POWER AND SUPERPOWER:
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Strengthening Weak States: A 21st Century Imperative
Susan E. Rice
Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

A Changed Security Paradigm

Throughout the cold war period, successive U.S. administrations defined the vital national security interests of the United States in narrow strategic and geographic terms. Our aim was clear: to avert the existential threat of nuclear annihilation through deterrence and containment and to counter Soviet and communist influences in key regions – chiefly Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Only to the extent that superpower competition spread to more distant battlefields did the U.S. evince much strategic interest in parts of Africa and Latin America. Major threats were those that risked the very survival of our country, and such threats emanated almost exclusively from other states – the Soviet Union and its communist proxies.

The post-cold war world is fundamentally different; so, too, is the nature of the threats we face. The Soviet Union is gone. The proxy wars fought across the globe have ended. The United States stands unrivalled in military and economic power. The risk of nuclear annihilation is reduced, though by no means eliminated. The world is fundamentally a safer place.

Yet, ours is still a dangerous world. It is more complex and less predictable. Real threats persist, but their origins and consequences are more diffuse. Today, fewer of the principal threats to U.S. national security are existential in the cold war sense, with the crucial exception of nuclear terrorism. Few, as well, derive primarily from states. Certainly Iran, North Korea, and possibly China are states with growing potential to threaten the U.S. in fundamental ways. Yet, despite botched U.S. policies toward Iran and North Korea, it is not inevitable that these countries will pose major challenges to U.S. security in the future.

Current risks to U.S. national security extend well beyond the handful that are state based or that have potentially existential consequences. Foremost among the challenges we face are transnational security threats -- those that cannot be limited to individual states. They include terrorism, weapons proliferation (of both small arms and weapons of mass destruction), conflict, infectious disease, international crime and narcotics flows, and environmental degradation.

These transnational phenomena threaten U.S. national security because they have the potential to kill significant numbers of Americans – whether swiftly or over an extended period of time. If there was once doubt that the definition of a threat to U.S. national security had changed after the cold war, September 11, 2001, effectively ended that debate. When we lost three thousand Americans in four heinous acts of terror committed by a transnational terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, the United States declared "war on terrorism." Our goal was both to avenge our compatriots' deaths and to eliminate Al Qaeda's ability to execute comparable or more deadly acts of terror in the future. The U.S. government determined that the loss of three thousand American lives

at the hands of a hostile foreign agent is a threshold constituting casus belli. Americans broadly supported that determination and a robust military response, whether in the name of prevention, preemption or retaliation.

So what is the appropriate minimum threshold for decisive U.S. action to avert or respond to a loss of American lives resulting from non-hostile external agents – disease, natural disasters exacerbated by environmental degradation, international criminal acts or narcotics trafficking? This question warrants careful consideration, as we weigh the adequacy of steps taken to prepare for a potential avian flu pandemic or to rebuild the levees in New Orleans. The transnational security threats we presently confront may take various forms, but all have the potential to result in thousands of American deaths. Countering these new threats is more complex than addressing their cold war antecedents, because none is wholly amenable -- and some are not even partially amenable -- to the threat or use of force.

No longer, moreover, are Europe, the Middle East and Asia the principal theaters of enduring strategic relevance. Transnational security threats, by definition, can emanate from any part of the world. Often, in fact, they emerge from relatively remote and poor regions of the world. They thrive particularly in conflict and lawless zones and where corruption is rife.

In a swiftly globalizing world, characterized by the rapid, international movement of people, goods, funds, and information, threats can traverse the planet with dangerous speed. Today, more than two million people cross an international border each day. Between 1950 and 2003, air traffic volume surged from twenty-eight billion passenger-

kilometers flown to 2.99 trillion passenger-kilometers.[1] Over the past four decades, total

seaborne trade is estimated to have more than quadrupled, from less than six trillion ton-

miles in 1965 to twenty-five trillion ton-miles in 2003.[2] These factors combine to render

Americans more vulnerable to seemingly far away phenomena: an avian flu epidemic in

Cambodia or Burkina Faso or an outbreak of Marburg virus in Angola; the theft of

biological or nuclear materials from poorly secured facilities in the former Soviet Union;

narcotics traffickers in Tajikistan and criminal syndicates from Nigeria; and, eventually,

flooding and other effects of global warming exacerbated by long-term deforestation and

tree burning in the Amazon and Congo River basins. At a minimum, such forces could

inflict major damage on the U.S. economy. In a worst case scenario, such as a deadly

pandemic, they could result in the loss of hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of

American lives.

Why Weak States Matter

Given the significance of transnational security threats, weak states matter more

than ever to U.S. national security. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wrote:

…the greatest threats to our security are defined more by the dynamics

within weak and failing states than by the borders between strong and

aggressive ones. The phenomenon of weak and failing states is not new, but

the danger they now pose is unparalleled….   Absent responsible state

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[1] International Civil Aviation Organization. ICAO Statistics. Available online at: www.icao.int
[2] International Maritime Organization, "Background Paper: International Shipping - Carrier of World
Trade," accessed on June 15, 2006,
http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D13168/backgroundpaper%28E%29.pdf.

authority, threats that would and should be contained within a country's borders can now melt into the world and wreak untold havoc."[3]

The world's weakest states are typically poor states that lack the capacity to fulfill essential government functions.[4] The drivers of state weakness vary enormously from state to state. Poverty fundamentally erodes state capacity—by fueling conflict, sapping human capital, by hollowing out or impeding the development of effective state institutions, and by creating especially conducive environments for corrupt governance. Though poverty underlies state weakness, weakness is also a consequence of other capacity deficits: lack of political legitimacy; lack of competence in economic governance and in the adequate provision of essential services to the population; and lack of security as evidenced by conflict and instability. Each of these capacity gaps can, in turn, exacerbate poverty.[5]

The preponderance of the world's weakest states is found in Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia.[6] They include: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros,

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[3] Condoleezza Rice, "The Promise of Democratic Peace," *Washington Post*, December 11, 2005.

[4] "Poor states" are defined according to the World Bank's income group classification of "low income" (GNI per capita of $825 or less) or "lower middle income" (GNI per capita between $826 and $3,255).

[5] For an elaboration on the linkages between poverty and state weakness and the resultant consequences for U.S. national security, see: Susan Rice, "The Threat of Global Poverty," *The National Interest*, 83 (Spring 2006). States that meet the "low income" classification are considered weak if they are deficient in at least two of the three fundamental government functions. States that are classified as "lower middle income" are considered weak if they are deficient in all three functions. If "lower middle income" states are currently hot spots of conflict but do not meet the criteria for lack of available, up-to-date, independent data, they are also identified as weak, (i.e. Iraq).

[6] This analysis is part of an ongoing collaboration between the Brookings Institution and the Center for Global Development led by Susan E. Rice and Stewart Patrick. Their project examines the relationship between weak states and transnational security threats. The weakest states include: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Togo, Timor Leste, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Togo, Timor Leste, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These include the subset of weak states that are failed states or in conflict. They encompass, additionally, many fragile states emerging from conflict within the past fifteen years, several illegitimate regimes, and states that are newly legitimate but still lack the ability to achieve sustained gains in human development. There is a second tier of fragile states, less impoverished than the weakest or slightly more capable of governance, that nonetheless bear close U.S. scrutiny, support and attention because they may serve as significant breeding grounds for transnational security threats. Among these are Egypt, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iran, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

When weak states fall into conflict, they create the optimal anarchic environment in which transnational predators can operate. Most dangerous, potentially, are failed states like Somalia and Afghanistan. These are weak states wracked by conflict that lose the ability to exercise effective control over much of their territory and resources.

Yet, weak states need not collapse into conflict or fail before they pose significant risks to their own citizens, and ultimately, albeit often indirectly, to American citizens. That is because weak states can function passively as potential incubators and conveyor belts for terrorists, criminal enterprises and, perhaps most significantly, for deadly infectious diseases.

Lacking adequate capacity to control their territory, borders and coastlines, weak states often house "ungoverned spaces" -- remote areas that can provide safe havens, training grounds and recruiting fields for terrorist or criminal networks. Such states often lack well-equipped and trained immigration and border control personnel. They must contend with under-resourced police, military, judiciary, and financial systems, which may facilitate exploitation by transnational predators. Difficult or mountainous terrain and corruption make many weak states even more vulnerable. Al Qaeda has preyed on the territory, cash crops, natural resources, and financial institutions of low-income, weak states from Mali to Yemen. Militants exploited lax immigration, security, and financial controls to plan and carry out terrorist operations in Kenya, Tanzania and Indonesia. It is estimated that Al Qaeda and its affiliates operate in approximately sixty countries worldwide. Terrorist groups have also forged tactical alliances with transnational criminals, smugglers and pirates operating in lawless zones from the Somali coast to Central Asia. International criminal syndicates pocket billions each year from illegal trafficking in drugs, hazardous waste, humans, endangered species, and weapons, often in weak states.

Weak states wracked by poverty also often lack the capacity to provide for the essential human needs of their people. In low-income countries, government services are often inadequate, creating voids in education and health that may be filled by radical elements within mosques, nongovernmental organizations or madrassas. In Africa's Sahel region, Egypt, Somalia, the Palestinian Territories, and Bangladesh, international Islamic charities are filling the social welfare gap. Global terrorist networks have used legitimate and illegitimate charities to garner popular support.

Weak states also struggle to establish basic health infrastructure and disease surveillance capacity. They often have only very limited capacity to detect, contain, and treat disease outbreaks in a timely fashion and thus to halt their spread abroad. The leap of the SARS virus from China to Canada in 2003 underscores the role that inadequate health care infrastructure and unaccountable governments can play in exacerbating disease outbreaks, which may ultimately impact North America. Similarly, the chance of a mutated form of H5N1 avian flu virus spreading abroad before it is detected may be substantially greater, if the first wave of robust human to human transmission occurs in a weak Asian or African nation. The apparently lengthy lag-time between the outbreak of H5N1 in Nigerian poultry stocks and the subsequent notification of federal and international authorities in February 2006 likely enabled the virus to spread to neighboring Niger, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso before being detected.

The economic, health and security consequences of such weak links in the global public health chain are potentially as dire for developed countries as they have proved deadly in the developing world.

New Security Imperatives: State Will and State Capacity

To fully adapt our perception of the predominant security challenges we face, the U.S. must recognize that relatively few threats are still state based. Most are now transnational. Thus, we must craft and implement comprehensive, long-term strategies for combating and mitigating these new threats -- a process that has barely started.

How can the United States possibly protect its territory and citizens from the many and diffuse transnational threats, which can emerge from any corner of the planet?

Put simply, we cannot – not through our own efforts alone. The U.S. cannot withdraw into a shell that keeps out the threats – natural and man-made -- that impact other parts of the globe. We cannot predict, detect, contain or kill every terrorist, criminal kingpin or virus that could inflict great harm on Americans. Our intelligence, our military assets, our financial resources and our public's patience are not sufficient to enable the U.S. to address these challenges alone, even if we were foolish enough to try.

To tackle transnational threats, the U.S. needs help. Specifically, we require the effective cooperation and assistance of as many other states as possible – developed and underdeveloped, weak and strong – to manage and reduce transnational threats. Crucially, these other states must deem it in their interest to act against transnational threats, including by collaborating directly with the U.S.

Thus, we need to maximize the number of states around the world with both the will and capacity to cooperate in our mutual interest to combat such threats.

We must start by recognizing that the U.S. faces a world characterized by significant deficits of both state will and state capacity. The willingness of many states to cooperate with the United States (both at the governmental and popular level) has been severely eroded by negative perceptions of the U.S. Globalization has exacerbated this trend. Many in less developed countries (and increasingly the less affluent in our own) view globalization as benefiting primarily the rich at the expense of the poor. This perception is fueled by the rapid and near universal information flows that reveal growing global income disparities, as well as by the stark contrast between life in the developed world and the enormous threats to human security in the poorest countries of the world. The spread of democracy, which accelerated after the end of the cold war, makes such

sentiments more powerful determinants of other countries' policies and attitudes toward the U.S. than ever before.

Lack of state capacity poses an even more intractable challenge. Weak states that cannot control their resources or territory effectively, nor provide for the essential needs of their citizens, create actual or potential security voids. Building the capacity of weak states to be effective partners in combating transnational threats is a central security imperative for the U.S. in the twenty-first century.

To address deficits of state will and state capacity that can spawn or incubate transnational threats will require marked changes in the purposes and practice of U.S. foreign policy. It will also necessitate a policy vision that aims, in partnership with others, to increase freedom and prosperity for peoples and states in all corners of the globe.

Building State Will

President Kennedy gave life to this theme in his 1961 inaugural address, stating: "To those peoples in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required — not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."[7] Yet, tragically, events overtook John F. Kennedy before he could begin to bring his vision to fruition. Subsequently, the fundamental

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[7] John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1961.

premise – that the U.S. benefits when others do well – has never formed the foundation for U.S. foreign policy. It is long past time that it should.

On the contrary, Kennedy's notion appears more radical with each passing decade. Sadly, America today is viewed by many in the world as a unilateralist hegemon. The 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Project survey of fourteen foreign countries found that public attitudes towards the U.S. remain largely unfavorable and continue to worsen. The U.S. is viewed negatively by substantial majorities in France (60%), Germany (60%), Spain (73%), Egypt (69%), Turkey (76%), Indonesia (67%), Pakistan (56%), Jordan (85%) and among Nigerian Muslims (68%). In twelve of fourteen countries, the U.S. military presence in Iraq is viewed as a greater danger to Middle East stability and to world peace than Iran.[8] Another Pew poll taken in fifteen nations in 2005 found that 72.8% of foreign publics believed it would be better if another country rivaled U.S. military power.[9]

U.S. policies have reinforced such negative perceptions. President George W. Bush and senior U.S. officials have variously: employed divisive rhetoric -- "you are with us or with the terrorists"; demonstrated hostility or ambivalence towards critical multilateral institutions (UN, NATO); abandoned important international treaties (International Criminal Court, Kyoto Protocol, Biological Weapons Convention); elevated preemption from an option to a doctrine and reserved it exclusively for the United States; punished our friends for upholding their sovereign rights (Article 98 Agreements); and invaded Iraq without the support of the international community on the basis of faulty intelligence and distorted threat assessments. Rather than leading by

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[8] "No Global Warming Alarm in the U.S., China. America's Image Slips, But Allies Share U.S. Concerns Over Iran, Hamas," *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, June 13, 2006.
[9] "American Character Gets Mixed Reviews," *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, June 23, 2005.

inspiring the world to join together to fight common enemies, we have challenged the world to support U.S. priorities and U.S. actions without reservation. Rarely, if ever, has international support for the U.S. been so low. Yet, never has the U.S. so urgently needed broad and effective international cooperation.

To correct our course, we must begin by changing both the tone and the substance of America's international leadership. By doing so, we will advance our own economic and security interests, which in a globalizing world we cannot accomplish alone. Crucially, we must motivate others to join with us rather than resent us, cower from us, or seek to counterbalance us.

What would new American leadership entail?

To the greatest extent possible, the U.S. must consistently adhere to our core national principles of democracy and respect for the rule of law in our actions at home and abroad. Our efforts to isolate human rights abusers or seed democracy in other countries are weakened when we fail to model the practices we preach. When the U.S. government takes actions that offend civil liberties and human rights, such as detaining American citizens for years without charge, torturing detainees, or killing Iraqi civilians while failing to hold senior leaders accountable, we erode the moral basis of our leadership. President Bush declared that "…it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."[10] Yet, the U.S. effectively punished the Palestinian people for the expression of their democratic will and fails to

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[10] George W. Bush, "Second Inaugural Address," January 20, 2005.

protest with any vigor dramatic setbacks to democratic progress in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Such inconsistency fuels suspicion of U.S. motives and perceptions of U.S. hypocrisy.

Most importantly, the U.S. must act on the recognition that, if we want others to work with us to counter the gravest threats we face, then we must devote serious effort and resources to helping eliminate the most proximate threats to the security of other peoples. Anti-U.S., transnational Islamic terrorism, combined with the possibility that terrorists could obtain weapons of mass destruction, may pose an existential threat to the U.S. But, for the vast majority of the people in the world, this prospect seems distant indeed. Billions are threatened most immediately and directly by conflict, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and grinding poverty, which can kill through malnutrition, polluted water, and the lack of immunizations or treatment for preventable diseases (e.g. diarrhea, iodine deficiency, maternal and neonatal tetanus).

While the U.S. is a net beneficiary of globalization, we must contend with the domestic and international economic, political and security disparities that globalization has arguably exacerbated and undoubtedly laid bare. The U.S. does little to build good will or foster cooperation in many parts of the world when we are seen to spend over four times more each month in Iraq than we spend in an entire year to fight HIV/AIDS – a scourge which kills approximately three times more people each day than died in the attacks of September 11th. [11] Nor do we win hearts and minds by spending, along with other rich countries, $350 billion annually on agricultural subsidies that choke off the

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[11] According to the *Washington Post* (4/27/06), the Congressional Research Service estimates total U.S. costs for the war in Iraq in 2006 will amount to roughly $8.5 billion per month. By contrast, the State Department estimates the U.S. will spend $1.975 billion in FY 2006 to fight the global AIDS pandemic.

livelihood of poor farmers in the developing world, while we devote less than one-seventh of that amount to development assistance.

Such disparities contribute to the proliferation of "hostile have-nots" -- people and governments that, out of indifference or more often resentment, come to view U.S. success as their loss, and our loss as their success. Yet, it is the United States that loses when educated young Muslim men turn to radicalism after abandoning hope for a good job or a bright future. It is the U.S. that loses when fragile states like Pakistan cannot keep terrorists out of their territories, even if they wanted to. The U.S. loses when Saudi citizens feel repressed by a corrupt regime that the United States supports. We lose when poor governance and weak healthcare infrastructure in Vietnam allows avian flu to spread for months undetected.

Instead, the U.S. needs visionary leadership informed by John F. Kennedy's understanding that we win when others win. To minimize international antipathy towards the U.S., reinvigorate U.S. leadership, and earn the willing cooperation of other states to join with us in combating transnational threats, we must expand the "global winners' circle." This is the body of countries and peoples that enjoy the fruits of, and thus have a stake in a cooperative international system characterized by the rule of law, a market-based global economy and greater collective security. Our aim in expanding the winners' circle must not be to triumph in an international popularity contest but rather to enhance our economic and national security.

Doing so requires that the United States invest aggressively in enhancing the human security, freedom, and economic opportunity of others, particularly peoples in the poorest parts of the developing world. New American leadership would aim to maximize

global public goods – peace and stability, economic opportunity and growth, public health, democracy, and respect for human rights. With our allies, we must commit to foster more and more societies with the will and the means to pursue with us shared security objectives.

Building State Capacity

Much of this can be accomplished by strengthening and sustaining the capacity of weak states to govern legitimately and effectively. Building the ranks of states that can control their territory and resources and provide adequately for their own people should be viewed as a central and pressing goal for U.S. and international policy makers. Unfortunately, there is no consensus on how to do so, much less comprehensive U.S. and multilateral strategies for achieving this goal. This hugely complex challenge is one that American and foreign officials are just beginning to confront.

Its complexity is a function of multiple factors. First, the drivers of state weakness vary enormously from state to state. Poverty erodes state capacity — by fueling civil conflict, sapping human capital, hollowing out or impeding the development of effective state institutions, and by creating especially conducive environments for corrupt governance. A 2005 study by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development showed that a country at $250 GDP per capita has an average fifteen percent risk of internal conflict over five years, while a country at five thousand dollars per capita has a risk of less than one percent.[12] While poverty underlies state weakness, weakness is also a consequence, variously, of lack of legitimacy, lack of

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[12] U.K. Department for International Development, *Fighting Poverty to Build a Safer World: A Strategy for Security and Development,* March, 2005. See also Paul Collier, "The Market for Civil War," *Foreign Policy* (May/June 2003).

competence to perform adequately in delivering essential services to the population, as well as of conflict and instability. Each of these capacity deficits can, in turn, exacerbate poverty.

Figure 1. State Capacity Deficits
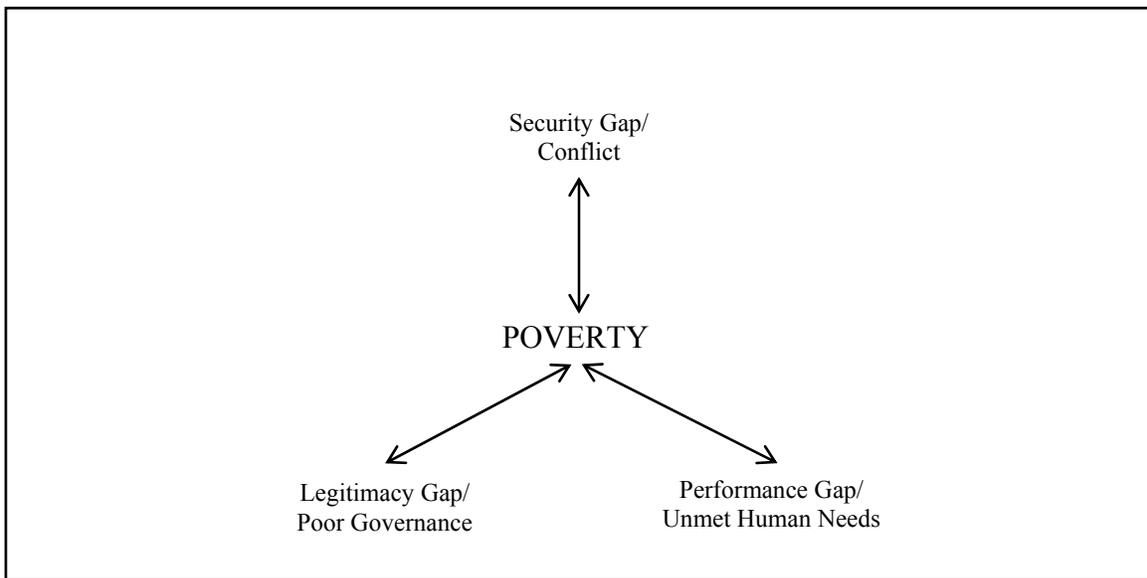
Understanding how these elements of state weakness reinforce one another both in generic terms and in specific states is a crucial first step in designing effective policy responses.

Second, it is essential to differentiate among the several types of weak states. Policy makers must define with greater precision the distinct characteristics of this disparate collection of potentially problematic countries, which range from the fully failed to the poor, but relatively stable and well-governed. Weak states can be classified into one of four categories: autocracies; conflict countries; countries transitioning from conflict or autocracy; and fragile, young democracies that appear on a path to sustainable security, if not yet broad based development. These classifications are admittedly fluid, and some states may not fall squarely into any single category but rather straddle the grey areas between or among them. Nonetheless, the objective of U.S. and international policy (as illustrated below) should be to help weak states move from conflict and autocracy, through post-conflict or post-autocratic transitional periods, to the more stable stage of fragile, functioning democracy. The ultimate goal should be to build the ranks of capable states -- like Brazil, Chile, Romania, Poland, Thailand, Botswana, and Mauritius -- that attain at least middle-income status, consolidate democracy and achieve lasting peace (for at least a generation), while contributing constructively to the international system.

Figure 2. Weak States Differ Dramatically…
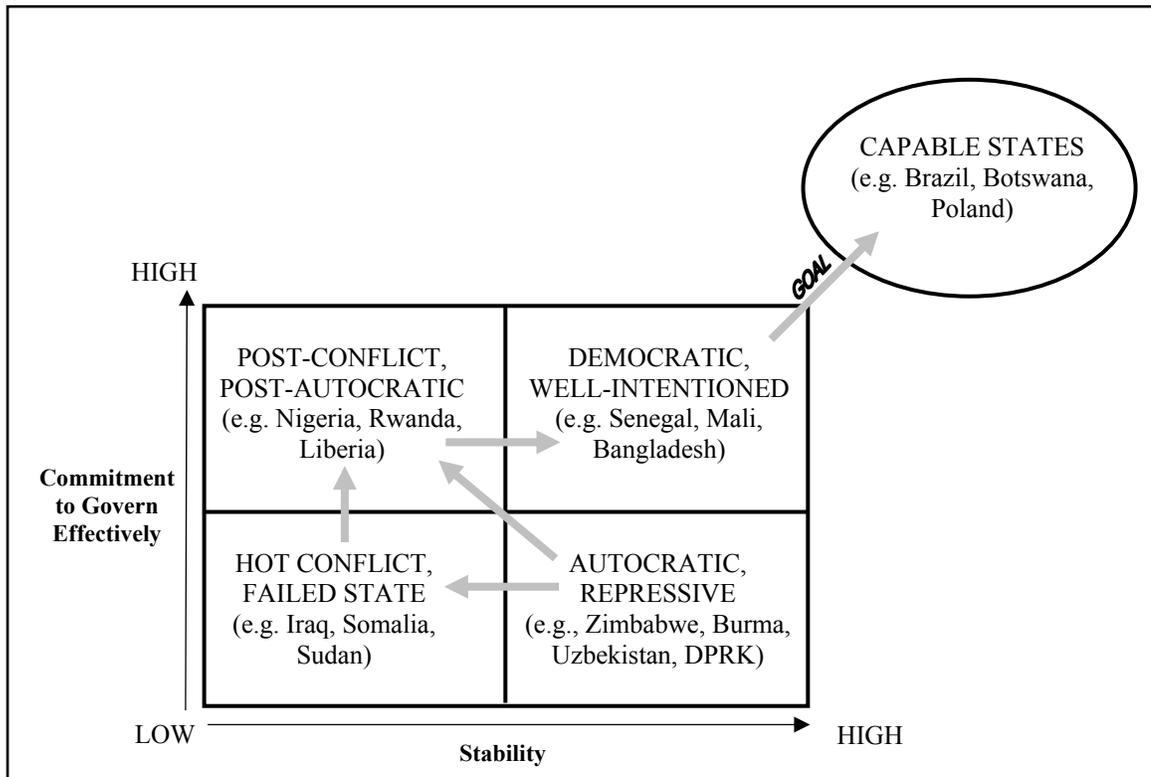
Third, the nature of the state capacity-building challenge and appropriate international policy strategies also differ among the four types of states, which are at various stages of stability and commitment to effective governance. The challenge for the United States, the UN, the international financial institutions, OECD countries, and our development partners is to construct agreed-upon theories of state capacity building in different contexts that are based on a shared policy framework. Thereafter, they must to work together to apply those theories flexibly in a tailored fashion that takes account of individual state contexts.

Viable external policy approaches must dovetail with target countries' particular political and security circumstances. For instance, the World Bank cannot successfully support long-term development projects in a hot conflict zone. The United States cannot

credibly fund development through state organs in a dictatorship. Nor would it typically be appropriate for the United States to build the security sector of an autocracy or state at war, though it may be wise for the United States to do so in a post-conflict environment or a nascent democracy. Immediate post-conflict states have different capacity-building challenges than those with some track record of stability and democracy. In short, we must adapt our security, political, and economic assistance to the nature of the state we seek to strengthen. Below are illustrative policy approaches tailored to each of the four categories of weak state.

Figure 3. ... And Require Different Policy Approaches

	TRANSITIONAL	DEMOCRATIC
HIGH	• Bolster stability and security via PKOs and international support for elections • Provide "democracy dividends" (e.g. debt relief, reconstruction assistance etc.) • Build governance capacity in state institutions; train security forces • Support freedom of the press • Phase assistance to peak at roughly year-five, when absorption capacity is improved	• Invest robustly in poverty reduction strategies via trade, investment, private sector development • Bolster democratic institutions, freedom of the press, multi-partyism • Support human capital development (e.g. health, education, agriculture) • Help deepen government capacity • Professionalize state security institutions
	HOT CONFLICT	AUTOCRATIC
	• Aggressive diplomacy and use of incentives/pressure to resolve conflict • Humanitarian intervention and/or Peace/stability operations • Humanitarian assistance • Develop civil society, local governments • Prepare to invest in post-conflict stability and reconstruction operations	• Build civil society and grassroots capacity • Apply diplomatic/economic incentives and pressures to change regime behavior • Support basic human needs through international organizations and NGOs • Align U.S. and international policies with aspirations of the people

Commitment to Govern Effectively (vertical axis, LOW to HIGH)

Stability (horizontal axis, LOW to HIGH)

Particularly intractable are the challenges posed by autocratic, highly corrupt states that appear frustratingly stable and whose leaders are masters of maintaining the status quo. It may be tempting to write such states off as too difficult or too unsavory to address in any constructive way. Yet, that approach, as advocated by some democracy and human rights advocates, is shortsighted. However odious a given regime, the United States would be foolish to consign its people to perpetual purgatory. Working with NGOs, multilateral institutions and others, the United States must pursue ways to seed positive change within the very real constraints imposed by repressive regimes. Such strategies could combine humanitarian assistance and support for basic human needs with the application of appropriate diplomatic and economic pressures and incentives, as well as investments in civil society, grassroots organizations and local institutions. The overarching U.S. goal should be to position itself on the side of oppressed populations so that when change finally and, perhaps, suddenly comes (as in Nigeria in 1998), the United States is viewed as a constructive and morally unambiguous partner for peace, democracy, and development.

Fourth, not all weak states matter equally to U.S. national security. Some weak states are more significant real or potential incubators of transnational security threats than others. Given resource and policy constraints, the U.S. cannot expect to influence positive change with equal intensity or effect in each of more than fifty states. We must apply clear analysis to make rational choices about policy and country priorities. Unfortunately, this kind of analysis has long been lacking.[13] So while it may be

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[13] To address this analytical gap, the Brookings Institution and Center for Global Development, under the leadership of Susan E. Rice and Stewart Patrick, are engaged in a project to assess the significance to the U.S. of the spill-over consequences of various transnational security threats that are manifest in or may emanate from weak states.

reasonable for U.S. policy makers to posit that the United States should devote more effort and resources to Pakistan, Nigeria and Yemen than to Comoros, Guinea Bissau or the Solomon Islands, it is harder to judge without comprehensive analysis whether Ethiopia or Kenya, Cameroon or Cambodia, pose more significant security challenges to the United States. The answers to such questions are too important to be divined through even educated guesswork.

The Way Ahead

In the wake of September 11th, U.S. officials began to acknowledge the significance of weak states to U.S. security. The 2002 National Security Strategy stated: "…weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states." Yet, five years after the World Trade Center attacks, the Bush Administration still lacks a coherent and comprehensive policy to build either the will or the capacity of weak states. Its approach to date has been disjointed. USAID issued in 2005 a "fragile states" strategy, but its funds are being diverted away from programs that might be relevant in such states to higher-performing Millennium Challenge countries. The Department of Defense (DOD) has developed its own very different framework for dealing with "ungoverned spaces," but lacks the tools, authorities and, increasingly, the credibility to implement the crucial nonmilitary aspects of state building. The State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization established in 2004 is working to identify and respond to states at risk, but is struggling to attain bureaucratic stature and relevance and, worse still, to secure sufficient funding from Congress to fulfill its mission. The National Security Council (NSC) is the logical locus

to guide the formulation and coordination of complex policies among competing agencies. Yet, National Security Presidential Directive 44, issued in December 2005, gave the State Department leadership on both policy formulation and implementation for issues relating to reconstruction and stabilization. The risk is that State will be unable to compel other agencies to conform to its guidance, as is often the case. Finally, in Congress, few lawmakers grasp the importance of state weakness to U.S. national security and fewer still are prepared to make the investments necessary to address it. In sum, there is no coordinated or effective U.S. strategy to strengthen states at risk.

A comprehensive, long-term U.S. strategy that helps transform weak states into willing, capable partners is overdue and urgently needed. Such a strategy should build upon and incorporate the experience and resources of multilateral institutions, regional organizations, OECD donors and developing countries. It should also encompass the following elements:

1) Elevating state capacity building to a key pillar of U.S. national security policy.

It is not enough to recognize the risks to U.S. security that weak states pose. The United States must tackle the challenge of weak states directly and effectively. This requires that we change fundamentally our twentieth century conceptions of national security to encompass transnational threats – including terrorism, weapons proliferation, conflict, infectious disease, international crime and narcotics flows, and environmental degradation – and that we adapt our national security strategy to focus on new realities.

More concretely, the U.S. Administration and Congress should shift U.S. government attention and resources. The NSC should coordinate the crafting of U.S.

strategy for dealing with weak states. The intelligence community should be directed to substantially increase the resources it devotes to collection and analysis of the internal, regional, and international dynamics that could impact the stability, governance, and development of weak states. The State Department, which in the current bureaucratic configuration is best placed to lead implementation of the strategy, should establish an Undersecretary position with responsibility for state building (above S/CRS) and be given the authority to program development, democracy, and security assistance funds that support all aspects of conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction.   In the aggregate, U.S. assistance has increased significantly in recent years. However, much of that increase has gone to emergency humanitarian assistance and to a few high profile post-conflict countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Liberia). The bulk of the remainder is slated for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the President's HIV/AIDS initiative. The losers have been weak states in the middle – neither hot conflict zones nor top performers – whose development assistance has been slashed. It is unwise to establish to great fanfare the MCC for high-performing countries while effectively reducing assistance to many states with marginal or poor performance. Rather, we need effective and adequately resourced approaches that can lay the foundation for strengthening the weakest and most problematic states, while solidifying the progress of those on the right track.

2) Properly Diagnosing the Drivers of State Weakness.

To the extent the Bush Administration has offered publicly any insight into its theory of how to confront state weakness, it has suggested that lack of democracy is the

key driver. Secretary Rice maintains: "Our experience of this new world leads us to conclude that the fundamental character of regimes matters more today than the international distribution of power.... Supporting the growth of democratic institutions in all nations is not some moralistic flight of fancy; it is the only realistic response to our present challenges."[14] This perspective oversimplifies very complex challenges. Poor governance is indeed an important element of state weakness; yet, it is not the only one. If all weak states were to become democracies tomorrow, they would not necessarily become capable states. Moreover, studies indicate that fragile, new democracies are among the countries most prone to conflict, instability and failure.[15] Largely missing from current U.S. policy is adequate recognition of the role of poverty, underdevelopment, and conflict in fueling and sustaining state weakness. "Democratic transformation," while important for many moral and political reasons, will not suffice to fill the significant capacity gaps that characterize weak states.

3) Building State Will.

It is as necessary to build political will as it is to build state capacity. U.S. policy makers must accept the reality that many countries and peoples are not prepared at present to willingly join the U.S. in pursuing our security interests. U.S. leaders should also recognize that state will to cooperate with the U.S. on transnational challenges, is much more than a function of democratic governance. It is a function, at least in part, of the nature of U.S. leadership and U.S. policies. We cannot assume that democracies, however friendly, will wish to cooperate with the United States on key aspects of our

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[14] Condoleezza Rice, "The Promise of Democratic Peace," *Washington Post,* December 11, 2005.
[15] Daniel C. Esty, et al., *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase II Findings*, July 31, 1998.

foreign policy. From Canada to Mexico, South Africa to France, Bolivia to New Zealand, democratically elected governments have chosen to varying degrees to oppose important aspects of U.S. policy and withhold their fullest cooperation on security issues we deem important.

To build state will, the U.S. must show as much respect for the sovereign equality of other responsible states, as we demand for our own. We must forge new, shared conceptions of collective security that explicitly include human security. The United States must also fashion a fresh approach to its global leadership that aims to inspire rather than intimidate others. The United States should consult widely and be prepared to accept the wise counsel of other peoples and governments. In short, we must build relations in a spirit of genuine partnership and mutual interest, not implicit U.S. superiority.

4) Learning the Lessons of Past Nation-Building Efforts.

While the U.S. and other concerned international actors still lack their own, much less any shared framework for building state capacity, their collective knowledge is considerable. Over the past twenty years, the UN, the United States, and others have gained enormous experience with complex political transitions involving post-conflict peace building or post-autocracy democracy building. This experience is invaluable, because it applies to the unavoidable and indispensable transitional stage through which the world's weakest and most problematic states must pass to embark on the path to sustainable security, development, and democracy. Unfortunately, this large and growing body of experience has not prevented the United States, UN, and others from repeating

past mistakes or making entirely new ones. Yet, the international community's overall record in "nation building" should not be caricatured by high profile failures such as in Somalia and Iraq. Nor should we be deterred from tackling these crucial challenges by setbacks in places like Afghanistan, Haiti, East Timor or Cambodia. There is ample evidence that internationally assisted post-conflict peace building and post-autocratic democracy building can succeed in some cases, as the UN's record in Mozambique, Namibia, El Salvador and South Africa affirms. In other cases, while the jury may still be out, progress has been unmistakable -- as in the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, and Liberia. A fundamental policy challenge is to better understand what works well and why and to apply those lessons effectively in future political transitions. This should be among the principal contributions of the newly established UN Peace-Building Commission.

5) Coordinating and Collaborating with International Partners.

Strengthening weak states is not something the United States can or should try to accomplish alone. Along with our OECD partners, multilateral and regional institutions (e.g. the African Union), and fragile states, we have a common interest in catalyzing and helping to sustain peace, democracy and development in all parts of the world. Thus, the U.S. should harmonize its policies, make synergistic investments, and determine appropriate divisions of labor among OECD players and international institutions. For example, perhaps the European Union should serve as the lead external partner in certain states and make major investments accordingly. Or, perhaps, the United States should

define its comparative advantage as a global leader in a few key sectors, such as health, education or agricultural innovation, while leaving other sectors to other donors.

Striking and implementing such bargains requires the United States to renew its efforts to adapt and strengthen international alliances, treaties and institutions rather than sideline or destroy multilateral infrastructure. The UN, NATO and Bretton Woods institutions often prove useful and necessary vehicles to advance U.S. policy objectives. They are especially integral to the goal of building capable states, which combines conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction, and fostering long-term sustainable democratization and development – all activities best conducted under international auspices. To meet these daunting challenges, the U.S. must join with our partners to devise and concert our policy strategies, prioritize our efforts, divide the labor, share the burden, and marshal significant additional resources to tackle the twenty-first century imperative of strengthening weak states.