

Foreword

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SECURING FREEDOM IN THE GLOBAL COMMONS may be the signal security challenge of the twenty-first century. Our world is intricately connected across the sea, air, space, and cyber domains. But who protects them? No one country controls access to the commons, but every country increasingly depends on open access to them. Indeed, the economic welfare of man and woman in this century, almost regardless of where they live, is tethered to the commons. Yet complex trends and new threats across the global commons, unthinkable even a decade ago, confront us with draconian consequences, exacerbated by economies and societies rising on the insecure foundation of networks and globalization. The exigencies of global counterinsurgency and counter-terror campaigns have impelled creative defense thinkers to grope for alternative solutions. Cold War arsenals have atrophied to the point that the need for their redesign and refurbishment is not only conceivable, but blatantly obvious. We are living in a world in which state power is simultaneously multiplying and shrinking. It is multiplying because of the emergence of new global and regional powers and the resurgence of old ones; it is shrinking because of the rise of non-state actors, transnational movements, and even super-empowered individuals. Thus, a volume that plumbs the depth and width and height of the global commons is an essential foundation on which to rethink and perhaps recalibrate concepts of how to maintain security in our time.

This book is written by distinguished academics and expert practitioners who have studied or worked extensively in topics related to the global

commons. Although delivered primarily from a U.S. viewpoint, the perspectives garnered from their research and personal experience are meant to inform a wider international audience, by presenting frameworks for consideration by U.S. allies and partners. The book's implications are explicitly international, because it raises the issues of affordability and feasibility in the context of common responsibility and common action in defense of security in the global commons. Moreover, this is not just an American affirmation. International allies such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Japan, and Australia, to name but a few, also have highlighted the necessity for action in the global commons. A key challenge will be to organize collective thinking and integrate responses to enable coherent and practicable solutions.

Against this backdrop, Scott Jasper asks us to confront the new realities of the global commons of outer space, international waters and airspace, and cyberspace. *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons* provides the basis for considering what these commons are; how they are interrelated; and how their preservation and protection from criminal or adversary exploitation are indispensable elements of national and international security. The volume provides a forum in which its contributors explicitly describe the various military-operational implications for securing strategic access and retaining freedom of action in the global commons. It also raises valuable definitional issues about the commons themselves, namely that their extension into and connectivity with one another and "non-common" national territories has yet to be parsed fully.

Advantage and vulnerability are the obverse and reverse themes of the world presented by *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons*: It is a world compacted and leveled, and dramatically more efficient; made increasingly vulnerable by the mixed blessings of networks and globalization; marked by widely uneven leaps ahead in living standards and the flow of goods, services, and information. The irony of fractionalization looms large in this world, diminished by exploitation of the global commons but enabling a veritable kaleidoscope of interests and conflicts, and the proliferation of both interests and states too small or weak to support themselves. This is a world characterized by chaos and instability; the uneven distribution of resources and misery; and endemic conflict. But opportunities also abound. In short, it will increasingly be a world in which the global commons will exacerbate as well as mitigate institutional and national vulnerabilities.

This world and its current conflicts seem to have polarized our institutions:

Should we be preparing for small, long wars, or for something more substantial? Among others, Andrew Bacevich framed the basic terms of this debate in *The Atlantic* magazine. Using the U.S. Army as an example, but speaking to the broader national military debate, he laid out the ostensible divide between “Crusaders” and “Conservatives.” Crusaders believe that “(f)or the foreseeable future, political conditions abroad rather than specific military threats will pose the greatest danger to the United States . . . winning battles becomes less urgent than pacifying populations and establishing effective governance.” Bacevich contrasts this perspective with the concern of the Conservatives that “an infatuation with stability operations will lead the Army to reinvent itself as ‘a constabulary,’ adept perhaps at nation-building but shorn of adequate capacity for conventional war-fighting,” that, for instance, “the Army’s field-artillery branch—which plays a limited role in stability operations, but is crucial when there is serious fighting to be done—may soon be all but incapable of providing accurate and timely fire support.”¹

It is, however, unnecessary and counter-productive to choose between present and future alternative threats. The comprehensive review offered by *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons* lays out why the present and future each is important, and the attendant necessity of having to hold in our minds two ideas at the same time. Reviewing this putative conundrum from the perspective of the global commons, this volume clarifies that these challenges are elements of a greater whole confronting our strategies and resources.

Securing Freedom in the Global Commons is more than just an intellectual exercise by defense academics and military operators. It has intrinsic, practical relevance to current policy debates of elemental concern to the U.S. Department of Defense and American allies worldwide, but not by simply choosing between competing ideas. Its in-depth discussion of threats, opportunities, and challenges in the global commons paces the debate in planning and budgets: How do we confront the war our allies and we are fighting now, while at the same time hedging against threats to the global commons, construed in planning regimes as the rise of non-state, transnational strategic competitors; the specter of a proliferated world (weapons of mass destruction or effect); and the rise of authoritarian capitalist states. In our present world, we see a rising—and rising and rising—China; a resurgent and assertive Russia; an increasingly militarized Iran; an isolated but potentially unstable nuclear North Korea; and a panoply of non-state actors, from pirates to hackers, who find it increasingly feasible to hold states at risk.

The contributions of this volume notwithstanding, the debate in the United States oscillates around these on-offer planning cases. The U.S. National Defense Strategy of June 2008 laid out a hedging strategy against China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Despite his insistence on “fighting the wars we have,” and his determination to terminate or truncate several high-profile defense programs—including the F-22 stealth fighter—Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made the case for a balance between current operations and future threats in the journal *Foreign Affairs*,² and in a series of American War College addresses in the spring of 2009.³ Frank Hoffman of the Foreign Policy Research Institute points out that Secretary Gates “has directly challenged his strategists and the military chiefs, declaring that the defining principle of the new National Defense Strategy is ‘balance’ and announcing that throwing money at the Department of Defense’s problems was no longer acceptable.”⁴ These same complexities receive broad treatment in *America’s Security Role in a Changing World*. As I wrote in that volume, the problem transcends any one instrument of policy: “Worldwide trends suggest that the United States will increasingly have to approach complex challenges and surprises through wider and more effective partnerships and more integrated strategies.”⁵ Hybrid solutions are required.

Hybridity may not be an easy concept to grasp, but it is transforming the character of conflict. In one manifestation of his notable body of work on hybrid warfare, Hoffman explored the relevant idea of the breadth of overlapping challenges facing the United States and allies, rather than the choices between them:

[F]uture contingencies will more likely present unique combinational or hybrid threats that are specifically designed to target U.S. vulnerabilities. Instead of separate challengers with fundamentally different approaches (conventional, irregular or terrorist), we can expect to face competitors who will employ all forms of war and tactics, perhaps simultaneously. Criminal activity may also be considered part of this problem as well, as it further destabilizes local government or abets the insurgent or irregular warrior by providing resources, or by undermining the host state and its legitimacy.⁶

In the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy proclaimed that the rise of China implies that the United States cannot depend on uncontested access to the maritime, air, space, and cyberspace commons.⁷ While *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons* is

not about China per se—it is explicit in its treatment of the entire range of threats—China represents the single most acute threat to security in the global commons. This is so because, convinced it has a free hand,

China is challenging access to the global commons through a broad, consciously directed array of military developments. China's military has moved beyond its focus on Taiwan and now possesses antisatellite weapons, advanced land attack ballistic missiles, new classes of submarines and surface ships and the emerging ballistic missile capability to hit ships at sea at least 1,000 miles from China's coasts.

These developments are designed to re-order the balance of power in China's favor by diminishing American strategic mobility and free access to Pacific waters, Pacific airspace, and the "high terrain" of space and cyberspace. A good example of this is China's development of land-mobile antiship ballistic missiles. This antiaccess capability is unprecedented anywhere in the world and has numerous implications for the U.S. Navy, probably best summarized as losing air and sea dominance—and perhaps control—in the Asian-Pacific region. This puts at risk American influence, regional security and alliance interdependence.⁸

The broader inference clearly is that the United States should have serious talks with its allies about gaps in strategic defenses, and about common interests in defending the global system.

Andrew Krepinovich, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, contributed to the debate by highlighting the fragility of security in the global commons; the transitory nature of traditional power; and the necessity of new alternatives for strategy, doctrine, capabilities, and operations.

The United States can either adapt to contemporary developments—or ignore them at its peril. There is, first of all, a compelling need to develop new ways of creating military advantage in the face of contemporary geopolitical and technological trends. That means taking a hard look at military spending and planning and investing in certain areas of potential advantage while divesting from other assets. And Washington must keep in mind that efforts to field new capabilities and put in place new ways of operating typically take time, often a decade or more, to come to fruition.⁹

Under the skillful stewardship of Michèle Flournoy, policy officials inside the Office of the Secretary of Defense began in 2009 to think about the salience of

securing freedom in the global commons as a planning exercise for a fundamentally new articulation of national security strategy.

The organization and specifics of *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons* argue persuasively for a balanced strategy that combines partnered capacities against today's disruptions with the need to hedge against future threats. It is in the global commons that much of this activity will take place, where offenses and defenses will square off. And it is in the global commons where the international system will be defended or deconstructed.

From this perspective, even though the world is in a financial crisis, and underinvested in today's campaigns, we have to invest in protecting the global commons.¹⁰ In fact, this is what the U.S. Department of Defense is doing: continuing with the basic building blocks of missile defense; proceeding with advanced aerospace systems (if not additional F-22s); and establishing the new U.S. Cyber Command. In this construct, for instance, the Defense Department is funding systems relevant to operations in the global commons, such as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and SM-3 missiles; the Littoral Combat Ship and Joint High Speed Vessel; and fifth-generation tactical fighter capability—the F-35—in quantity at sustainable cost.

This is a reform budget, reflecting lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan yet also addressing the range of other potential threats around the world, now and in the future. . . . Some will say I am too focused on the wars we are in and not enough on future threats. The allocation of dollars in this budget definitely belies that claim.¹¹

In making its arguments, this volume lays out the thematic basis for rational decisions for current and ongoing investments in any budgetary environment, despite financial constraints and whatever campaigns might be underway; funding defense of the global commons is more than a hedge; as the Navy's Maritime Strategy makes clear, it is the glue that holds the entire global enterprise together.

The authors of *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons* represent the best and brightest at a diverse array of commands and institutions. The heart of the volume they have produced is a systematic review of each of the four commons, the military operational implications of each, and their functional salience for decision makers. The authors review the character of each of the commons, explore connections and dependencies, examine operational vulnerabilities, and offer strategic alternatives for policy development and acquisition planning.

The global commons are the arena in which political, economic, and military competitions are going to play out against the backdrop of demographics, culture, commerce, and geography. *Securing Freedom in the Global Commons* has been written at the beginning of a long wave of strategic planning. It clarifies the centrality of the commons as a practical operational construct, and provides the basis for responding to challenges. In describing the terrain of both stability and uncertainty in the security environment, this volume will be of enduring value and immense interest not only for a broad international audience of strategic thinkers, academics, policy officials, military commanders, and parliamentarians, but for students of security studies and the general public as well.