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PART B6

From: Campbell, Kurt M <CampbellKM@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2011 7:26 PM
To: H; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Fw: figured you might agree with this

From Richard. Kurt

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From: Richard Haass [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, November 15, 2011 06:34 PM
To: Campbell, Kurt M
Subject: figured you might agree with this

From: Madeleine Gray
Sent: Monday, November 14, 2011 12:58 PM
Subject: Project Syndicate Op-ed by Dr. Richard Haass

Please find below the link and text to a Project Syndicate piece by Richard Haass titled "Re-Orienting America." Project Syndicate commentaries appear in several dozen newspapers around the world. The article was published online today, November 14.

Re-Orienting America

By Richard N. Haass

NEW YORK – Some 40 years ago, when I entered Oxford University as a graduate student, I declared my interest in the Middle East. I was told that this part of the world came under the rubric of "Oriental Studies," and that I would be assigned an appropriate professor. But when I arrived for my first meeting at the professor's office, his bookshelves were lined with volumes bearing Chinese characters. He was a specialist in what was, at least for me at the time, the wrong Orient.

Something akin to this mistake has befallen American foreign policy. The United States has become preoccupied with the Middle East – in certain ways, the wrong Orient – and has not paid adequate attention to East Asia and the Pacific, where much of the twenty-first century's history will be written.

The good news is that this focus is shifting. Indeed, a quiet transformation is taking place in American foreign policy, one that is as significant as it is overdue. The US has rediscovered Asia.

"Rediscovered" is the operative word here. Asia was one of the two principal theaters of World War II, and again shared centrality with Europe during the Cold War. Indeed, the period's two greatest conflicts – the wars in Korea and Vietnam – were fought on the Asian mainland.

But, with the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, Asia receded from American interest. In the first decade of the post-Cold War era, the US trained much of its attention on Europe. American policymakers focused primarily on enlarging NATO to encompass many of the former Warsaw Pact countries, and on contending with the post-Yugoslav wars.

The second phase of the post-Cold War era began with the 9/11 terror attacks. What followed was a decade of US focus on terrorism and the large-scale commitment of American military forces to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The two conflicts have claimed more than 6,000 American lives, cost more than \$1 trillion, and consumed countless hours for two presidents and their senior staff.

But now this phase of American foreign policy is ending. President Barack Obama has announced that US armed forces will be out of Iraq by the end of 2011. In Afghanistan, US force levels have peaked and are declining; the only questions concern the pace of withdrawal and the size and role of any residual US military presence after 2014.

This is not to argue that the Middle East is irrelevant or that the US should ignore it. On the contrary, it is still home to massive oil and gas reserves. It is a part of the world where terrorists are active and conflicts have been common. Iran is moving ever closer to developing nuclear weapons; if it does, others may well follow suit. And it is a region now experiencing what could prove to be historic domestic political upheavals. There is also the unique American tie to Israel.

Nevertheless, there are grounds for the US doing less in the greater Middle East than it has in recent years: the weakening of al-Qaeda; the poor prospects for peacemaking efforts; and, above all, the mounting evidence that, by any measure, massive nation-building initiatives are not yielding returns commensurate with the investments.

At the same time, there are strong arguments for greater US involvement in the Asia-Pacific region. With its large populations and fast-growing economies, it is difficult to exaggerate the region's economic importance. American companies export more than \$300 billion in goods and services to countries in the region each year. Meanwhile, Asian countries are a critical source of investment for the US economy.

Maintaining regional stability is thus critical for US (and global) economic success. The US has multiple alliance obligations – with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand – which are needed, in part, to deter North Korean aggression. Moreover, US policy must create an environment in which a rising China is never tempted to use its growing power coercively – within or outside the region. For this reason, recent US efforts to strengthen ties with India and several Southeast Asian countries make good sense.

The US is right to shift its focus from the Middle East to the Far East. The good news is that this conclusion seems to be shared across the US political spectrum. Mitt Romney, the likely Republican nominee for president, pledges to increase the rate of shipbuilding – a commitment linked to an increased US presence in the Pacific. And US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks of America pivoting away from the greater Middle East: “The world's strategic and economic center of gravity is shifting east, and we are focusing more on the Asia-Pacific region.”

Regardless of whether the twenty-first century will be another “American century,” it is certain that it will be an Asian and Pacific century. It is both natural and sensible that the US be central to whatever evolves from that fact.

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