Bipolarity, Proxy Wars, and the Rise of China

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The modern international system in which nation-states compete for survival has historically assumed three primary configurations: unipolarity, in which a single state acts as a hegemon;[1] bipolarity, in which two states control the majority of power with weaker states aligning with one or the other; and multipolarity, where three or more nations are powerful enough to act as poles in the system. Since the 1648 Treaties of Westphalia, multipolarity with various great-power states jockeying for supremacy has been the norm. As the fortunes of these states waxed and waned, war typically has been the ultimate result of perceived power imbalances among them. While there have been historical instances of bipolarity, each of these was regional rather than global in scope.[2]

Many scholars argue that the international system has assumed a unipolar orientation since 1991, with the United States the sole remaining "superpower."[3] Perhaps more important are predictions of what will follow for international relations. For example, some believe the United States will face no viable challengers in the near term, with unipolarity a stable and long-term likelihood.[4] Others see a return to a multipolar environment wherein many nations will possess military and economic might sufficient to be recognized as great-power states.[5] Still others foresee a return to bipolarity with the United States and one future great power locked once again in a struggle for primacy.[6] This last possibility is increasingly influenced by Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC). The most likely challenger to US hegemony to emerge, at least in the foreseeable future, is China. Only China is close to possessing sufficient economic might leveraged into

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military spending and growth to soon rival the United States. It may well become the second great-power state in a new bipolar international regime.

Scholars debate the likelihood of future war with a rising China, each side arguing whether direct conflict is inevitable. Yet this debate does not consider the most probable future of US-China relations. While direct conflict is indeed a possibility, it remains remote. A more likely outcome is subnational conflict as the United States and China engage in proxy wars over resource access in Africa. These conflicts will place great demands on all US instruments of power as involvement in foreign internal defense, particularly counterinsurgency operations in Africa, trends upward. Bipolarity and renewed proxy conflict will require rethinking of long-term national and military strategies now focused primarily on large-scale interstate wars. This will impact defense acquisition and military doctrine as US strategic focus shifts from conventional conflict to more-low-end operations.

To understand this argument, one must first define subnational and proxy conflicts and explain why nuclear powers in a bipolar system make strategic policy choices to compete by proxy. The historical record of subnational proxy conflict conducted by both the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) from 1946 through the end of the Cold War era is illustrative, even though it was more about ideology than resources. The next section discusses the rationale for the claim that China will soon be poised to challenge the United States within a new bipolar order, the concomitant increase of proxy conflicts between the two, and the implications for US grand and military strategies, defense acquisition programs, and development of future doctrine to meet this new order. The final section discusses recommendations for strategic planning over the next several decades.

Renewed Bipolarity, Subnational Conflict, and Proxy Conflicts

Thousands of interstate conflicts have occurred since Westphalia, yet they have become relatively rare in the post-WWII era. Sixty-one have been recorded since 1946 but only five since the end of the Cold War. Intrastate conflicts, ranging from localized rebellions to civil war, increased linearly from 1946 through 1992 and then dramatically decreased in the post–Cold War era. This rise and fall of subnational conflict closely

mirrors the "proxy" wars fought by or between the USSR and the United States; the term refers to "great-power hostility expressed through client states" and describes superpower use of these states to pursue strategic and ideological goals within the confines of nuclear deterrent postures extant during the Cold War.[7] This was done in large part to achieve strategic national interests and other political goals without risking nuclear war. In its waning years the USSR could no longer afford to fund these wars; US support to many of these commitments ended soon after.[8] With resources depleted, former client states and subgroups had little choice but to resolve their conflicts, either via negotiation or decisive victory.

Scholars have lauded bipolarity for the stability inherent in such a regime; however, these arguments focus on Cold War relations between states and reduced incidence of interstate war.[9] Indeed, the Cold War bipolar era was arguably more peaceful than the era preceding it, as major wars between states were relatively rare and no militarized conflict ever erupted between the two superpowers. Was Cold War interstate stability truly an artifact of a bipolar system, or were additional factors responsible?

Bipolarity did not stifle interstate conflict between seventeenth-century Britain and France when they were imperial superpowers, yet no Cold War militarized conflict broke out between the United States and the Soviet Union.[10] The reason lies in the unique conditions of Cold War bipolarity; each superpower possessed sufficient nuclear capability to make war too costly to consider. Some scholars place this absence of conflict on the success of US deterrence and containment strategies.[11] Others cite the "stability-instability paradox," wherein nuclear parity precludes the use of such weapons while still allowing limited conventional conflicts between nuclear-armed states.[12] Others infer that nuclear weapons played no part in Cold War peace at all.[13] On the contrary, the perceived high costs of war in nuclear parity within a bipolar international system actually prevented war between the two. The United States and the USSR chose instead to address ideological differences indirectly by proxy within client states. While these strategies arguably kept the Cold War cold, what prescriptive logic was responsible for superpower decisions to engage in subnational conflict by proxy?

Just as interstate conflict takes many forms, from sanctions to militarized action, so too does subnational conflict cover a wide variety of cases. Civil wars often begin as grassroots organizing, followed by riots, rebellions, and insurgent conflict, prior to culminating in open war between insurgent

groups and forces of the state. Here the focus is on conflicts occurring solely within the geopolitical borders of the state, though examples of those spanning state borders also exist.[14] The number of these subnational conflicts increased steadily since 1946, some lasting 50 years or more (see fig. 1). Between 1946 and 2007 there were 225 conflicts between some insurgent group and the forces of a state.[15]

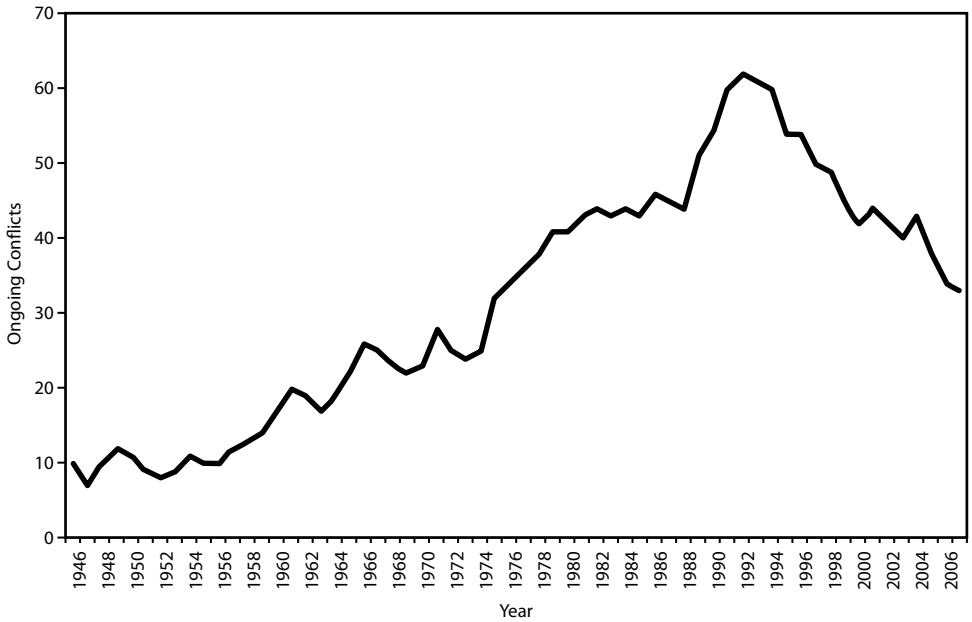

Figure 1. Ongoing subnational conflicts, 1946–2007

The number of subnational conflicts peaked in 1992 and has rapidly declined over the last two decades; ongoing conflicts in 2007 were at the same level as observed in the 1970s.[16] This pattern of subnational conflict naturally produces two related questions: (1) What caused the increase in ongoing subnational conflict during the Cold War? and (2) Why has it rapidly decreased in the two decades since? Both of these questions may be answered by examining strategic foreign policy choices each superpower made during the Cold War era.

As stated earlier, proxy conflicts are those in which great-power hostilities are expressed through client states rather than between great powers themselves. These proxy conflicts occur between nations that disagree over specific

issues but do not wish to engage in direct conflict. A significant portion of Cold War–era subnational conflicts were proxy conflicts sponsored by the United States and/or the USSR in support of their geopolitical and ideological differences. It must also be noted that impressions of power were just as important as military equality; this resulted in strategies that depended on *perceptions* of a balance of power as much as the balance itself.[17] Thus, US policy treated any Soviet gains as a threat that had to be countered in a zero-sum realpolitik game.

Cold War proxy conflicts usually took the form of aid provided to either insurgent forces or to those of the state—cash transfers, provision of weapons/technology, and advisory or combat support. While many instances of US and Soviet aid to states in conflict remain classified and thus impossible to account for at present, there are still many where such aid was identifiable. Dozens of subnational conflicts during the Cold War were proxy wars of the United States or the USSR, and their distribution is suggestive. Nearly half of these occurred during the Cold War's first two decades, when US-USSR competition was on the rise; this percentage declined in the 1980s as Soviet economic support dwindled and US aid to these nations quickly followed suit.[18] So, while the high cost of interstate conflict in the Cold War bipolar system wherein nuclear annihilation was possible led to peace between the great powers, it *increased* the incidence of subnational proxy conflict via two complementary mechanisms. It provided the superpowers a means to achieve geostrategic goals without the risk of nuclear war while also providing groups within client states the means to achieve their goals, through violence if necessary.

Why did the United States and the USSR engage in Cold War proxy conflict? Realists of the period warned against doing so—involvement in third-world conflicts was detrimental to US interests and did not enhance the all-important balance of power.[19] One possible explanation is that great powers prefer to compete by proxy without direct conflict to achieve their strategic interests and engender goodwill via soft-power strategies.[20] But the historical record does not support this, as great powers have often fought with one another. A more credible explanation is found in the structural conditions that existed in the Cold War international environment. As the United States and the USSR reached nuclear parity, danger of nuclear annihilation successfully deterred both sides from direct conflict. Yet each was driven to spread its ideology to the greatest extent possible, both to maximize alliance pools and achieve realpolitik goals of maximum

security.[21] A combination of realist political goals, coupled with the reality of nuclear parity, moved each away from direct confrontation and toward goal achievement via proxy conflict in client states.

The earliest Cold War example of subnational proxy conflict was the Greek Civil War, a communist uprising supported by Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and countered by the Greek army with support from the United States and the United Kingdom.[22] The United States also funded and equipped the 1954 coup in Guatemala that ousted President Guzman and ultimately led to the 36-year civil war that followed.[23] Other examples in the Western Hemisphere include the Cuban Revolution; the long civil war in El Salvador, where the United States supported Salvadoran government forces against the left-wing Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front; and the funding of rebel Contras in Nicaragua.[24]

Many Cold War proxy conflicts occurred in Africa following the end of European colonization there in the 1950s and '60s.[25] Probably the most infamous of these was the Angolan civil war, which began in 1975 and continued until 2002. Estimates of battle deaths exceed half a million. In this conflict the United States provided monetary assistance to National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebel forces, while Cuban troops participated as a Soviet expeditionary force of sorts on the side of Angola's communist government.[26] Other examples include the Soviets' provision of weapons to the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia and US/USSR backing of the civil war in Mozambique.[27] Examples in Asia include the US-sponsored mujahedeen fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan and US involvement in the Vietnam War.[28]

Although some of these conflicts persist, many ended following the dissolution of the USSR. Support for the Nicaraguan Contras ended after the scandal broke in the United States; a negotiated peace followed two years later.[29] Moscow ended all support for the Mengistu regime in 1990; it fell to rebels soon after.[30] When backing for the Angolan conflict was withdrawn, the UNITA and the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola soon agreed to a settlement.[31] Many of the conflicts during this period were arguably initiated and certainly prolonged by external support from the two superpowers; it has been argued such external support is in fact vitally necessary for successful insurgencies.[32] While neither side had direct stakes in these conflicts, the desire to resolve ideological differences within the constraints of nuclear parity drove each to create

national security policies that took realpolitik and domestic security concerns to foreign battlefields to engage in conflict by proxy.

The rising incidence of subnational conflict during the Cold War and its decline in the current era were thus influenced by superpower policy decisions to pursue strategic goals by proxy within client states to avoid the high costs of nuclear war. As the USSR lost the ability to fund these proxy wars, it ceased such aid and the United States followed suit. Although it is impossible to prove that loss of aid was a primary causal factor in many conflict resolutions in the post–Cold War era, it likely would have forced belligerents to search for alternative funding or prepare for peace. Since 1990, conflict resolution has occurred at nearly three times the Cold War rate—many thus seem to have chosen this route.[33] The current unipolar environment appears to be more peaceful in terms of relations both between and within states. However, several states now appear capable of achieving great-power status; if one of these amasses a sufficient level of economic and military might to challenge the United States, a return to international bipolarity is likely.

Future Challenges to the Current Unipolar Order

The so-called BRIC states—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—arguably possess the potential to rise to great-power status at some future point, yet only China has both the capability and the will to do so in the near term. There is strong rationale for singling out China as the next US peer competitor. This US-Sino competition will result in a new bipolar international regime and lead to resurgence in subnational proxy conflict, as both states compete for future access to scarce strategic resources, primarily in the African region.

China's economy has exploded in recent years, surpassing Japan to become the world's second largest economy (behind the United States) in the second quarter of 2010.[34] This gap is likely to decrease in the ongoing economic crisis; US growth remains sluggish, while China's is again 9 percent per annum. China has embarked on an ambitious program of military modernization, acquiring advanced offensive and defensive capabilities,[35] while US deficits are likely to result in reductions in defense expenditures, further decreasing the military capabilities gap.[36] China's economic and military might, coupled with its large population, point to its emergence as both a great power and a US peer competitor in the near future.

Volumes of scholarly literature detail China's rise to great-power status and the likely implications thereof.[37] Given its prodigious economic growth, it is natural to question whether such a rise will be accompanied by US-Sino conflict. Such an outcome is unlikely, primarily because of a return of nuclear parity within a bipolar environment.[38] There are concerns over China's increasing need for fuel imports to support its expanding infrastructure. China shows little concern with the political ideologies of regimes with which it trades; yet, its willingness to deal with states like Iran and Sudan could worsen relations with the United States.[39] China's ongoing military modernization also appears designed in part to deny the United States the ability to deter it in the near future through strategies focused primarily on interruptions of its oil supply via area denial or control of critical eastern sea lines of communication.

China is expanding its web of regional alliances via arms transfers and other inducements that may result in a wall of allies the United States will find difficult to penetrate to protect its interests in the Eastern Hemisphere.[40] China is also willing to protect those interests militarily where necessary; some aver the 1996 Taiwan crisis indicated China may be prepared to take Taiwan by force in a preemptive attack.[41] Yet, evidence suggests its neighbors welcome the economic opportunities China presents to them and believe its intentions are peaceful and focused on domestic stability and growth rather than regional dominance.[42] Since it is unlikely that any regional attempts to balance a rising China are forthcoming, at least in the near term, it falls to the United States as the peer competitor to do so. While US military preeminence is still clear, trends appear to indicate the United States will find it increasingly difficult to compete with China for strategic resource requirements as China's geostrategic influence expands.

Bipolarity, Nuclear Weapons, and Sino-US Proxy Conflict in Africa

It is likely China will achieve economic and then military parity with the United States in the next two decades. China currently possesses 240 nuclear warheads and 135 ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States or its allies; that number of nuclear warheads is estimated to double by the mid 2020s.[43] As during the Cold War, a bipolar system in which war between the United States and China is too costly will lead to policy decisions that seek conflict resolution elsewhere.[44] But why would China's rising necessarily lead to geostrategic competition with the United States, and where would this most likely occur? Unlike the Cold War, access to

strategic resources rather than ideology would lie at the heart of future US-Sino competition, and the new "great game" will most likely be played in Africa.

Despite Communist Party control of its government, China is not interested in spreading its version of communism and is much more pragmatic in its objectives—securing resources to meet the needs of its citizens and improve their standard of living.[45] Some estimates show that China will overtake the United States to become the world's largest economy by 2015, and rising powers usually take the necessary steps to "ensure markets, materials, and transportation routes."[46] China is the leading global consumer of aluminum, copper, lead, nickel, zinc, tin, and iron ore, and its metal needs now represent more than 25 percent of the world's total.[47] In contrast, from 1970 to 1995, US consumption of all materials, including metals, accounted for one-third of the global total despite representing only 5 percent of the world's population.[48] China is the largest energy consumer, according to the International Energy Agency, surpassing the United States in consumption of oil, coal, and natural gas in 2009.[49] As the two largest consumers of both global energy and materials, the United States and China must seek foreign policy prescriptions to fulfill future resource needs. While the United States can alleviate some of its energy needs via bio- or coal-based fuels, hydrogen, or natural gas alternatives, China currently lacks the technological know-how to do so and remains tied to a mainly nonrenewable energy resource base. Since the majority of these needs are nonrenewable, competition of necessity will be zero-sum and will be conducted via all instruments of power.[50]

Africa is home to a wealth of mineral and energy resources, much of which still remains largely unexploited. Seven African states possess huge endowments of oil, and four of these have equally substantial amounts of natural gas.[51] Africa also enjoys large deposits of bauxite (used to make aluminum), copper, lead, nickel, zinc, and iron ore, all of which are imported and highly desired by China. Recent activity serves to prove that China seeks greater access to natural resources in Africa by avidly promoting Chinese development in a large number of African nations. South Africa, the continent's largest economy, has recently allowed China to help develop its vast mineral wealth; it is China's number one African source of manganese, iron, and copper.[52] Chinese involvement in Africa is not wholly extractive; the continent provides a booming export market for China's goods and a forum to augment its soft power in the region by

offering alternatives to the political and economic baggage that accompanies US foreign aid.[53]

Of primary interest is open access to Africa's significant deposits of oil and other energy resources. For example, China has 4,000 military personnel in Sudan to protect its interests in energy and mineral investments there; it also owns 40 percent of the Greater Nile Oil Production Company.[54] Estimates indicate that within the next few decades China will obtain 40 percent of its oil and gas supplies from Africa.[55] Trade and investment in Africa have also been on the rise; trade has grown more than 10 percent annually in the past decade. Between 2002 and 2004, African exports to China doubled, ranking it third behind the United States and France in trade with the continent. Chinese investment is also growing; more than 700 Chinese business operations across Africa total over $1 billion. Aid and direct economic assistance are increasing as well, and China has forgiven the debt of some 31 African nations.[56]

Africa is thus a vital foreign interest for the Chinese and must be for the United States; access to its mineral and petroleum wealth is crucial to the survival of each.[57] Although the US and Chinese economies are tightly interconnected, the nonrenewable nature of these assets means competition will remain a zero-sum game. Nearly all African states have been independent entities for less than 50 years; consolidating robust domestic state institutions and stable governments remains problematic.[58] Studies have shown that weak governments are often prime targets for civil conflicts that prove costly to control.[59] Many African nations possess both strategic resources *and* weak regimes, making them vulnerable to internal conflict and thus valuable candidates for assistance from China or the United States to help settle their domestic grievances. With access to African resources of vital strategic interest to each side, competition could likely occur by proxy via diplomatic, economic, or military assistance to one (or both) of the parties involved.

Realist claims that focusing on third-world issues is misplaced are thus fallacious; war in a future US-China bipolar system remains as costly as it was during the Cold War. Because of the fragile nature of many African regimes, domestic grievances are more prone to result in conflict; US and Chinese strategic interests will dictate an intrusive foreign policy to be both prudent and vital. US-Sino proxy conflicts over control of African resources will likely become necessary if these great powers are to sustain their national security postures, especially in terms of strategic defense.[60]

What does this mean for the future of US grand and military strategy, foreign policy prescriptions, future defense acquisition priorities, and military doctrine and training?

Implications for the United States

The Obama administration's 2010 *National Security Strategy* (*NSS*) departed from the preceding administration's focus on preventive war and the use of the military to succeed in this effort. The new *NSS* focuses instead on international institutions and robust alliances to build a more peaceful world, a restructuring of the global economy, limiting the spread of WMDs, and combating terrorism. To do this, the 2010 *NSS* argues, the United States must "balance and integrate all elements of American power and update our national security capacity for the 21st century. We *must maintain our military's conventional superiority*, while enhancing its capacity to defeat asymmetric threats"[61] (emphasis added). All this is based on the assumption that the current unipolar international environment persists. If a new bipolar order arises in which Chinese competition for scarce resources represents the new status quo, future *NSS* submittals must reflect the nature of such competitive behavior.

The current US defense budget requires approximately $680 billion—more than all other nations combined. To support the current *NSS*, the *National Military Strategy* must focus on maintaining conventional military superiority by requiring the acquisition of military equipment that supports traditional force-on-force military operations.[62] Yet, the United States must ensure access to strategic resources as well, and if African subnational proxy conflict rises, national and military strategies must adapt to meet this future challenge. While current capabilities are necessary, current conventional strategies focus overly on fighting the last war. If the United States is to maintain access to the strategic resources it needs to sustain its place in the future global order, it must improve its ability to meet the asymmetric threats it may face in proxy conflicts in Africa, where foreign internal defense operations will dominate. The asymmetric nature of future conflict over African resources means defense acquisition must therefore focus on equipping and training military as well as civilian foreign internal defense teams. Both military and civilian doctrine must be altered to allow robust and effective interagency actions to meet the challenges of proxy conflict that will span the continuum of war from security

forces assistance, counterinsurgency, information, and combat operations to peace enforcement and postconflict stability efforts.

Recommendations

Conventional wisdom suggests the United States will benefit by ending its recent forays into counterinsurgency operations and returning to conventional war-fighting preparation to meet a rising China head on.[63] However, the likelihood of a direct militarized conflict between the United States and China is low, and nuclear war between the two is unthinkable. It is thus imperative the United States reduce its focus on maintaining conventional force superiority—it already outdistances anything that could challenge it in the near future. Instead it should better fund acquisition and training programs to deal with future asymmetric, subnational warfare. Advances in interagency support to foreign internal defense have been substantial, yet doctrinal improvements covering provincial reconstruction teams and interagency cooperation for combat and phase IV operations must continue. While US military forces have proven invaluable in the postconflict efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, resource constraints caused by the current financial crisis will undoubtedly force future defense cuts and require enhanced interagency involvement instead.

Reliance on conventional "business as usual" war fighting to meet the threat of a rising China will divert precious resources away from a looming crisis in US access to foreign strategic resources, especially in Africa. Tying financial aid to democratic institution building is also a failed strategy. Instead, the United States must employ its soft power to persuade African nations to work with it. The time to do so is now, before China's inroads in African states become insurmountable. If the United States is to secure its resource needs from Africa in the future, it must be prepared to employ all elements of hard and soft power to meet the demands of future proxy conflict on the continent.

Conclusion

The United States currently enjoys a unique position as the sole global superpower, yet it is unlikely this unipolar moment will endure much longer. China is uniquely positioned to translate rapidly expanding economic might into sufficient military resources to achieve regional hegemony.

To meet the needs of its growing population and burgeoning economy, China must focus on obtaining strategic resources abroad, and herein lies the challenge for US foreign policy makers. In a future bipolar system where a nuclear-equipped China and United States both require non-renewable strategic resources, competition for such resources will be a vital strategic interest for each side.

Scholars debate whether such strategic interests will necessitate conflict between the United States and China in the future, yet preparations for such conflict now dominate US defense policy. The alternative, strategically justified future is one of proxy wars with China for continued access to strategic resources, particularly in African states. While the United States should not reduce current preparations for conventional war-fighting dominance, prudence dictates that it also prepares for future proxy conflict management in Africa.

The ongoing financial crisis will undoubtedly force reductions in future defense spending if the United States is to reduce its national debt load. This will necessitate further strategic, military, and interagency doctrinal and training realignments if it is to be successful in meeting the challenges of future foreign internal defense operations in Africa and elsewhere. Preparations must begin soon if the United States is to overcome the looming challenge of strategic resource competition with China. A failure to plan for this proxy competition may well make a future war with China inevitable. SSQ

Notes

1. I define a unipolar system similarly to that in Christopher Layne's "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 5, wherein a single power possesses sufficient military and economic resources to preclude any attempts to balance against it.

2. Athens and Sparta are early examples, as are Philip II's Spain and France during the sixteenth century and Great Britain and France during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

3. See Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990); William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999); and Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War," *International Security* 21, no. 4 (1997). See also Stephen Brooks and William C. Wohlforth's defense of unilateralism in "International Relations Theory and the Case against Unilateralism," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005).

4. These predictions are cited by Christopher Layne in *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 134–35, by what

he terms "unipolar optimists" who argue that US hard power allows no likely counterbalancing because of the high costs involved.

5. One example is made in John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), in which he warns of the likelihood of a return of international conflict in multipolarity.

6. Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 5–51.

7. Although definitions of proxy conflict are varied, I find the one used by Dillon Craig in "State Security Policy and Proxy Wars in Africa: Ultima Ratio Regum: Remix or Redux?" *Strategic Insights* 9, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2010): 2, to be most useful.

8. See, for example, Alex Thomson, *An Introduction to African Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 160.

9. A detailed argument about the alleged stability of bipolar international systems can be found in Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1979).

10. Other instances of regional bipolarity (e.g., Athens vs. Sparta, 17th-century Spain vs. France) were also conflictual.

11. An evaluation and appraisal of the evolution of Cold War US grand strategy can be found in John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

12. Layne, *Peace of Illusions*, 176.

13. See, for example, John Mueller, "The Essential Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons: Stability in the Postwar World," *International Security* 13, no. 2 (1988): 56.

14. For example, see Jon Abbink, "Proxy Wars and Prospects for Peace in the Horn of Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 21, no. 3 (September 2003).

15. Conflict data were obtained from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Data Set, version v4-2009, http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/.

16. Ibid.

17. Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 90.

18. The United States and the Soviet Union were involved heavily in proxy conflicts in the first two decades following WWII; by the 1980s their level of involvement had dropped to less than 20 percent. Sources include John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 2006).

19. Realists such as Hans J. Morgenthau in *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978) and Kenneth Waltz in *Theory of International Politics* have argued against US involvement in third-world proxy wars.

20. An example of nonmilitary involvement can be found in US humanitarian efforts in Haiti, yet this endeavor has been blasted by Venezuela and France as a US occupation attempt. See Barron Youngsmith, "Proxy War: How Haiti Became a Battlefield for the Great Powers," *New Republic*, 30 January 2010. Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), also explains how soft power increases US security in the modern age.

21. Layne, *Peace of Illusions*, 28–38.

22. See Maria Nikolopoulou, *The Greek Civil War: Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004). US policy for the conflict was first outlined in President Truman's speech of 12 March 1947, when he stated that the United States should "make full use of its political, economic and, if necessary, military power in such a manner as may be found most effective to prevent Greece from falling under the domination of the USSR."

John O. Iatrides, "Britain, the United States and Greece, 1945–9," in *The Greek Civil War, 1943–50: Studies of Polarization*, ed. David H. Close (London: Routledge, 1993), 202.

23. Susanne Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and U.S. Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 70. Additional information is included in Guy Arnold, *Wars in the Third World since 1945* (London: Cassell Villiers House, 1995), 601.

24. Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 28. Corroborating information on US intentions was obtained from a speech by former secretary of state Alexander Haig to NATO on 18 February 1981 in which he states, "We consider what is happening is part of the global Communist campaign . . . to support the Marxists in El Salvador." Martin E. Gettleman, ed., *El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War* (New York: Grove Press, 1981). Also see Arnold, *Wars in the Third World*, 594–99. For the Nicaraguan civil war, see Roger Miranda and William Ratliff, *The Civil War in Nicaragua: Inside the Sandinistas* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993). Additional information was obtained from Arnold, *Wars in the Third World*, 616–20.

25. Thomson, *Introduction to African Politics*, 152–53, describes the evolution of Soviet support in Africa in its goal of expanding socialism on the continent.

26. William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (London: Zed Books, 1994); and Arnold, *Wars in the Third World*, 362–64.

27. Richard J. Bloomfield, ed., *Regional Conflict and U.S. Policy: Angola and Mozambique* (Algonac, MI: Reference Publications, 1988); and Arnold, *Wars in the Third World*, 400–11.

28. This is not to say proxy conflict was not present in the Middle East—US cash grants to Israel, CIA support to the Afghan mujahedeen, and the ouster of Mossadegh in Iran all supported US policies meant to disadvantage Western competition and forge a strategic alliance against the USSR, according to Beverley Milton-Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Conflict in the Middle East since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2001).

29. See, for example, John R. Thackrah, *The Routledge Companion to Military Conflict since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 32.

30. Ibid., 74.

31. Raymond W. Copson, *Africa's Wars and Prospects for Peace* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1994), 114–25. Although Soviet support was high through 1988, by 1990 the USSR no longer had the will to fund the conflict; both the United States and the USSR cut funding with the 1991 negotiated peace settlement.

32. Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* (Washington: Potomac Books, Inc., 2007), xi.

33. Data obtained from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Data Set, version v4-2009.

34. "China Overtakes Japan as World's Second-Biggest Economy," *Bloomberg News*, 16 August 2010, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-08-16/china-economy-passes-japan-s-in-second-quarter-capping-three-decade-rise.html.

35. Jonathan Pollack, "American Perceptions of Chinese Military Power," in *The China Threat: Perceptions, Myths and Reality*, eds. Ian Storey and Herbert Yee (New York: Routledge-Courzon, 2002), 44, outlines an array of Chinese military advances.

36. Aaron Friedberg, "Implications of the Financial Crisis for the US-China Rivalry," *Survival* 52, no. 4 (2010): 33–36, describes a wide range of effects resulting from the financial crisis on US-Chinese rivalries.

37. Jack S. Levy, "Power Transition Theory and the Rise of China," in *China's Ascent: Power, Security and the Future of International Politics*, eds. Robert S. Ross and Zhu Feng (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 32, argues China will challenge the United States in Asia, and to a lesser extent Africa, only until it develops sufficient power projection capability to expand

further. Zhu Feng, "China's Rise will be Peaceful: Unipolarity Matters," in ibid., 53, claims China's rise will be peaceful, using soft balancing against the United States in a unipolar construct.

38. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China: Power, Institutions and the Western Order," in *China's Ascent*, 92, shows how strengthening international institutions will force China to peaceably rise within them rather than mounting a challenge to the international order. Jonathan Kirschner in *China's Ascent*, 239, claims that while Sino-US economic tensions will sometimes be high, war is also unlikely over this issue.

39. Robert Kaplan, "The Geography of Chinese Power: How Far Can Beijing Reach on Land and at Sea?" *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (May/June 2010): 2, states that such actions are also conflictual in that they are shifting the balance of power in the Eastern Hemisphere, which "must mightily concern the United States."

40. Jacqueline Newmyer, "Oil, Arms and Influence: The Indirect Strategy behind Chinese Military Modernization," *Orbis*, Spring 2009, 207, also shows how Chinese military modernization will soon make US efforts to protect Taiwan too costly to consider and obviate the need for a Chinese use of force in such a conflict.

41. Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 189–91, describes Chinese offensive capabilities during this incident.

42. David Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 197–98, makes a strong case that regional balancing against China is thus unlikely.

43. Robert Norris and Hans Kristensen, "Chinese Nuclear Forces, 2010," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 66, no. 6 (2010): 134.

44. Aaron Friedberg, "The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?" *International Security* 30, no. 2 (2005): 17–19, argues that the costs of such conflict will cause both sides to carefully avoid direct conflict.

45. Kaplan, "Geography of Chinese Power," 2, argues China is anxious to secure energy, metals, and strategic minerals to meet these needs.

46. Friedberg, "Future of U.S.-China Relations," 17–19, also highlights China's potential for economic growth and its implications.

47. Kaplan, "Geography of Chinese Power," 4, notes that resource acquisition is "the primary goal of China's foreign policy everywhere."

48. Grecia Matos and Lorie Wagner, "Consumption of Materials in the United States, 1900–1995," *Annual Review of Energy and the Environment* 23 (November 1998): 107–22, http://pubs.usgs.gov/annrev/ar-23-107/aerdocnew.pdf.

49. Data obtained from the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission's 2010 Report to Congress, 183, http://www.uscc.gov/annual_report/2010/10report_chapters.php.

50. Friedberg, "Future of U.S.-China Relations," 19, shows how rising-power states such as China will take necessary steps to ensure access to required resources. He also states that disputes over these issues are "seldom resolved peacefully."

51. These states are Libya, Nigeria, Angola, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Reserve information was obtained from the *CIA World Factbook*, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/.

52. See "China to Help South Africa Develop Mineral Wealth," *Bloomberg News*, 25 August 2010.

53. Peter Lewis, "China in Africa," *Bretton Woods Committee* 2, no. 1 (2007): 1.

54. Bill Emmott, *Rivals: How the Power Struggle between China, India and Japan Will Shape our Next Decade* (Orlando, FL: Mariner Books, 2009), 53.

55. Jonathan Holslag and Sara Van Hoeymissen, "The Limits of Socialization: The Search for EU-China Cooperation towards Security Challenges in Africa," Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies policy report, 30 May 2010. China currently imports more than a quarter of its oil from Africa.

56. Economic data from Lewis, "China in Africa," 12.

57. Stephen Burgess argues that the United States has traditionally relied on free-market forces in Africa and elsewhere for access to its strategic resource needs; however, China's monopolistic practices in Africa mean that future access to these materials is no longer guaranteed and may be in serious jeopardy. Burgess, "Sustainability of Strategic Minerals in Southern Africa and Potential Conflicts and Partnerships," Air War College research paper, 4, http://www.usafa.edu/df/inss/Research%20Papers/2010/Report%20Burgess%20Southern%20Africa%20Strategic%20Minerals.pdf.

58. Note, for example, Tunisia's recent ouster of President Ben Ali and the recent antigovernment rebellion in Egypt.

59. Steven R. David, *Catastrophic Consequences: Civil Wars and American Interests* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), describes how such regimes provide fertile ground for civil wars.

60. Burgess, "Sustainability of Strategic Minerals," describes the US need for "defense critical materials," primarily available only from Africa, which the United States must have to maintain its national security. These include platinum, cobalt, chromium, and manganese, each of which is vital to US defense and civilian industrial sectors and found primarily in African states and in Russia. The lack of these materials would represent a critical loss in US ability to manufacture weapons and other defense systems and thus conceivably weaken US national security.

61. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington: The White House, May 2010), 6.

62. Examples include the F-35 joint strike fighter, *Virginia*-class submarines, and ballistic missile defense programs.

63. See, for example, Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., "The Pentagon's Wasting Assets: The Eroding Foundations of American Power," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 4 (July/August 2009), 28–33. Such "wasting assets" have implications for future US foreign policy as well, as outlined in Donna M. Oglesby, "Statecraft at the Crossroads: A New Diplomacy," *SAIS Review* 29, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2009): 94.