³ A. Trevor Thrall and Jane K. Cramer, ed., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3-4.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 3.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

²⁵⁶ Monica Duffy Toft, "The Dangerous Rise of Kinetic Diplomacy," *War on the Rocks*, May 14, 2019.

²⁵⁷ *USAspending.gov*, <https://www.usaspending.gov/#/agency/315>, Accessed December 2, 2019.

²⁵⁸ Kori N. Schake, *A State of Disrepair: Fixing the Culture and Practices of the State Department* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 2012), location 419.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, location 2060.

²⁶⁰ Senator Chris Murphy, IISS Manama Dialogue 2019, <https://twitter.com/laraseligman/status/1198243247275040770>.

²⁶¹ Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions*, 12-13.

²⁶² Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, 21.

Assessing the Causal Mechanism

Assessing how international constraints, bureaucratic politics, and domestic politics influence US grand strategy during this era is a difficult task considering the lack of ‘grand’ principles and the inability to determine threats. The application of the means of statecraft turned into a reactive practice, rather than channeling the means into interests, ways, and desired ends. Scholars and pundits alike have identified US grand strategy in this era as ‘primacy,’ and primacy it may be, however it does not resemble the grand strategic ecosystem established in the literature review. With a dependent variable, the search for evidence of impactful independent variables is a fruitless endeavor, but that does not mean there are not lessons to draw upon.

Section 4: Findings and Implications

Grand strategy has proved a useful tool for organizing the interests, means, principles, and ways of US statecraft throughout much of its history. Based on the United States’ interaction with the international system, its grand strategy pre-Cold War proved steady, while Cold War grand strategy was very adaptive and post-Cold War grand strategy has been non-existent. Nineteenth century US grand strategy saw coherent coordination of the means of statecraft with designs of regional hegemon in the western hemisphere to ensure the security of the developing republic, as well as commitment to distance the nation from the politics of Europe. Emergence from the nineteenth century as a great power meant the United States had greater power to wield on the international stage, thus acting as a system stabilizer during the world wars, ensuring its own security in the western hemisphere. Following World War II, the state of international system left the United States to play a greater role in ensure the stability of the international system by going global to contain the Soviet Union. The international system that formed in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union left US grand strategy incoherent, lacking clarity on threats and coordination of means to tangible interests and ends. The policy process is constant. Failure to formulate and implement coherent grand strategy and principles is the result of failure to understand and adapt to the forces that cause grand strategy whether it is the condition of the international system or understanding bureaucratic and domestic politics.

Four of the five case studies have found a coherent grand strategy, and upon an analysis of the historical evidence, international constraints, bureaucratic politics, and domestic politics have exerted influence on the formulation of grand strategy. US grand strategy has been coherent when the hierarchy of the international system mandates the recognition of grave threats to US security and galvanizes US policymakers appropriately. When policymakers understand what clear and obtainable ends are and can align the means of statecraft to those ends, those threats presented by the international system are manageable. Specifically, US policymakers throughout the nineteenth century understood that the threat that European great powers posed and that the position of the United States in a different hemisphere from other great powers provided an opportunity for the United States to enhance its security through expansion in that hemisphere. US grand strategy dictated the appropriate use of military means, diplomatic means, and economic means when those threats attempted to encroach the US sphere of influence. As the globe shrunk—through technological enhancements and globalization—the urgency to confront grave threats outside of the US sphere of influence grew stronger. Figure 3 below illustrates the different grand strategies that has guided US policymakers in conducting foreign policy and responding to the challenges of international affairs.

Case Study	Grand Strategy	Change Point(s)
The Early Republic	Non-Entanglement	Lasted from the beginning of the Washington administration to, technically, the United States’ emergence as a great power. Non-entanglement in Europe and European non-entanglement in the

		Western Hemisphere guided US foreign affairs through expansion and Civil War.
The Emerging Empire	Progressive Imperialism	A new grand strategy to firmly establish dominance in the western hemisphere upon obtaining great power status.
The World Wars	System Stabilization	Changed from Progressive Imperialism to System Stabilization when Germany became strong enough to challenge Great Britain for the dominance of Europe. Ultimately German hostilities against a neutral United States forced US to enter the war.
The Cold War	Containment	The Cold War era grand strategy of containment lasted the end of World War II to the fall of Soviet Union in 1991. This grand strategy can be characterized as being highly adaptive, responding to the various challenges that a truly global competition brought. Each presidential administration brought their own ideals to containment, creating subtle shifts in the strategy throughout the duration.
Post-Cold War	"Still Searching for a Grand Strategy"	International, multilateral interventionism and democracy exportation. Anti-Terror and forced Democracy (Iraq fiasco) under GW Bush, Renewed Multilateralism (Climate Change, Iran Nuclear, and TPP, NATO extra-regional enforcement, etc.) under Obama-Clinton-Kerry, and Reversion to Autarky and Unilateralism under Trump.

Likewise, bureaucratic politics also influences grand strategy. More so post-National Security Act of 1947, bureaucratic politics exerts both positive and negative forces on policymaking. Competition for limited resources impacts the balance and alignment of the means of statecraft, and interagency politics can affect who bears responsibility for implementation. The highly professionalized National Security Enterprise ultimately must formulate, implement, and evaluate policy, including grand strategy to the best of their understanding. The experiences of those professionals' act as a lens through which the outputs of the policy process are affected. In the post-Cold War era, the one case study without a coherent grand strategy, is rife with policymakers seeing the world through the lenses of the Cold War. This is significant because the international system presented entirely different challenges than that of the Cold War. Domestic politics also has had an impact. Public opinion and historical memory factor in the crafting of US grand strategy, despite the discreet nature of foreign policy. Even as the scope

of Vietnam was secretly widen in the outset of the Nixon administration, anti-war public opinion eventually forced Nixon to reassess the war, and the totality of US grand strategy.

Grand strategy can be a useful tool for US policymakers again, by looking back beyond containment and understanding the traditions of US grand strategy. The organization of interests, means, and desired outcomes, guided by certain principles managed US statecraft through the perilous waters of European imperial ambitions, treacherous great power wars, and tense confrontation with a communist superpower for which the mere existence of the United States was an antithesis of their ideology. It guided the United States to great power status and then superpower status in the international system. As serious step toward reverting back to those grand strategic traditions should start with categorizing threats and their real potential for harm. Gaining clarity on threats and interests allows for the proper applications of the means of statecraft. Reforming the means of statecraft is also a vital step in reengaging the grand strategic ecosystem. Proper funding for State Department programs and improved practices, as well as taking a good, hard look at military deployments around the globe in an effort to demilitarize foreign policy are important steps as well.

Early in 2019, the Center for New American Security published a series on the future of US grand strategy appropriately called ‘New Voices in Grand Strategy.’ This work gathered a variety of scholars and practitioners from various backgrounds and of various persuasions together to ‘grapple with the central questions of US grand strategy.’²⁶³ One particular scholar, already cited in this piece, stood out as having a viable framework, asking the right questions of grand strategy. Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin writes:

First, does a specific grand strategy limit threats to one’s security? Relations with other great powers are particularly salient to this issue, given their significant capabilities and ability to shape the strategic environment to which a grand strategy responds. One wants to know whether a grand strategy adequately shapes relations vis-à-vis other great powers to promote cooperation where possible and minimize military threats where it must. Second, are the tools and techniques chosen to promote security appropriate to the task? That is, are ends and means “integrated” – with clear priorities set among different goals, adequate resources devoted to their resolution, and due consideration given to potential second- and third-order effects of one’s efforts – or do ends and means run at cross purposes, such that applying the strategy creates more problems and generates more risk than it solves?²⁶⁴

From what we understand of the anarchic nature of the international system, new threats and challenges can be just around the corner. Much of the renewed interest in grand strategy is due to a shifting polarity, making our understanding of the grand strategic ecosystem essential. A recalibration of US grand strategy to focus on a clear definition of threats and obtainable ends in the current international system—as well as aligning the right means of statecraft to those ends— can help US policymakers revert back to a grand strategy that ensures the survival and success of liberty.

²⁶³ Richard Fontaine and Loren DeJonge Shulman, ed., *New Voices in Grand Strategy* (Washington, DC: Center for New American Security, 2019), 2.

²⁶⁴ Fontaine and Shulman, *New Voices in Grand Strategy*, 75.

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