

CLOSEOUT FILES



Resolved: Failed nations are a greater threat to the United States than stable nations.

Introduction

Resolved: Failed nations are a greater threat to the United States than stable nations. Overall, I think it's a decent topic, especially compared to last month. It's a little broad and will likely spur some definition debates, but I think it's a pretty balanced interesting topic.

The resolution is pretty clear. Are failed nations a greater threat or stable nations? It does beg the question: what makes one nation a "failed nation" and another a "stable nation?" Also is there any (non topical) middle ground? We've included some definitions, and a lot of debates will probably come down to where you draw the line. This really shouldn't happen though, and you should be prepared to argue both failed states in theory and specific examples backing that up as well. If you get bogged down in whether or not specific nations are failed or not, I would take a step back and argue more theoretically.

Threat level is usually defined as a function of both capability to do damage and intent/probability. In order to be a real threat both must be present. Don't let your opponents get away with arguing that ____ nations could potentially do X which would severely harm the United States. If X isn't likely, it shouldn't be classified as a real threat to the United States.

Finally, a nation can be a threat to the United States in myriad ways. They can be a threat militarily, economically, politically, cyberly, etc. Feel free to be kind of creative, but don't ignore their impacts either. I judged a very good team in our rounds at Harvard last year (top 3 seeded), and they got a little too creative. They were right about their argument and probably caught a lot of teams off guard, but at the end of the round it just didn't hold much weight compared to the legitimate threats their opponents were arguing back.

Good luck debating! As always feel free to send us an email about any question you might have about the topic or to run stuff by us at CloseoutFiles@yahoo.com.

Background

Key States

http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-American_Perspectives_on_the_Threat_Posed_by_Weak_and_Failing_Asian_States.pdf

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North Korea As a charter member of the “Axis of Evil,” North Korea is regularly described as a *rogue* state, but occasionally also as a failing or failed state. Rotberg’s characterization of North Korea as exemplar of a special sub-category of weak states seems most appropriate, however. North Korea possesses many of the qualities of a weak state, except that its authoritarian regime wields absolute power throughout the country. North Korea’s active nuclear weapons program, coupled with its ballistic missile capability, clearly constitutes a threat to its neighbors and to the United States.²⁹

In his annual worldwide threat assessment presented to Congress in February 2002, then Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet warned that the cumulative effects of prolonged economic mismanagement left North Korea “increasingly susceptible to the possibility of state failure.” Tenet catalogued North Korea’s problems: economic deprivation, chronic food shortages leading to periodic famine, malnutrition and collapse of the public health system.⁵⁷ In his February 2003 report, the DCI reiterated that North Korea’s nuclear weapons program posed a danger to its region and the world. The elements of this threat are well known: developing the capability to enrich uranium, ending the freeze on its plutonium production facilities, and withdrawing from the Nonproliferation Treaty. Tenet added: “North Korea also continues to export complete ballistic missiles and co-production capabilities along with related raw materials, components and expertise. Profits from these sales help Pyongyang to support its missile and other WMD development programs and in turn generate new products to offer its customers.”⁵⁸

Secretary of State Colin Powell has also discussed the North Korean threat both in congressional testimony and speeches. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly amplified remarks in numerous presentations to the Congress during the past three years. There can be little doubt that the Bush administration has accorded North Korea a very high priority.⁵⁹

Pakistan

Analysts describing weak and failing states often cite Pakistan as a case in point. Takeyh and Gvodsev note that, during the 1990s, Pakistan was mired in ethnic tension, sectarian violence and absence of cohesive central rule. The *madrasas*, political parties, intelligence services, and retired generals all used the services of al Qaeda for purposes as diverse as religious extremism and political advantage. Pakistan found al Qaeda veterans from Afghanistan a bountiful source of insurgents for Kashmir. Reversing course after 9/11 has been difficult, as President Musharaff testifies. Pakistanis surveyed in 2003 ranked terrorism and religious and ethnic conflict, as well as crime and corruption, as “very big problems.” The government does not control all Pakistani territory. Taliban and al Qaeda remnants occupy the border with Afghanistan. Home-grown Islamic extremists rule the vast Northwest Territories. Recent revelations that Pakistani scientists illegally sold nuclear weapons data and technology to North Korea, Iran and Libya demonstrate the limits of state authority.³⁵

As a key U.S. ally in the War on Terrorism, Pakistan occupies an important place in U.S. strategic thinking. Yet, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship is complex and controversial. Administration officials are thus careful not to characterize Pakistan in terms that could be interpreted as critical. That militates against the use of value-laden adjectives such as “weak” or “failing.” The Bush administration does have concerns about political stability, religious extremism, and terrorists groups in Pakistan. These concerns about the domestic situation slip through in the *National Security Strategy*’s reference to President Musharaff’s decision to “move toward building a more open and tolerant society” and comments by State Department officials that Pakistani cooperation in the War on Terrorism “has had costs for the government and for the country’s social fabric.” The administration speaks more freely about the dangerous security situation in the Afghanistan-Pakistani border area and the threat to regional stability resulting from differences between Pakistan and India over control of Kashmir.⁶⁵

Afghanistan

The U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan destroyed the Taliban regime, dispersed al Qaeda terrorists to the Pakistani border, and installed the moderate Karzai government in Kabul. These developments do not, however, remove Afghanistan from the list of weak states. Poor social and economic conditions, the return of the warlords, the resumption of large-scale opium poppy cultivation, and continued security problems stemming from Taliban and al Qaeda remnants create political instability and limit the ability of the state to exercise authority.³⁶

Bush administration officials often portray Afghanistan under the Taliban as a weak or failing state in which al Qaeda elements controlled significant territory, trained recruits, and plotted barbarous acts. Although U.S. and coalition forces removed the Taliban from power, dispersed al Qaeda elements and installed a moderate government, the administration continues to regard Afghanistan as a weak state. Moreover, administration officials continue to express concern about the security situation, the government’s lack of control of the countryside, slow political development, and poor social and economic conditions.

Definitions

Failed Nations

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy

Updated August 28, 2008

Weak and failing states have been defined as those countries with governments unable to protect their citizens from internal or external threats, unable to provide basic services, or unwilling or unable to respond to their population's needs. Civil wars, declining resources, and economic migration from rural to urban areas have put unprecedented stress on governments and economies throughout the developing world.

No universal definition for “weak state” or “failing state” exists. Some analysts describe state weakness as the erosion of state capacity — a condition characterized by gradations of a regime's ability to govern effectively, which, in its most extreme form, results in the complete collapse of state power and function. Most countries in the developing world fall along this spectrum, exhibiting at least some elements of weakness. Failing states, which are seen as including only a handful of countries in the world, exhibit more pronounced weaknesses than others. Among the universe of weak and failing states, there is no single pathway to failure. In some cases, states are characterized by gradual, yet persistent, institutional decay and political instability. In other cases, states rapidly tumble into failure, faltering under the weight of political instability, an acute natural disaster, or economic crisis. Based on quantitative development indicators, weak and failing states tend to be among the least-developed and most underperforming states in the world.

Notable U.S. government and government-affiliated efforts to describe weak and failing states focus on four major, often overlapping, elements of state function. Factors stressed include (1) peace and stability, (2) effective governance, (3) territorial control and porous borders, and (4) economic sustainability.

! **Peace and Stability:** Failing states are often in conflict, at risk of conflict and instability, or newly emerging from conflict. Lacking physical security, other state functions are often compromised; frequently cited examples of such states today include Sudan and Iraq.

! **Effective Governance:** Countries can also be hampered by poor governance, corruption, and inadequate provisions of fundamental public services to its citizens. In some cases, as in North Korea or Zimbabwe, this may occur because leaders have limited interest, or political “will,” to provide core state functions to all its citizens. A government's perceived unwillingness to provide adequate public services can incite destabilizing elements within a state.⁶

! **Territorial Control and Porous Borders:** Weak and failing states may lack effective control of their territory, military, or law enforcement — providing space where instability can fester; such places may also be called “ungoverned spaces” or “safe havens.” The Pakistan-Afghanistan border and the Sahel region of Northern Africa are common examples where such elements of state weakness exist.⁷

! **Economic Sustainability:** Many weak states are also among the poorest countries in the world. Arguably as a consequence of other security and political deficiencies, weak and failing states often lack the conditions to achieve lasting economic development. Such countries include Bangladesh and many in Sub-Saharan Africa.

http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-American_Perspectives_on_the_Threat_Posed_by_Weak_and_Failing_Asian_States.pdf

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A failed nation-state is “utterly incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community,” according to Helman and Ratner. A fundamental causal problem, they maintain, is a chronic lack of legitimacy of the governments dating back to their origins first with the explosion of new states following European decolonization and more recently with the emergence of newly independent states as a consequence of the fall of the Soviet Union.¹ These states “have always derived a major, if not dominant, share of their legitimacy from the international system rather than from domestic society.”²

Strong states are distinguished from weak ones, and weak states from failed or collapsed states, Rotberg asserts, “according to the levels of their effective delivery of the most crucial political goods.” Chief among these is human security – the security of borders, elimination of domestic threats, prevention of crime, and facilitation of peaceful dispute resolution. Sustainable human security makes possible the rule of law, political freedoms, functioning physical, economic and educational infrastructures, and an active civil society. “*Strong* states unquestionably control their territories and deliver a full range and a high quality of political goods to their citizens.” They “offer high levels of security from political and criminal violence, ensure political freedom and civil liberties and create environments conducive to the growth of economic opportunity.”³ *Weak* states, in contrast, are “inherently weak because of geographical, physical, or fundamental economic constraints”; are “basically strong, but temporarily or situationally weak because of internal antagonisms, management flaws, greed, despotism, or external attacks;” or are a combination of the two. Moreover, they usually reflect “ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommunal tensions that have not, or not yet thoroughly, become overtly violent. Urban crime rates tend to be higher or increasing.” In weak states, the various infrastructural and economic networks that characterize strong states have deteriorated, corruption has increased and autocrats often rule.⁴ There is also a special sub-category of weak states, according to Rotberg, which appear to be strong, suppress dissent and are secure, but provide very few political goods. He cites North Korea as an extreme case in this sub-category.⁵

Failed states, according to Rotberg, “are tense, deeply conflicted, dangerous and contested bitterly by warring factions.” The government must contend with one or more armed insurgencies, civil disturbances, varying degrees of communal discontent, “and a plethora of dissent directed at the state and groups within the state.” Violence is enduring, with much of it directed against the government or regime. It is rationalized or justified in the minds of the insurgents by “the inflamed character of their political and geographical demands” for power sharing or autonomy. The civil wars that characterize failed states are usually rooted in ethnic, religious, linguistic or other communal enmity. In fact, Rotberg concludes that “[t]here is no failed state without disharmonies between communities.”⁸

Failed states also cannot control their borders and lose authority over territory. Rotberg notes that regimes in most failed states victimize their own citizens and, as state authority deteriorates, criminal violence increases and non-state actors often assume the role of supplier of political goods. In short, “a failed state is a polity that is no longer able or willing to perform the fundamental jobs of a nation-state in the modern world.” The institutions of the state are flawed, except in the exercise of executive functions. This includes the armed forces that, though possibly retaining their integrity, may be heavily politicized. The physical infrastructure is deteriorated or destroyed, and education and health care become unavailable to the general public, with concomitant declines in literacy and increases in infant mortality and infectious diseases. Crony capitalism and economic exploitation, accompanied by corruption, flourish, while GDP figures decline. The absence of safety nets encourages migration and displacement.¹⁰ Rotberg argues that “[a] nation-state also fails when it loses legitimacy,” that is, when its nominal borders become irrelevant and autonomous control passes to groups, such as warlords, within the national territory of the state, “or sometimes even across its international borders.”¹¹

A different approach to characterizing state failure has been taken by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF, originally called the State Failure Task Force, was established in 1994 by the CIA at the request of Vice President Al Gore.

They defined state failure to include four categories of events:

- *Revolutionary wars*: episodes of sustained military conflicts between governments and politically organized challengers that seek to overthrow the central government, to replace its leaders, or to seize power in one region.
- *Ethnic wars*: episodes of sustained violent conflict in which national, ethnic, religious or other communal minorities challenge governments to seek major changes in status.
- *Adverse regime changes*: major, abrupt shifts of patterns of governance, including state collapse, periods of severe elite or regime instability, and shifts away from democracy toward authoritarian rule.
- *Genocides and politicides*: sustained policies by states or their agents and, in civil wars, by either of the contending authorities that result in the deaths of a substantial portion of a communal or political group.¹²

Pro Analysis

US Not Prepared to Handle Threats from Failed Nations

The real problem with threats that come from failed nations is that the U.S. is not prepared to handle those threats. The threats from stable nations are known; the U.S. has taken steps to prevent them and they have themselves and international bodies to prevent them from happening. This is not true with threats from failed nations because they are largely spontaneous and disregard international policy. The fact of the matter is that rogue nations with crazed leaders act much of the time without reason; therefore, their threats are often met with surprise. The Center for Global Development phrases this best when they say, “The threats to our security from weak and failed states are very different from states that we're used to, and very different from the threats, quite frankly, we're prepared to face.”

Terrorism

The main threat coming from failed nations is the actions of ungoverned terrorist organizations. The first point you need to make is to prove why failed nations are a better place for terrorists than stable nations are. The Congressional Research Service states, “Terrorists can benefit from lax or non-existent law enforcement in these states to participate in illicit economic activities to finance their operations and ease their access to weapons and other equipment. As with Afghanistan in 2001, weak and failing states can also be ideal settings for terrorist training grounds, when the host country's government is unable to control or govern parts of its territory.” There is an incentive for terrorists to operate in failed nations because there isn't a threat from the internal pressures of a government. Failed nations are usually extremely corrupt and are prone to civil wars; consequently, terrorist organizations have insured their position in the country by supporting successful revolutions and close government affiliations. The Brookings Institute says, “These states provide convenient operational bases and safe havens for international terrorists. Terrorist organizations take advantage of failing states' porous borders, of their weak or nonexistent law enforcement and security services, and of their ineffective judicial institutions to move men, weapons and money around the globe.” Once the connection has been made it should be simple enough to show why terrorism is a threat to the U.S. For direct threats, mention 9/11, the subway bombings in Britain, attacks on U.S. troops, the constant fear and economic drain of performing the necessary precautions taken by our country to prevent future attacks. The Washington Quarterly states the magnitude of terrorist threats from failed nations, “Data on global terrorist attacks from the University of Maryland show that, from 1991 to 2001, most individual terrorists came from low-income authoritarian countries in conflict, such as Sudan, Algeria, and Afghanistan. Similarly, data compiled annually by the State Department reveals that for 2003–2005 most U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations use weak and failing states as their primary bases of operations.” It is not enough just to say that terrorists come from failed states so be sure to provide the logical impact to how it harms the U.S. directly and indirectly through regional destabilization.

Regional Destabilization

Any country, pragmatist, or idealist wishes for global stability and peace; we all know that this is an impossible feat, but failed nations are making the situation worse. Failed states are failed and unstable internally, but they also have negative influences on the surrounding regions.

According to the Brookings Institute, “Failed states represent a threat to U.S. national security [because] they often spawn wider regional conflicts, which can substantially weaken security and retard development in their sub-regions. The conflicts in Sierra Leone, Congo, and Sudan, each largely internal in nature, have also directly involved several other states. In some extreme cases, these conflicts have exacerbated conditions in neighboring countries, accelerating, though rarely precipitating, their failure. Examples include the impact of the Sierra Leone conflict on Guinea, and Congo's on Zimbabwe.” If failed nations were only a detriment to themselves then it would be much simpler to conclude that they did not pose a threat to the U.S.; it becomes far more difficult to do the same when failed nations have regional repercussions that put peaceful world order in jeopardy. The Washington Quarterly states, “The link here between state failure or weakness and regional instability is not universal but obvious: when weak or failed states are contiguous, the risk of regional instability is higher. The spillover of violent conflict itself may reflect a lack of capacity or will. Some governments are unable to control cross-border activities of rebel groups operating from their territory.” It should be fairly obvious why instability is a threat to the U.S. but The Congressional Research Service can support that claim when they say, “According to recent research, states do not always become weak or failed in isolation — and the spread of instability across a region can serve as a critical multiplier of state vulnerability to threats. Instability has a tendency to spread beyond a weak state’s political borders, through overwhelming refugee flows, increased arms smuggling, breakdowns in regional trade, and many other ways. The National Intelligence Council acknowledges that state failure and its associated regional implications pose an ‘enormous cost in resources and time’ to the United States.”

Weapons Proliferation and Arms Trade

Failed nations have been known for their involvement in nuclear proliferation and arms trade. The Congressional Research Service states, “Weak and failing states, unable or unwilling to guarantee the security of nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological (CBRN) materials and related equipment, may facilitate underground networks that smuggle them. Endemic corruption and weak border controls raise the possibility of these states being used as transshipment points for illicit CBRN trafficking. Porous international borders and weak international controls have contributed to 1,080 confirmed nuclear and radiological material trafficking cases by member states from 1993 to 2006, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. The majority of smuggled nuclear material reportedly originates in Central Asia and the Caucasus where known stockpiles are said to be inadequately monitored.” The nature of failed nations with weak boarder control facilitates the spread of weapons to regimes that threaten the U.S. The Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs in the Reagan Administration said, “In addition,

diminished states often become markets for unconventional weapons of mass destruction, principally chemical and biological. As these terrible weapons make their way into the hands of rogue regimes and non-state actors, America is less secure.” When using this argument you do not need to claim that failed nations themselves are a military threat to the U.S. but that the weapons being transferred through their country end up in the hands of those who do threaten the U.S. The Washington Quarterly quantifies how much of a risk to the U.S. when they state, “According to the British government, of the 17 states that have current or suspended WMD programs beyond the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, 13 are ‘countries at risk of instability.’ There is clear evidence that weak, failing, and postconflict states play a critical role in the global proliferation of small arms and light weapons. According to the Geneva-based *Small Arms Survey*, more than 640 million such weapons circulate globally, many among private hands and for illicit purposes.” Since this argument can be linked to many different impacts (Military threats, non-proliferation of WMD’s, and regional destabilization) there is very little evidence refuting it. There is no guarantee that this arms trade or weapons proliferation would occur if there weren’t failed states; therefore, the existence of failed states pose a threat to the U.S.

Narcotics Trafficking

If you are looking for threats that directly affect that U.S. and its people, then failed states contribution to the United States’ drug problem is perfect. The Adjunct Professor of the Practice of International Affairs The George Washington University contends, “The connection between narcotics trafficking and weak, failing or failed states is also well documented. Narcotics traffickers need access to territory, especially agricultural production areas, means of transportation and distribution, cooperative government officials, and freedom from law enforcement in order to conduct their illicit activities. Weak, failing and failed states offer tremendous advantages in these areas.” While you cannot say that drug production and trade would cease if there were only stable nations, you can definitely argue that drugs would be far more difficult to produce and transfer. The professor goes on to say, “According to the World Bank study, 95 percent of the global production of opium is in civil war countries. Not only is production concentrated where civil wars occur, but distribution channels and storage facilities rely on the absence of law and order generated by these conflicts.” The problem you will face using this argument is the magnitude of drug trade that comes from “stable nations,” primarily in reference to Mexico. To respond to this you may want to argue that Columbia is a failed nations so the threats from cocaine can be attributed to failed nations, or you could argue the difference of impacts between drug trade in stable and failed nations. The money from drug trade in stable nations primarily goes to drug lords within the country who use the money to support their drug trade. The same is true of the money from drug trade in failed nations but, in addition to that, the money also supports terrorist organizations which cause external threats. The Adjunct Professor finalizes his argument with why this is a problem for Americans when he says, “The illegal drug threat to the United States has been extensively documented. Illegal drugs wreak havoc in urban, suburban and rural areas, among all racial and ethnic groups, all income groups, and all ages. The social and economic costs to the United States are enormous.”

Health

With the current pandemonium over the swine flu, there is no better time to use a health argument. These arguments could normally be swept under the table with a simple “when was the last time something like this harmed the U.S.,” but given the news storm over H1N1, this argument might have some true impact. According to The Washington Quarterly, “There is growing concern that weak and failing states may serve as important breeding grounds for new pandemics and, lacking adequate capacity to respond to these diseases, endanger global health. As development economists Clive Bell and Maureen Lewis said, ‘Failed or faltering states cannot or will not perform basic public health functions . . . placing the rest of the world at risk.’” The United States and the developed world is capable of dealing with most medical and health situations that arise; however, there is no way to predict the next epidemic that normally comes from third world and failed nations. The Washington Quarterly states that the reason why failed nations are a breeding ground for diseases is because, “National security and public health experts worry that weak and failed states, which invest little in epidemiological surveillance, health information and reporting systems, primary health care delivery, preventive measures, or response capacity, will lack the means to detect and contain outbreaks of deadly disease.” It is likely that many diseases could be prevented if these countries had a stable government with adequate health knowledge and care. Unfortunately, the lack of government oversight in failed countries puts the world at risk of spreading pandemics.

Energy Security

The United States is threatened by the instability of failed oil producing nations. This was one of the popular arguments from last years peak oil topic and it can still be effective for this month. The instability of failed nations has a drastic effect on the supply of oil which in turn leads to higher prices for the American people. The Washington Quarterly fully explains this argument when they state, “The doubling of world oil prices in 2005 exposed strains and volatility in the global energy market at a time of surging global demand, intensifying competition over dwindling reserves, and instability in key producer countries from Iraq to Nigeria to Venezuela. To some, these trends suggest that reliance on oil and gas from weak and failing states may endanger U.S. and global energy security by increasing the volatility, costs, and risk of interruption of supplies. Beyond requiring the United States to pay an “insecurity premium,” such dependence may complicate the pursuit of broader U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives. By 2005 this figure was 58 percent, with fully one-third coming from Venezuela, Nigeria, Iraq, and Angola. Increasingly, U.S. energy security is hostage to foreign political developments. During the past several years, oil markets have tightened in response to strikes in Venezuela, violence in Nigeria, and insurgency in Iraq. This dependence on weak states will only increase. By 2015 the United States is forecast to be importing 68 percent of its oil, a quarter of it from the Gulf of Guinea, up from today’s 15 percent. All of the countries in that region—Angola, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Nigeria—face tremendous governance challenges.” Energy security is one of the most important issues facing society today, and failed nations only undermine the stability of the oil markets.

Resource Drain

Whether or not failed nations pose a real threat, the common view of the countries is that it would be better for the world if they were reformed. Because of this, the US is compelled to take action against them, which is a threat in itself to our available resources. Many of our military actions have taken place against “failed nations,” according to the Washington Quarterly, “Given their propensity to descend into violence and embroil neighboring countries, weak and failing states are disproportionately at risk of external military intervention. State failure preceded virtually every case of the 30- odd instances of U.S. military intervention between 1960 and 2005. Failed and failing states have also been the overwhelming focus of the 55 UN peacekeeping operations over the same period.” You can use some of the information you learned from the October topic by stating that these resources being spent on failed nations could have had a larger impact if they went to eliminating poverty or preventing environmental degradation. Even in situations when there is no military intervention, failed nations are still a large drain on international resources. The Washington Quarterly quantifies the amount of money spend on remedying failed nations when they report, “Even in the absence of violence, failing states impose significant economic hardship on their regions, undoing years of development efforts. Recent analysis by the World Bank suggests that the average total cost of a failed state to itself and its neighbors amounts to a staggering \$82.4 billion, or more than the total global foreign aid budget of \$79 billion. In other words, the collapse of a single state can effectively erase an entire year’s worth of worldwide official development assistance.” The existence of failed states undermines the efforts of promoting global stability and peace.

Con Analysis

Definitions

I know I never say this, but for this topic I think it will be important do debate definitions if you have to debate them (and I expect you will). The definitions of “failed nations” are so ambiguous that it is nearly impossible to get consensus as to which countries are actually failing. Remind your opponents and the judge that the list of failed nations is definitely not carved in stone, and that the status of many countries are up for debate. Make yourself familiar with the multiple definitions of failed nations so that you can impress your judges by being able to analytically explain why a country deserves to be failed opposed to just claiming that a country is failed because it is on the Fund for Peace’s Failed States Index (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Failed_States_Index). The states I believe will cause the most controversy are Iran, Venezuela, and North Korea, and unless you are willing to let those countries pass as failed you should be prepared to counter those claims. Make a distinction between countries who are truly failed and countries who are weak but pose a threat to the U.S.

Failed States are Not Threats

Although there are plenty of examples of failed and stable states to use for debate, it is perfectly legitimate to argue about the theory behind whether failed or stable states are more of a threat to the U.S. There have been flaws in the current analysis regarding failed states and it is important for you to point out why just because a state is failed does not mean that it is a threat. According to the Washington Quarterly 2006, “Policymakers and experts have presumed a blanket connection between weak governance and transnational threats and have begun to implement policy responses accordingly. Yet, they have rarely distinguished among categories of weak and failing states or asked whether (and how) certain types of developing countries are associated with particular threats.” It is important for you to define the difference between failed states and weak states, there is a substantial difference. Failed states do not inherently threaten the U.S.; they are merely victim to the non-state actors within the country. Reason.com states, “The dangers that can arise from failed states are not the product of state failure itself. They are the result of other factors, such as the presence of terrorist cells or other malign actors.” The states themselves are not the threat, but the terrorist groups who reside within the country are the threats. These terrorist cells are just as threatening if they were in any stable nation (evidence shows they are indeed in stable nations as well). Certain areas make them more prone the terrorist organizations and these cells wouldn’t be any less of a threat if the countries were “stable.” Look to the evidence that states why linking terrorism to failed nations falls. Reason.com goes on to say, “In short, state failure ranks rather low as an accurate metric for measuring threats. Likewise, while the lists of “failed states” and “security threats” will no doubt overlap, correlation does not equal causation. The obvious non threats that appear on all lists of failed states undermine the claim that there is something particular about failed states that is necessarily threatening.” Because failed states are not a threat by themselves, you can outweigh the secondary threats by the real threat associated with stable nations in your case. Finally,

Reason.com concludes that countries who are not failed pose more of a threat to the U.S.; “Using 12 different indicators of state failure, the researchers derived state failure scores, and then listed 60 countries whose cumulative scores marked them as "critical," "in danger," or "borderline," ranked in order. If state failure is itself threatening, then we should get very concerned about the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Chad, Bangladesh, and on and on.” The countries who are failing most do not pose as much of a threat; therefore, even the correlation between failing states and threats is weak.

It is much easier to handle threats from perceived failed nations because there is wide-spread international support for intervention. Whether or not failed nations are a threat or not, the world of stable nations would definitely agree that these states are not ideal; therefore, whenever there is an obvious threat or problem, the international community is quick to take action against the states. This is not true when it comes to threats from other stable nations because there is much more at stake when dealing with stable nations. Alliances, debts, tact, and politics prevent real action from being taken against stable nations who pose threats.

Economics

As globalization has connected the world, advancements in stable countries have allowed for large amounts of cheap labor that have been made available to American businesses. The Brookings Report shows, “Together, these two huge nations(China and India) are adding 1.2 billion lower-wage workers to the global economy. With lagged adjustment of ‘capital,’ this puts downward pressure on the wages of similarly skilled workers elsewhere.” Many countries have a strong IT service industry that has incited many U.S. companies to outsource American jobs to these foreign countries. The pro team cannot discount the detriments associated with U.S. job loss by stating that the American economy is better off. In such a crucial time in our economy, the U.S. needs to be creating jobs for Americans and what benefit is there to American businesses if they no longer have American employees to purchase their products? Outsourcing puts downward pressure on wages across the world and creates an even greater divide between the upper and lower or middle classes.

As the United States falls further into debt to push ourselves out of the recession and fund public services, we must look at who is funding this American debt. According to the United Press International, “China is sitting on foreign exchange reserves of more than \$1.5 trillion, and Russia has more than \$500 billion, India close to \$300 billion and Brazil around \$200 billion.” The risk associated with this is most accurately described by the Council on Foreign Relations when they say, “America’s continued descent into greater and greater indebtedness threatens an important source of its influence: the dollar’s role as the critical global currency. A cautionary note regarding America’s current path is provided by Britain’s loss of military and political primacy in the twentieth century; that development followed a shift from creditor to debtor status. Similarly, a prolonged decline in the dollar’s value and increasing indebtedness will erode America’s dominance in political and security spheres.” On the whole, we have seen the value of the American dollar decreasing and questions arising about the power of the United States.

Other countries, specifically China, have called for there to be a new international base currency, which comes from a decreased confidence in the U.S. currency. The United States is in a precarious position and, unless steps are made to secure our position, it is likely that there will be new powers when it comes to the global financial markets. The United States has become so dependent on China that President Obama recently denied meeting with the Dalai Lama as to not disgruntle the Chinese government over human rights issues in Tibet. Who says that debt doesn't affect foreign policy?

Politics

One of the key examples of stable nations posing a threat to the United States is that the rising powers are consciously working against the U.S. The world visions of countries like China and Russia do not coincide with the hopes of America. Bloomberg reports, "Besides the economic front, the BRIC group could prove to be a growing counterweight to U.S. hegemony in global affairs." It is very reasonable to assume that these countries have different needs and wants than the United States. A growing foreign power threatens the power of the United States because as they become more powerful they can better fulfill their wants. Bloomberg also states that, "Russia wants BRIC to become a 'notable factor in multilateral diplomacy,' to help strengthen 'multi-polarity,' acting Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman [Boris Malakhov](#) said in a statement." Many of the actions of the U.S. have conflicted with the interests of these countries, and, with the increase of power, we have seen moves on their part to threaten the global influence of the United States.

The Observer Research Foundation proposes that, "While the US acknowledges the difficulty in maintaining a unipolar world order, given that the rise of new power centres is a reality, the US wants to maintain its primacy in the international system as an important grand strategic objective through a range of tools, including political, economic and military. Scholars have argued that 'continued American hegemony is important because it is seen as the prerequisite for systemic stability.'" It is in the best interest of the United States to exert their influence over much of the world. U.S. hegemony actually creates a safer world environment because there are fewer struggles regarding the global vision. When there are additional superpowers, developing and smaller countries choose allegiances with a variety of powers, which eventually leads to a clash over policy, economics, and wars. The only actors who can create such a problem for the United States are stable nations.

Resources and Energy

According to the Brookings Institute, "China's sustained rapid growth, along with that of India, has contributed to a big jump in commodity prices. The higher costs of inputs have two negative effects: reducing profits and hence lowering the supply of the final goods; and causing the prices of final goods to rise, thus preventing profits from absorbing the entire cost increase." To fuel growth in the growing superpowers, the countries need to consume materials, which has adverse effects on the supply for the rest of the world. Since increased consumption increases

commodity prices, U.S. investments in infrastructure become less profitable, will prevent private commercial ventures, and decrease the effectiveness of government stimulus. Overall, this stifles the entire global market and only prolongs the economic slowdown. Goldman Sachs states, "The BRIC's share of global oil demand has been on an upward trend since 1995, jumping from 15.9% then to an estimated 18.6% in 2006." BRIC consumption of Oil puts upward pressure on oil prices which have disastrous impacts on the U.S. High gas prices have the capacity to ripple throughout the economy like we all saw a couple of summers ago, and an increase in consumption by BRIC only decreases the available supply of oil. No matter what the current price of gas and other natural resources is, the price would be significantly lower without the consumption of stable nations. Countries actions to improve themselves have unintended repercussions that harm the U.S. Higher commodity and energy prices threaten the ability of the United States to swiftly recover from this downturn.

Military

Although there haven't been any legitimate military conflicts with stable nations, the only people who could pose a real threat (in real threat a mean that there would be a high cost to U.S. success if full military action needed to take place) are large stable nations. In 2005, Russia and China conducted joint military exercises that didn't have the intention to threaten any country but it can be inferred that the purpose was to show their alliance to the rest of the world. According to the India Daily, "Russian and Chinese military are having secret joint sessions to create the strategy of self defense in case of any invasion from other countries...Sources say, Russia and China have formally joined hands to stop expanding American and European military as well as economic global influences." Of the countries that actually have the potential to be a significant threat to the U.S., Russia and China top the list; a military alliance between these two countries pose the largest military threat to the U.S. A public showing of military exercises doesn't serve as a benefit to the rest of the world, if anything, it can be considered as a perceived threat and instills fear into the minds of those around the world. Since the rise of these countries, the U.S. has had to alter its desires to accommodate for alternative powers because they now have the capability to threaten military action, just as Russia has done in regards to the missile shield. At the very least, China and India are preparing themselves to handle any potential military threats from other countries, i.e. the U.S. India Daily also states, "International think tanks suggest that soon Russia-China strategic partnership will form a NATO type military and G7 type economic alliance. India and Brazil will be invited to join the alliance." While this hasn't taken place yet, there doesn't need to be a formal organization to still have the anti-American sentiment between these countries. On the top of everyone minds when it comes to these countries, is the potential military threat from these companies, instill this into the minds of your judges and it may serve as a powerful argument.

Pro Blocks

Threats from Failed Nations due to Other Factors

Perhaps but that ignores the fact that failed nations are more likely to possess those other factors. It's analogous to saying AIDS isn't deadly, because it's the specific AIDS' complications that kill. Well if A->B and B->C then by extension A->C. Perhaps it is the result of other factors, such as the presence of terrorist cells or other malign actors that makes the state a threat, but failed states provide convenient operational bases and safe havens for international terrorists. According to the Congressional Research Service, "terrorists can benefit from lax or non-existent law enforcement in these states to participate in illicit economic activities to finance their operations and ease their access to weapons and other equipment. As with Afghanistan in 2001, weak and failing states can also be ideal settings for terrorist training grounds, when the host country's government is unable to control or govern parts of its territory. States mired in conflict also provide terrorists with opportunities to gain on-the ground paramilitary experience." In addition to terrorism, "analysts identify numerous links between weak and failing states and transnational security threats, ranging from...nuclear proliferation to the spread of infectious diseases, environmental degradation, and energy security."

Easier to Handle Threats from Failed Nations because International Support for Negative Repercussions

Historically this is just plain false. The international community has a bad track record solving problems in failed nations even when little is required. According to the Stanley Foundation, "the Rwanda genocide, and its more than 700,000 deaths, could have been prevented by quite small numbers of international troops." If the international community can't handle problems in small countries that "would be relatively easy to stop," what makes us think they'll have better luck against bigger threats? Also as much as I hate to reiterate anything Joe Biden says, "The threats to our security from weak and failed states are very different from states that we're used to, and very different from the threats, quite frankly, we're prepared to face." We're simply unprepared to face the serious threats posed by failed nations; unlike we are for stable nations.

Stable Nations Threaten our Economy

Stable nations do not pose a threat to our economy. The United States gains nothing by having an unstable/volatile global economy. Stable nations inherently make the global economy more stable which is especially important given the current rough state of the economy. On the other hand, the instability created by failed nations especially in the Middle East poses a direct threat to the United States. It is basic economics that when two countries trade both benefit. Stable nations serve as important trading partners and serve as good markets for U.S. products, especially luxury goods. Another thing to consider is the vast interconnectedness of our economies. Even if a country possessed the means to sufficiently harm our economy, in a mutually assured destruction-esque way it doesn't represent a real threat, because any attack on the United States economy would likely hurt the attacker just as much if not more. For example, China probably has the capability to cripple the dollar, but would never do that because they own so many U.S. reserves it would also impact their own economy.

Opposing Powers Challenge US Hegemony

Contrary to what many believe, strong stable nations actually help U.S. interests. Militarily, stable nations promote stability in regions without threatening us in the least. Economically, stable nations represent a huge market for us – we need each other (actually they need us more than we need them). But let's focus on our diplomatic interests. In recent years the United States has badly hurt itself by throwing its weight around as the world's only superpower. Our arrogance has hurt us abroad, cost us key allies –in Iraq certainly, and elsewhere – and has strengthened our true enemies – the Islamic radicals who DO have an ideology and who DO want us dead. The same radicals that exploit failed nations in order to directly threaten the United States. It may be hard for some to acknowledge, but things didn't automatically get better for us when the US became the only superpower, and they wouldn't automatically get worse if Russia or some other stable nation were to climb back to superpower status. We can protect ourselves militarily, and we can compete economically. We have nothing to fear. In the meantime, though, we need stable nations – one's that can rein in true enemies in Asia, provide energy to our European allies, and buy American products.

Military Threat

The logic here is that stable nations are more likely to pose a threat to the United State, because they are more likely to possess developed militaries/WMDs. The United States military is in a league of its own. “The U.S. has three tremendous advantages over any rivals when it comes to conventional warfare: it is several steps ahead in terms of weapons technology, it has the wealth and capacity to produce more of these weapons than any rival, and it has the experience and tactical skill to employ them effectively. In terms of power projection (where intelligence gathering, transport capabilities, and bases matter), no other country (or group of countries) will be able to match America’s global military reach for decades. The best others can hope to do is counter this conventional power with WMD (Asian Perspective).” The U.S. also has a significant advantage in terms of WMDs; however, other countries aren’t a threat in terms of WMD possession because of mutually assured destruction (MAD). Now turn this argument. It is clear that BRIC remains not a threat to the U.S. The U.S. has served as the sole policeman in the world for far too long. As nations gain strength we gain more policemen spread throughout the world while remaining the sheriff and unthreatened ourselves. Despite what we may think, we can’t keep watch effectively over the entire world all at once. While stable nations don’t represent a legitimate military threat, failed nations do. Failed nations and terrorists don’t play by the same rules. MAD doesn’t really apply as a deterrent when the initiator doesn’t care about being “destroyed” and believes he is going to be met in paradise by 72 virgins for his sacrifice.

Con Blocks

Failed Nations are a Terrorism Threat

This argument is purely anecdotal. According to the Cato Institute, “the empirical research on failed states does not demonstrate that they necessarily present threats, it is difficult to understand why the belief that they do is so widely held.” “It’s true that Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations can operate in failed states. But they also can (and do) operate in Germany, Canada, and other countries that are not failed states by any stretch of the imagination.” The Washington Quarterly goes on to say, “weak capacity per se cannot explain why terrorist activity is concentrated in particular regions, particularly the Middle East and broader Muslim world, rather than others such as Central Africa. Other variables and dynamics, including political, religious, cultural, and geographic factors, clearly shape its global distribution.” “As Gary Dempsey pointed out in 2002: Failed states are where the terrorists are most vulnerable to covert action, commando raids, surprise attacks, and local informants willing to work for a few dollars. Failed states are not “safe havens”; they are defenseless positions.” Stable nations pose just as big a threat. For example, “the 9/11 hijackers were trained in Afghanistan, but resided in Saudi Arabia and Egypt and other potential jihadists find support in Western Europe.” In short, there is no empirical link showing that there is something inherent about failed states that makes them threatening.

International Crime

According to the Congressional Research Service, “Some researchers contend, however, that the weakest states are not necessarily the most attractive states for international criminals. This may be because some illicit transnational groups might be too dependent on access to global financial services, modern telecommunication systems, transportation, and infrastructure that do not exist in weak states. Researchers also find that some forms of international crime are more associated with weak states than others. Narcotics trafficking and illicit arms smuggling, for example, often flow through weak states. However, other types, such as counterfeiting and financial fraud, may be more prevalent in wealthier states.”

Failed Nations Centers for Drug Trade

While it is true some drug trafficking occurs in failed nations, likewise threats from the drug trade originate from stable nations as well. Furthermore, the nations that directly impact the United States in terms of the drug trade are overwhelmingly stable nations not failed nations. “Right now we are dealing with a possible pandemic and bloody drug war from a non-failed state next door (Mexico); the pot, cocaine and heroin that kills thousands and leads to crime in America comes from places like Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and even Canada.”

Failed Nations are Health Threats

No. As callous as it sounds, people dying of disease in failed nations doesn't really directly harm/threaten us. Yes it is true that failed nations are predominantly third world countries that are heavily plagued by disease; however, this doesn't inherently threaten the United States. Some people argue that it threatens the US, because disease knows no borders so it has the potential of spilling over and hurting the US. This point completely ignores the types of diseases these nations suffer from. They're almost entirely diseases that haven't threatened the United States in years due to advances in medicine such as malaria. It's simply a lack of resources that unfortunately still makes them a problem in the developing world. When it comes to health threats that actually could pose a threat to the United States, stable nations are more threatening. For example, China was the main source of SARS and avian flu. Personally living in the United States, I feel vastly more threatened by SARS than malaria.

Crossfire

C: In terms of trade, aren't most of the United States biggest competitors stable nations not failed nations?

P: It really depends on what market you're talking about. I don't know if that's necessarily true if you're talking about energy.

C: ...

P: In the trade you're talking about both parties gain as opposed to the illicit black market trading in failed nations. Also and more importantly, can you tell me who gains from the instability created by failed nations?

P: Would you agree that illegal drugs pose a serious threat to the United States in terms of social and economic costs?

C: I don't think the costs are that extensive in the grand scheme of things.

P: Hasn't the link between failed nations and drug trafficking been well documented; considering, the criminals need freedom from the government in order to conduct their illicit activities?

C: No. If that were true, then we wouldn't expect to see Colombia, a stable nation, to be the biggest producer of cocaine in the world. In addition, most illicit drugs passing into the United States travel in through stable nations, so if anything the drug threat that you believe exists can be attributed to stable nations not failed.

C: By definition don't failed nations lack a strong centralized military? By extension don't stable nations pose a bigger military threat?

P: When it comes to failed nations it isn't really a strong government run conventional military that we're afraid of. Stable nations don't pose a threat either, because of MAD. Failed nations on the other hand are potentially dangerous because they don't really have anything to lose, and they serve as a safe haven for terrorists – who do pose a threat to us.

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Pro Evidence

US Not Prepared to Handle Threats from Failed Nations

http://www.cgdev.org/doc/weakstates/WeakState_Transcript_rev.pdf

CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

ON THE BRINK: WEAK STATES AND U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

June 8, 2004

Senator Joseph E. Biden

It makes clear the new kinds of security threats that weak and failed states present. That alone is a point that must be driven home to our fellow Americans. The new threats have radically changed the world that we now live in.

Just as importantly, the report provides a blueprint to fashion an effective response to these threats. It makes clear specific recommendations to refocus our attention, allocate our resources and reform our institutions. The threats to our security from weak and failed states are very different from states that we're used to, and very different from the threats, quite frankly, we're prepared to face.

It is not new that they are poor countries. It is not new that there are poor countries on our planet nor is it new that these same countries often suffer under corrupt, incompetent and misguided governments. What is new in today's world is the effect on our lives, the threat to our security that can come from these age-old sources of human misery, poverty and ineffective governments, incompetent and misguided governments.

Failed States Pose Many Diverse Threats

http://www.cgdev.org/doc/weakstates/WeakState_Transcript_rev.pdf

CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

ON THE BRINK: WEAK STATES AND U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

June 8, 2004, Senator Joseph E. Biden

Now, the very symbols of the technological superiority of our age, from the cell phone, to the Internet, to jetliners, have been transformed into records in the hands of those who are the declared enemies of our way of life. They allow stateless actors to reach out from shadows from weak and failed states to attack us here in our own country and in other countries around the world. And these states can destabilize their neighbors and the whole region, creating humanitarian crises as severe as any natural disaster. With the proliferation of chemical, biological and even, over time, nuclear weapons, weak and failed states represent more profound and frightening threats whether those weapons are in the hands of rogue governments or in the hands of people beyond the control of any government.

Failed states are fertile ground for drug production and trafficking, feeding on our own drug problems here. With the scourge of AIDS and other diseases that know no borders, we cannot afford the existence of more states that cannot feed, house, educate or inoculate their own citizens.

For all of these reasons, we ignore failed states at our own peril. We have both a humanitarian obligation, which many in the Commission have been preaching for sometime and not often listened to, but we also now have a national security mandate to pay attention beyond the humanitarian obligation we have. That clear message and report, in my view, makes it required reading for all.

[http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=31158)

[ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=31158](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=31158)

Richard S. Williamson Assistant Secretary of State for International
Organization Affairs in the Reagan Administration, 2007

The cascade of possible threats from weak, failing, and failed states is considerable. The spread of pandemic disease, environmental degradation, illicit drugs, narco-crime syndicates, organized crime, lost economic opportunity, arms proliferation, and lawlessness and disorder in general can lead to regional instability, and would thus present challenges to American interests. The war on terror properly commands urgent and sustained engagement. Therefore, the assault on human rights, and the humanitarian suffering common in diminished states, warrants our concern and aid. For all these reasons, diminished states must be taken seriously.

Failed States Pose Many Diverse Threats Cont'd

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“Threats of Weak, Fragile, Failing States and Mitigation Strategies”

Global Political Risk Consulting, LLC; Columbia University - School of International & Public Affairs (SIPA)

February 27, 2005

“Failing states are countries in which the central government does not exert effective control over, nor is it able to deliver vital services to, significant parts of its own territory due to conflict, ineffective governance, or state collapse. Current examples include Afghanistan, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan. Weak states—those in which the central government's hold on power and/or territory is tenuous—also pose a serious threat. They are often countries emerging from, or on the brink of, conflict such as Angola, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Burundi, and Cote D'Ivoire. Others, like Colombia, have relatively strong central governments but are cause for concern, due to their lack of control over parts of their territory. Still others, including Pakistan, Georgia, Albania, Yemen, Nigeria, and Indonesia, are fragile, if not yet clearly weak states.”¹

The concept of a “weak” or “fragile” state is not new, a variety of historical examples indicate that some empires had failed to exert effective control over its peripheries (Dutch, British and Spanish empires), while other empires have collapsed due to ineffective governance and from exogenous conflicts (Roman and Persian empires). If history serves to indicate the future, some “weak” or “fragile” states can become influential world players (Roman Empire), while others simply “fail” (Persian Empire).

In contemporary setting, such states pose a number of obstacles to democratic governance and to international security. President Bush argues that these states provide convenient operational bases and “safe heavens” for international terrorists. This problem emerges from three main reasons: porous borders, weak law enforcement and security services, and influences exerted by terrorist organizations. One must note that through such influence on “weak” states terrorist organizations could exploit local resources to fund their operations, recruit forces from the local population where poverty and religious fundamentalism amalgamate.²

Failed States Pose Many Diverse Threats Cont'd

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“Threats of Weak, Fragile, Failing States and Mitigation Strategies”

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February 27, 2005

Some African countries and Middle East countries serve as empirical evidence of such activity. From Egypt to Mauritania, Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations have used these countries as sanctuaries. Countries like Sudan and Uganda, Cote D'Ivoire and Algeria lack effective central government and have fueled, through financing and sheltering, various international terrorist groups.³ Another important rationale on why “fragile” states represent a threat to international security: they generate wider regional conflicts. Regional conflicts can undermine democratic governance edifice and deteriorate developments in neighboring countries. For instance, the Kosovo conflict in the FYR (Former Yugoslav Republic) frightened many development organizations and terrified potential investors in providing their services to countries surrounding the ethnic clash.⁴ In another region of the world, the war in Chechnya retarded political stability in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Ethnic clashes spilled over borders into these countries and caused further problems to their democratization developments. Another explanatory variable is the cost of “weak” or “fragile” states inability to govern: forced relocation, weapons proliferation, unnecessary resources spent on humanitarian and peacekeeping assistance, and from the financial perspective, the opportunity costs of lost trade and investment. The World Trade Organization estimated that if trade with “weak” countries increased by just 25%, the populations living under poverty line in these countries would decrease by 45%.⁵ Due to their “fragile” state countries like Colombia and Afghanistan due fell into drug production and distribution, in addition to human trafficking; such activities further weaken international security and democratic governance.

<http://reason.com/archives/2006/07/01/are-failed-states-a-threat-to>

Reason.com

July 2006

In the course of commenting on a report from the Center for Global Development, Francis Fukuyama, a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, argued that “it should be abundantly clear that state weakness and failure [are] the single most critical threat to U.S. national security.”

Larger Potential for Catastrophic Threats

<http://www.twq.com/09april/index.cfm?id=339>

The Washington Quarterly
April 2009

Trends like the youth bulge and urbanization in underdeveloped states and the proliferation of weapons and advanced technologies point to a future dominated by chaotic local insecurity and “non-traditional conflict” waged by non-state actors rather than confrontations between the armies and navies of nation-states.¹⁷ This likely future of persistent low-intensity conflict around the globe suggests that U.S. interests are at risk not just from rising peer competitors but also from what has been called a “global security capacity deficit.”¹⁸

Gates recently warned that “the most likely catastrophic threats to our homeland, for example, an American city poisoned or reduced to rubble by a terrorist attack are more likely to emanate from failing states than from aggressor states.”¹⁹

http://74.125.95.132/search?q=cache:WwoE_4HPtJMJ:www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf+weak+states+and+global+threats+stewart+patrick&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a

Washington Quarterly
2006

It has become a common claim that the gravest dangers to U.S. and world security are no longer military **threats** from rival great powers, but rather transnational **threats** emanating from the world’s most poorly governed countries. Poorly performing developing countries are linked to humanitarian catastrophes; mass migration; environmental degradation; regional instability; energy insecurity; **global** pandemics; international crime; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and, of course, transnational terrorism. Leading thinkers such as Francis Fukuyama have said that, “[s]ince the end of the Cold War, **weak** and failing **states** have arguably become the single-most important problem for international order.”¹ Official Washington agrees. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declares that nations incapable of exercising “responsible sovereignty” have a “spillover effect” in the form of terrorism, weapons proliferation, and other dangers.²

Failed Nations Contain Ungoverned Spaces

http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/0/9/5/3/pages209530/p209530-2.php

Naval Postgraduate School

Authors: Clunan, Anne. and Trinkunas, Harold.

“Ungoverned spaces” are increasingly cited as a key threat to the U.S. government and its interests throughout the world. Often these spaces are seen as synonymous with failed states, or states that are unable to effectively exercise sovereignty. A key goal of U.S. defense strategy is now to improve “effective sovereignty” in such areas, in order to deny sanctuary to terrorists, WMD proliferators, narco-traffickers, and gangsters. According to the World Bank, in 2006 the number of states lacking effective sovereignty rose to 26, from 11 in 1996.

Non-State Actors in a Failed State can be a Threat

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Failed States and Flawed Logic

The Case against a Standing Nation-Building Office

by Justin Logan and Christopher Preble January 11, 2006

What would be more helpful, and more prudent, than issuing categorical statements about what failed states mean for the United States would be to examine countries, failed or otherwise, on the basis of discrete measures of threat assessment: to what extent does a government—or non state actors operating within a state—intend and have the means to attack America?

Failed Nations are a Terrorism Threat

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

August 28, 2008

Analysts identify numerous links between weak and failing states and transnational security threats, ranging from terrorism and nuclear proliferation to the spread of infectious diseases, environmental degradation, and energy security. U. S. national security documents generally address weak states in relation to four key threat areas: (1) terrorism, (2) international crime, (3) nuclear proliferation, and (4) regional instability. Terrorism. According to several analyses, weak and failing states are perceived as “primary bases of operations” for most U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Jaish-IMohammed.

Terrorists can benefit from lax or non-existent law enforcement in these states to participate in illicit economic activities to finance their operations and ease their access to weapons and other equipment.¹² As with Afghanistan in 2001, weak and failing states can also be ideal settings for terrorist training grounds, when the host country’s government is unable to control or govern parts of its territory. States mired in conflict also provide terrorists with opportunities to gain on-the ground paramilitary experience.¹³

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=31158>

Richard S. Williamson Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs in the Reagan Administration, 2007

Weak, failing, and failed states are fertile ground for terrorism. Such states invariably are impoverished societies with little economic or social opportunity.

Good governance and the rule of law, preconditions for stability and justice, are usually unknown. Warlords, criminal cartels, and the exploitation of resources often prosper in this environment. Furthermore, weak central governments provide space for fiefdoms such as that which was provided for al-Qaeda by the Taliban in Afghanistan. These hothouses of frustration and rage are especially susceptible to extremist ideologies and calls to violence.

Failed Nations are a Terrorism Threat Cont'd

http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-American_Perspectives_on_the_Threat_Posed_by_Weak_and_Failing_Asian_States.pdf

Adjunct Professor of the Practice of International Affairs, Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University; President, Sorrento Group
The U.S.-China Conference on Areas of Instability and Emerging Threats
February 23-24, 2004
Regional Instability

Takeyh and Gvodsev argue persuasively that terrorist networks need failed states. The primary advantage to terrorists lie in the opportunity to acquire more territory than a collection of safe houses would provide. As in the case of Usama Bin Laden in Afghanistan, terrorists may have access to sufficient land to construct training complexes, arms storage areas, and communications facilities. Generally, terrorists do not seek to own a failed state; they prefer to rent it, or at least such territory as they may require. De facto control over territory not only permits terrorists to build institutions, but also allows them to develop business entities that can help generate income to support operational activities. It also enables terrorists and organized crime networks to establish transshipment points for logistics support.²⁴

Terrorist groups often gain control over territory in failed states by supporting one side during civil conflict. Takeyh and Gvodsev cite the Afghanistan case in which Islamist fighters arrived to participate in a local war bringing with them not only manpower, but also equipment and funding. Once inserted into the conflict, they could exploit the chaos to organize their own operations.²⁵ In summary, the literature on the relationship between state failure and terrorism is extensive and compelling. Weak and failing states – and failed states – not only provide safe haven for terrorists, but also facilitate the planning, preparation and conduct of terrorist operations. On this basis alone, the literature suggests that state failure represents a clear and present danger to the United States and its allies, as well as to other Asian states.

https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2001/gannon_speech_01242001.html

Gannon Remarks: Challenges to US National Security
Remarks by John C. Gannon Chairman, National Intelligence Council,
at the United States Army War College, Carlisle, PA
January 24, 2001

Meanwhile, states with poor governance; ethnic, cultural, or religious tensions; weak economies; and porous borders will be prime breeding grounds for terrorism. In such states, domestic groups will challenge the entrenched government, and transnational networks seeking safe havens.

Failed Nations are a Terrorism Threat Cont'd

http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/02terrorism_rice.aspx

The New National Security Strategy: Focus on Failed States

The Brookings Institution

February 2003

Why are failed and failing states significant threats to U.S. national security?

First, these states provide convenient operational bases and safe havens for international terrorists. Terrorist organizations take advantage of failing states' porous borders, of their weak or nonexistent law enforcement and security services, and of their ineffective judicial institutions to move men, weapons and money around the globe. They smuggle out precious resources like diamonds and narcotics that help fund their operations. Terrorist organizations may also recruit foot soldiers from local populations, where poor and disillusioned youth often harbor religious or ethnic grievances.

Africa offers several cases in point. Sudan has served as a sanctuary and staging ground for al Qaeda and other global terrorist organizations. Its radical Islamist government is identified by the United States as a state sponsor of terrorism. Somalia, lacking any effective central government, has afforded safe operational space to affiliates of al Qaeda. Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations have hidden effectively in various African states (including Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Cote D'Ivoire, Mauritania, and elsewhere), where they planned, financed, trained for, and successfully executed terrorist operations against American and allied targets.

http://www.strategycenter.net/research/pubID.120/pub_detail.asp#topArea

The Strategic Challenge of Failed States

by [Douglas Farah](#)

September 25th, 2006

Afghanistan under the Taliban (allowing al Qaeda to plan and execute transnational attacks against American targets in East Africa, Yemen and the United States) and Somalia after the collapse of the central government are clear examples of non-state actors' use of failed states from the recent past. The border territories along the Afghan-Pakistan border, Somalia and much of the Democratic Republic of Congo are current examples. However, terrorist groups and other non-state armed groups are not always located in states, but in specific areas that may spread across several states. As the Bank study shows, when one area in a state begins to fail or can no longer function as part of the state, other nearby regions, both in that state and in surrounding states, will almost certainly be affected.

Failed Nations are a Terrorism Threat Cont'd

http://www.strategycenter.net/research/pubID.120/pub_detail.asp#topArea

The Strategic Challenge of Failed States

by [Douglas Farah](#)

September 25th, 2006

As a recent report by Centre for Strategic Studies in the Hague stated, terrorists “seek out the soft spots, the weak seams of the Westphalian nation-state and the international order that it has created. Sometimes the territory’s boundaries coincide with the entire territory of a state, as with Somalia, but mostly this is not the case. Traditional weak spots, like border areas are more likely. Terrorist organizations operate on the fringes of this Westphalian system, in the grey areas of territoriality.”[6] In order to help refine the discussion on terrorist sanctuaries, the authors propose looking at “Black Holes” that can be transnational in nature, rather than focusing on failed states. The report identifies 41 “black holes” in the non-Western world. Most involve at least two countries, often more.

http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/weak_satets_threat_usa_security_Full_Report.pdf

On the Brink: Weak States and US national security

UN non government liaison service

May 2004

Terrorists training at bases in Afghanistan and Somalia. Transnational crime networks putting down roots in Myanmar/Burma and Central Asia. Poverty, disease, and humanitarian emergencies overwhelming governments in Haiti and Central Africa. A common thread runs through these disparate crises that form the fundamental foreign policy and security challenges of our time. These crises originate in, spread to, and disproportionately affect developing countries where governments lack the capacity, and sometimes the will, to respond.

In the most extreme cases, these states have completely failed, as in Afghanistan, Haiti, or Somalia. In many others, states are not failed but weak. Governments are unable to do the things that their own citizens and the international community expect from them: protecting people from internal and external threats, delivering basic health services and education, and providing institutions that respond to the legitimate demands and needs of the population.

Failed Nations are a Terrorism Threat Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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Institute of Technology

The Washington Quarterly • 29:2 pp. 27–53.

Both the Bush administration and outside commentators frequently contend that countries with weak or nonexistent governance are greater risks to generate and serve as hosts of transnational terrorist organizations. As the *New York Times* argued in July 2005, “Failed states that cannot provide jobs and food for their people, that have lost chunks of territory to warlords, and that can no longer track or control their borders, send an invitation to terrorists.”¹⁹

Such claims have some justification. Data on global terrorist attacks from the University of Maryland show that, from 1991 to 2001, most individual terrorists came from low-income authoritarian countries in conflict, such as Sudan, Algeria, and Afghanistan.²⁰ Similarly, data compiled annually by the State Department reveals that for 2003–2005 most U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations use weak and failing states as their primary bases of operations.²¹ Weak and failing states appeal to transnational terrorist organizations for the multiple benefits they offer: safe havens, conflict experience, settings for training and indoctrination, access to weapons and equipment, financial resources, staging grounds and transit zones, targets for operations, and pools of recruits. Al Qaeda, for example, enjoyed the hospitality of Sudan and Afghanistan, where it built training camps and enlisted new members; exploited Kenya and Yemen to launch attacks on U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as well as on the USS *Cole*; and financed its operations through illicit trade in gemstones, including diamonds and tanzanite, from African conflict zones.

Similarly, not all terrorism that occurs in weak and failing states is transnational. Much is self-contained action by insurgents motivated by local political grievances, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), or national liberation struggles, such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka. It is thus only tangentially related to the “global war on terrorism,” which, as defined by the Bush administration, focuses on terrorists with global reach, particularly those motivated by an extreme Salafist strand of Wahhabi Islam. Third, not all weak and failing states are equal. Conventional wisdom holds that terrorists are particularly attracted to collapsed, lawless polities such as Somalia or Liberia, or what the Pentagon terms “ungoverned spaces.”

Failed Nations are a Terrorism Threat Cont'd

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In fact, as Davidson College professor Ken Menkhaus and others note, terrorists are more likely to find weak but functioning states, such as Pakistan or Kenya, congenial bases of operations. Such badly governed states are not only fragile and susceptible to corruption, but they also provide easy access to the financial and logistical infrastructure of the global economy, including communications technology, transportation, and banking services.²⁸

Although all four governance gaps associated with weak and failing states may contribute to transnational terrorism, political and security gaps are the most important. In the absence of peaceful outlets for political expression, frustrated groups are more likely to adopt violence against repressive regimes and their perceived foreign sponsors. Similarly, states that do not control borders or territory facilitate terrorist infiltration and operations. Two other gaps may play supporting roles. When states do not meet basic social needs, they provide openings for charitable organizations or educational systems linked to radical networks. Similarly, states lacking effective economic institutions are more likely to suffer from stagnant growth, breed political extremism, and be unable to regulate terrorist financing. In seeking to bolster weak states against transnational terrorism, policymakers must distinguish between capacity and will.

<http://www.pbs.org/avoidingarmageddon/getInvolved/aaLesson2.pdf>

Public Broadcasting Service

The International Role of the United Nations

As the film notes, often terrorists can find haven in “failed” nations states where economic, political, military and health crises have led to instability. Discuss the role of the United Nations in such regions and the collaborative international efforts to reduce terrorism, resolve conflicts and assist “failed” nations.

Failed Nations are a Threat to Non-Proliferation

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

August 28, 2008

Weapons Proliferation. Weak and failing states, unable or unwilling to guarantee the security of nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological (CBRN) materials and related equipment, may facilitate underground networks that smuggle them. Endemic corruption and weak border controls raise the possibility of these states being used as transshipment points for illicit CBRN trafficking. Porous international borders and weak international controls have contributed to 1,080 confirmed nuclear and radiological material trafficking cases by member states from 1993 to 2006, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.²¹ The majority of smuggled nuclear material reportedly originates in Central Asia and the Caucasus where known stockpiles are said to be inadequately monitored.²²

Other sources of concern include poorly secured materials in research, industrial, and medical facilities. A relatively new region of concern for the United States is Africa, where more than 18% of the world's known recoverable uranium resources exist. Lax regulations, weak governments, and remotely located mines that are difficult to supervise combine to make the removal and trafficking of radioactive substances in Africa "a very real prospect."²³

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub649.pdf>

The Strategic Studies Institute

COUNTERTERRORISM IN AFRICAN FAILED STATES:

Thomas Dempsey

April 2006

Terrorist hubs operating in African failed states threaten to make the connection between WMD capabilities and terrorist nodes a reality. The nexus of terrorist hubs operating from failed states, terrorist nodes located in or with access to areas of vital interest to the United States, and nuclear weapons technology or devices is one that demands strategies that will be effective immediately. Current strategies being pursued by the United States in the GWOT are not likely to be effective in identifying and neutralizing terrorist hubs operating from failed states.

Failed Nations are a Threat to Non-Proliferation Cont'd

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=31158>

Richard S. Williamson Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs in the Reagan Administration, 2007

In addition, diminished states often become markets for unconventional weapons of mass destruction, principally chemical and biological. As these terrible weapons make their way into the hands of rogue regimes and non-state actors, America is less secure.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=649>

COUNTERTERRORISM IN AFRICAN FAILED STATES:
CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Thomas Dempsey

April 2006

Terrorist hubs operating in African failed states threaten to make the connection between WMD capabilities and terrorist nodes a reality. The nexus of terrorist hubs operating from failed states, terrorist nodes located in or with access to areas of vital interest to the United States, and nuclear weapons technology or devices is one that demands strategies that will be effective immediately.

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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The Washington Quarterly • 29:2 pp. 27–53.

WEAPONS PROLIFERATION RISKS?

Fears that weak and failing states may incubate transnational terrorism merge with a related concern: that poorly governed countries may be unable or disinclined to control stocks of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons or prevent the onward spread or leakage of WMD-related technology. This is not an idle worry. According to the British government, of the 17 states that have current or suspended WMD programs beyond the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, 13 are “countries at risk of instability.”³² The most frightening prospect is that a nuclear-armed state such as Pakistan or North Korea might lose control of its nuclear weapons through collapse or theft, placing the weapons into the hands of a successor regime or nonstate actors with little compunction about their use. A more likely scenario might involve the transfer of biological weapons, which are easier to make and transport but difficult to track. Direct transfer of functioning WMD should not be the only concern.

Failed Nations are a Threat to Non-Proliferation Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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Revelations about the extensive international nuclear arms bazaar of Abdul Qadeer Khan suggest that poor governance may be the Achilles' heel of global nonproliferation efforts. For more than two decades, Khan, Pakistan's leading nuclear scientist, orchestrated a clandestine operation to sell sensitive expertise and technology, including the means to produce fissile material and to design and fabricate nuclear weapons, to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. As David Albright and Corey Hinderson stated, "The Khan network could not have evolved into such a dangerous supplier without the utter corruption and dishonesty of successive Pakistani governments, which, for almost two decades, were quick to deny any involvement of its scientists in illicit procurement."³³

Furthermore, it could not have gone global without institutional weaknesses in more advanced middle-income countries, including Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey, that possessed manufacturing capabilities but lacked the knowledge, capacity, or will to implement relevant export control and nonproliferation laws.

Although U.S. officials are understandably preoccupied with the dangers of WMD proliferation, for most of the world the spread of more mundane but still deadly conventional weapons poses the greatest threat to human security and civil peace. There is clear evidence that weak, failing, and postconflict states play a critical role in the global proliferation of small arms and light weapons. According to the Geneva-based *Small Arms Survey*, more than 640 million such weapons circulate globally, many among private hands and for illicit purposes.³⁴ Weak states are often the source, transit, and destination countries for the illegal arms trade.

On the borderlands of the former Soviet Union, for example, vast stockpiles of weapons remain in ill-secured depots, providing tempting targets for rebel groups, terrorists, and international criminal organizations. Such matériel frequently surfaces on the global black or grey markets, as corrupt officials manipulate legitimate export licenses to obscure the military purpose or ultimate recipient of the shipment. In one notable instance in 1999, Ukraine's export agency transferred 68 tons of munitions to Burkina Faso. The weapons were then shipped to Liberia and ultimately to Sierra Leone, landing in the hands of Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front.³⁵

Failed Nations are a Threat to Non-Proliferation Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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The availability of conventional weapons further weakens state capacity by fueling civil wars and insurgencies, fostering a culture of criminality and impunity. As the experiences of Afghanistan, Haiti, and the DRC, among others, show, easy access to instruments of violence complicates efforts by governments and international partners to establish public order and the rule of law, provide relief, and pursue more ambitious development goals. As with terrorism, the risk of proliferation from weak states is often more a matter of will than of objective capacity. This is particularly true for WMD proliferation. The technological sophistication and secure facilities needed to construct such weapons would seem to require access to and some acquiescence from the highest levels of the state apparatus. This may be less true for small arms proliferation. Some weak states simply lack the capacity to police the grey or black market and to control flows of such weapons across their borders. Of the four governance gaps, WMD proliferation is most likely to be correlated with security and political shortcomings, particularly poor civilian oversight of the defense establishment and the presence of an authoritarian and corrupt regime. In the case of small arms, weak economic institutions may also create incentives and opportunities for proliferation.

Failed Nations Foster International Crime

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

August 28, 2008

International Crime. As with terrorist groups, international criminal organizations benefit from safe havens that weak and failing states provide. According to the U.S. Inter-agency Working Group report on international crime, weak states can be useful sites through which criminals can move illicit contraband and launder their proceeds, due to unenforced laws and high levels of official corruption.¹⁶ Since the Cold War, the international community has seen a surge in the number of transnational crime groups emerging in safe havens of weak, conflict prone states — especially in the Balkans, Central Asia, and West Africa. Criminal groups can thrive off the illicit needs of failing states, especially those subject to international sanctions;

http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/Nats_Hospitable.pdf

NATIONS HOSPITABLE TO ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORISM

A Report Prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress

under an Interagency Agreement with the United States Government

October 2003

As organized crime and terrorist groups have globalized and diversified their operations in the past decade, they have based their activities in countries offering conditions most favorable to survival and expansion. Mobility, an important new characteristic of most such groups, has given groups a wider selection of operational bases and the ability to respond faster to changes that are unfavorable to their operations.

The main domestic elements making a nation “hospitable” to transnational crime and terrorism are official corruption, incomplete or weak legislation, poor enforcement of existing laws, non-transparent financial institutions, unfavorable economic conditions, lack of respect for the rule of law in society, and poorly guarded national borders. In some cases, several of those conditions arise together from a lack of political will to establish the rule of law. In turn, such a lack can derive from weak national institutions or from high-level corruption. A failing national economy often is an influential background factor that increases domestic and transnational criminal activity in a country. Such purely domestic factors often are exacerbated by a nation’s geographic location (along a key narcotics trafficking route or in a region where arms trafficking is prolific, for example), or the influence of regional geopolitical issues such as a long-standing territorial dispute.

Failed Nations Foster International Crime Cont'd

http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/weak_states_threat_usa_security_Full_Report.pdf

On the Brink: Weak States and US national security

UN non government liaison service

May 2004

US military and civilian antiterrorism officials struggle to keep up as terrorists plot to attack the United States from bases in Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Somalia; steal weapons from ill-guarded caches in the Sahara Desert or buy them from Central Asian middlemen; raise money by dealing diamonds in West Africa or by shipping honey across the Persian Gulf; and finance the schooling in extremism of young boys from the poorest Pakistani households. Antinarcotics law enforcement watches as drug dealers run cocaine and heroin with apparent impunity through national borders in South and Central America, the Caribbean, and Central Asia.

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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DENS OF THIEVES?

Beyond posing terrorist or proliferation risks, weak and failing states are said to provide ideal bases for transnational criminal enterprises involved in the production, transit, or trafficking of drugs, weapons, people, and other illicit commodities and in the laundering of the profits from such activities. The surging scope and scale of global organized crime underpins these concerns. The worldwide narcotics trade alone is now estimated to be a \$300–500 billion business, on a par with at least the global automobile industry or at most the global oil industry. Former International Monetary Fund managing director Michel Camdessus estimates that money laundering accounts for 2–5 percent of world gross domestic product, or between \$800 billion and \$2 trillion.³⁶

The rise in organized crime is being driven by the dynamics of globalization. Recent advances in communications and transportation, the removal of commercial barriers, and the deregulation of financial services have created unprecedented opportunities for illicit activity, from money laundering to trafficking in drugs, arms, and people. National authorities, particularly in weak states, strain to encourage legitimate commerce while curbing illicit trade.³⁷

Failed Nations Foster International Crime Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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The relationship between transnational organized crime and weak states is parasitic. All things being equal, criminal networks are drawn to environments where the rule of law is absent or imperfectly applied, law enforcement and border controls are lax, regulatory systems are weak, contracts go unenforced, public services are unreliable, corruption is rife, and the state itself may be subject to capture. As University of Pittsburgh professor Phil Williams said, such capacity gaps provide “functional holes” that criminal enterprises can exploit. Poor governance has made Africa, in the words of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “an ideal conduit through which to extract and/or transship a range of illicit commodities, such as drugs, firearms, minerals and oil, timber, wildlife, and human beings.”³⁸ Transnational organized crime further reduces weak-state capacity, as criminals manipulate corruption to gain protection for themselves and their activities and to open new avenues for profit. Criminal groups have become adept at exploiting weak-state capacity in conflict zones, such as Colombia or the DRC, where political authority is contested or formal institutions have collapsed, and in fluid postconflict settings, such as Bosnia or Kosovo, where they have not yet been firmly reestablished.

Yet, if state weakness is often a necessary condition for the influx of organized crime, it is not a sufficient one. Even more than a low-risk operating environment, criminals seek profits. In a global economy, realizing high returns depends on tapping into a worldwide market to sell illicit commodities and launder the proceeds, which in turn depends on access to financial services, modern telecommunications, and transportation infrastructure. Such considerations help explain why South Africa and Nigeria have become magnets for transnational and domestic organized crime and why Togo has not.³⁹ Criminals will accept the higher risks of operating in states with stronger capacity in return for greater rewards.

In addition, the link between global crime and state weakness varies by sector. The category “transnational crime” encompasses a vast array of activities, not limited to narcotics trafficking, alien smuggling, piracy, environmental crime, sanctions violations, contraband smuggling, counterfeiting, financial fraud, high-technology crime, and money laundering. Some of these activities, such as narcotics trafficking, are closely linked to state weakness. Poorly governed states dominate the annual list of countries Washington designates as “major” drug-producing and -transiting nations.

Failed Nations Foster International Crime Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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Nearly 90 percent of global heroin, for example, comes from Afghanistan and is trafficked to Europe via poorly governed states in Central Asia or along the “Balkan route.” Burma is the second-largest producer of opium and a key source of methamphetamine. Weak states similarly dominate the list of countries designated as the worst offenders in human trafficking, a \$7–8 billion business that sends an estimated 800,000 women and children across borders annually for purposes of forced labor or sexual slavery.⁴⁰ Other criminal sectors such as money laundering, financial fraud, cyber crime, intellectual property theft, and environmental crime are less obviously correlated with state weakness. With few exceptions, for example, money laundering occurs primarily in small offshore financial centers, wealthy nations, or middle-income countries. The reason is straightforward: most weak and failing states lack the requisite banking systems. On the other hand, many of the profits being laundered come from activities that emanate from or transit through weak states.

Among the four governance gaps, the rise of transnational organized crime in weak states appears to be most closely correlated with poor economic and political institutions. Poor regulatory environments and unaccountable political systems constrain the growth of the licit economy and create opportunities for corruption, both grand and petty. Inadequate public security and social welfare may play a secondary role by fostering a culture of lawlessness and permitting criminals to win support by meeting basic needs of a beleaguered population. Finally, the relative role of capacity versus will in facilitating transnational organized crime in weak states tends to vary. As crime becomes more entrenched, a compromised political elite is less likely to deploy the capacities at its disposal to fight it.

Failed Nations Destabilize their Regions

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

August 28, 2008

Regional Instability. According to recent research, states do not always become weak or failed in isolation — and the spread of instability across a region can serve as a critical multiplier of state vulnerability to threats. Instability has a tendency to spread beyond a weak state's political borders, through overwhelming refugee flows, increased arms smuggling, breakdowns in regional trade, and many other ways.²⁵ The National Intelligence Council acknowledges that state failure and its associated regional implications pose an “enormous cost in resources and time” to the United States.²⁶

http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-American_Perspectives_on_the_Threat_Posed_by_Weak_and_Failing_Asian_States.pdf

Adjunct Professor of the Practice of International Affairs, Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University; President, Sorrento Group
The U.S.-China Conference on Areas of Instability and Emerging Threats
February 23-24, 2004
Regional Instability

In sum, state failure literature cites spillover – political, economic, and military – as a common consequence of state failure that has a destabilizing regional impact. In particular, the literature indicates that the civil wars frequently associated with state failure regularly cross borders and create conditions associated with state failure in neighboring countries. When this occurs in a region in which the United States has strategic interests and allies, such as Asia, it clearly poses a direct threat.

http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/02terrorism_rice.aspx

The New National Security Strategy: Focus on Failed States
The Brookings Institution
February 2003

A second reason, not mentioned in the NSS, why failed states represent a threat to U.S. national security is that they often spawn wider regional conflicts, which can substantially weaken security and retard development in their sub-regions. The conflicts in Sierra Leone, Congo, and Sudan, each largely internal in nature, have also directly involved several other states. In some extreme cases, these conflicts have exacerbated conditions in neighboring countries, accelerating, though rarely precipitating, their failure. Examples include the impact of the Sierra Leone conflict on Guinea, and Congo's on Zimbabwe.

Failed Nations Destabilize their Regions Cont'd

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=31158>

Richard S. Williamson Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs in the Reagan Administration, 2007

The combustibility of diminished states makes them prime markets for fragmentation and convulsion. Consequently, they are often home to private militias, rebels, and warlords. The spread of small arms into and out of these diminished states is common.

By definition, diminished states are unstable. Lacking a strong central government, adequate army and police, as well as an effective rule of law, the environment of lawlessness and its consequences inhibits society. As violence spirals from ethnic tension to sectarian violence and on to full-scale civil war, the instability usually bleeds beyond borders. One state's mayhem and bloodshed spills over to neighbors, creating regional instability that threatens the broader interests of the neighborhood, and of America.

http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/weak_states_threat_usa_security_Full_Report.pdf

On the Brink: Weak States and US national security

UN non government liaison service

May 2004

Spillover effects—from conflict, disease, and economic collapse—put neighboring governments and peoples at risk. Illicit transnational networks, particularly terrorist and criminal groups, target weak and failed states for their activities. Regional insecurity is heightened when major powers in the developing world, such as Nigeria or Indonesia, come under stress. Global economic effects come into play where significant energy-producing states, regional economic powers, and states key to trade negotiations are weak. Finally, the human costs of state failure—when governments cannot or will not meet the real needs of their citizens—challenge American values and moral leadership around the globe.

Failed Nations Destabilize their Regions Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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BAD NEIGHBORS?

Experience since the end of the Cold War has shown that conflict in developing countries can have critical transnational dimensions.⁵³ A common contention is that violent conflict and complex emergencies often spill over the porous borders of weak and failing states, destabilizing regions. Such claims have merit. As state structures collapse and borders become more porous, these countries often export violence as well as refugees, political instability, and economic dislocation to states in their vicinity. This risk is compounded when weak, vulnerable, or collapsed states are adjacent to countries with similar characteristics that possess few defenses against spillovers. Weaknesses in one state can thus encourage the rise of an entire bad neighborhood. Such a pattern emerged in West Africa during the 1990s, as the conflict in Liberia under Charles Taylor poured across national borders in the form of people, guns, and conflict diamonds, undermining neighboring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Cote d'Ivoire.⁵⁴

In reciprocal fashion, bad neighborhoods can undermine governance and encourage violence in already weak states. Many recent internal conflicts, from that of Burundi in the Great Lakes Region of Africa to that of Tajikistan in Central Asia, have been embedded in such regional conflict formations. In some cases, contiguous countries have fomented civil war by supporting armed groups across borders that share their political goals. In other cases, transnational networks, whether based on ethnic identity, political affinity or economic interest, have undermined the central government and fueled violent conflict by facilitating illicit traffic in small arms, drugs, people, or lootable commodities. Where regional conflict formations are present, sustainable peace may depend on successful peace-building in the larger region.⁵⁵ Given their propensity to descend into violence and embroil neighboring countries, weak and failing states are disproportionately at risk of external military intervention. State failure preceded virtually every case of the 30-odd instances of U.S. military intervention between 1960 and 2005.⁵⁶ Failed and failing states have also been the overwhelming focus of the 55 UN peacekeeping operations over the same period.⁵⁷

Failed Nations Destabilize their Regions Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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Even in the absence of violence, failing states impose significant economic hardship on their regions, undoing years of development efforts. Recent analysis by the World Bank suggests that the average total cost of a failed state to itself and its neighbors amounts to a staggering \$82.4 billion, or more than the total global foreign aid budget of \$79 billion. In other words, the collapse of a single state can effectively erase an entire year's worth of worldwide official development assistance.⁵⁸

The link here between state failure or weakness and regional instability is not universal but obvious: when weak or failed states are contiguous, the risk of regional instability is higher. The spillover of violent conflict itself may reflect a lack of capacity or will. Some governments are unable to control cross-border activities of rebel groups operating from their territory. The most salient governance gap here is inability to provide public security. Other governments adopt a conscious policy of destabilizing their neighbors. In this case, internal weakness and external aggression tend to reflect authoritarian political institutions.

Failed Nations are Centers for Narcotics Trafficking

http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-American_Perspectives_on_the_Threat_Posed_by_Weak_and_Failing_Asian_States.pdf

Adjunct Professor of the Practice of International Affairs, Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University; President, Sorrento Group
The U.S.-China Conference on Areas of Instability and Emerging Threats
February 23-24, 2004
Regional Instability

The illegal drug threat to the United States has been extensively documented. Illegal drugs wreak havoc in urban, suburban and rural areas, among all racial and ethnic groups, all income groups, and all ages. The social and economic costs to the United States are enormous. The damage to minority communities is particularly heavy. The connection between narcotics trafficking and weak, failing or failed states is also well documented. Narcotics traffickers need access to territory, especially agricultural production areas, means of transportation and distribution, cooperative government officials, and freedom from law enforcement in order to conduct their illicit activities. Weak, failing and failed states offer tremendous advantages in these areas. The link from civil war – a characteristic associated with state failure – to narcotics trafficking is through production and distribution. Coca and opium cultivation requires territory that is outside the control of any government. Anti-cultivation policies can be enforced with some degree of seriousness where territory is under the control of an internationally recognized government. Civil wars usually result in a certain portion of national territory being removed from government control. According to the World Bank study, 95 percent of the global production of opium is in civil war countries. Not only is production concentrated where civil wars occur, but distribution channels and storage facilities rely on the absence of law and order generated by these conflicts.

Failed Nations are Centers for Narcotics Trafficking Cont'd

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0C54E3B3-1E9C-BE1E-2C24-A6A8C7060233&lng=en&id=31158>

Richard S. Williamson Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs in the Reagan Administration, 2007

Meanwhile, weak, failing, and failed states encroach upon a broad spectrum of American interests. While a strategy to deal with such diminished nation-states doesn't establish a grand strategy for Uni foreign policy, its importance necessitates a more thoughtful, sustained, and effective engagement. America continues its current episodic and uncoordinated approach to dealing with diminished stat its own peril.

Diminished lacking professional police and an independent judiciary are prime targets for organized crime and narcotics trafficking. The pestilence of this lawlessness not only plagues the host country, but reaches deep into the streets of American cities and suburbs. The social and economic cost to America of organized crime and narcotics is immense and, constantly growing. In addition, diminished states invariably have poor public health systems.

Failed Nations are a Threat to Energy Security

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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The doubling of world oil prices in 2005 exposed strains and volatility in the global energy market at a time of surging global demand, intensifying competition over dwindling reserves, and instability in key producer countries from Iraq to Nigeria to Venezuela. To some, these trends suggest that reliance on oil and gas from weak and failing states may endanger U.S. and global energy security by increasing the volatility, costs, and risk of interruption of supplies. Beyond requiring the United States to pay an “insecurity premium,” such dependence may complicate the pursuit of broader U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives.

Anxiety about U.S. energy security is nothing new. Much hand-wringing accompanied the oil crisis of the mid-1970s, when domestic U.S. production peaked and the country confronted an Arab oil embargo. Despite temporary shortages and an oil price shock, the Nixon-era United States managed to find alternate sources of supply. Most economists are confident that today’s markets are similarly capable of absorbing temporary interruptions, albeit at a price.

Nevertheless, some new dynamics deserve consideration. First, the U.S. quest for energy security is occurring at a time of increased global competition for limited supplies. Since 2000, the world’s consumption of fossil fuels has risen much faster than most analysts had predicted, driven not only by sustained U.S. demand but also by China’s seemingly unquenchable thirst for energy. During 2004 alone, Chinese oil imports surged by 40 percent making China the world’s second-largest oil importing country.⁴⁷ The removal of excess production and refining capacity has resulted in a dramatic tightening of the global energy market and has left prices vulnerable to sudden spikes in the event of disturbances in producer countries.

Second, price shocks are increasingly likely, given the world’s growing reliance on energy supplies from weak states, as proven reserves in stable countries peak or become depleted. As Hampshire College professor of security studies Michael Klare said, the geographic concentration of exploitable fossil fuels means that the availability of energy is “closely tied to political and socioeconomic conditions within a relatively small group of countries.”⁴⁸ Significantly, many of the world’s main oil exporters, including Iraq, Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela, are less stable today than in 2000. The United Kingdom calculates that some 60 percent of global oil reserves are located in countries “facing stability challenges,” such as Azerbaijan, where untapped reserves could generate \$124 billion in revenue by 2024. Complicating matters, a large percentage of the world’s oil and gas transits unstable regions, such as Transcaucasia, and vulnerable choke points, such as the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca, via pipeline or tanker.⁴⁹

Failed Nations are a Threat to Energy Security Cont;d

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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The U.S. exposure to volatility and interruption of energy supplies has grown markedly since 1973, when it imported only 34 percent of its crude oil. By 2005 this figure was 58 percent, with fully one-third coming from Venezuela, Nigeria, Iraq, and Angola. Increasingly, U.S. energy security is hostage to foreign political developments.⁵⁰ During the past several years, oil markets have tightened in response to strikes in Venezuela, violence in Nigeria, and insurgency in Iraq. This dependence on weak states will only increase. By 2015 the United States is forecast to be importing 68 percent of its oil, a quarter of it from the Gulf of Guinea, up from today's 15 percent. All of the countries in that region—Angola, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Nigeria—face tremendous governance challenges. ⁵¹ Nigeria, a fragile democracy that Washington hopes will become an anchor of stability in the region, is beset by rampant corruption and crime, simmering ethnic tensions, and grinding poverty. During the past three years, rebels in the Niger Delta have repeatedly disrupted Nigeria's oil flow.

Rising dependence on energy from weak and failing states promises to have unpleasant ramifications for wider U.S. foreign policy objectives. It will surely complicate U.S. democracy promotion by encouraging Washington to cozy up to authoritarian dictators or to intervene to shore up unstable regimes in regions such as the Caucasus or Central Asia. Even where the United States sticks to its principles, it may find good governance elusive in countries awash in petrodollars. For such "trust fund states," as Fareed Zakaria terms them, it is all too easy to rely on easy natural resource revenue rather than to do the hard work of building the economic and political institutions necessary to create enduring wealth and foster human liberty.⁵²

By definition, the transnational threat of energy insecurity is peculiar to a subset of weak states that either possess large energy resources or sit astride transit routes. The nature of this threat varies according to whether state weakness is a function of insufficient will, inadequate capacity, or both. For Venezuela or Iran, for example, the main risk of interrupted supplies comes from the unpredictability of autocratic regimes. For Nigeria or post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, in contrast, the risk is that weak elected governments will be unable to ensure oil flows in the face of domestic instability. In either case, the governance gaps most closely correlated with energy insecurity tend to be political and economic, reflecting the tendency of natural resource riches to produce endemic corruption, abusive state power, and long-term stagnation.

Failed Nations are Health Threats

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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PLAGUE AND PESTILENCE?

The threat of the rapid spread of avian influenza, which could conceivably kill tens of millions of people, has placed infectious disease into the first tier of national security issues. There is growing concern that weak and failing states may serve as important breeding grounds for new pandemics and, lacking adequate capacity to respond to these diseases, endanger global health. As development economists Clive Bell and Maureen Lewis said, “Failed or faltering states cannot or will not perform basic public health functions . . . placing the rest of the world at risk.”⁴¹

Since 1973, more than 30 previously unknown disease agents, including HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and the West Nile virus, have emerged for which no cures are available. Most have originated in developing countries. During the same time span, more than 20 well-known pathogens, including tuberculosis, malaria, and cholera, have reemerged or spread, often in more virulent and drug-resistant forms.⁴² In an age of mass travel and global commerce, when more than 2 million people cross international borders a day and air freight exceeds 100 billion ton-kilometers a year, inadequate capacity or insufficient will to respond with vigorous public health measures can quickly threaten lives across the globe. National security and public health experts worry that weak and failed states, which invest little in epidemiological surveillance, health information and reporting systems, primary health care delivery, preventive measures, or response capacity, will lack the means to detect and contain outbreaks of deadly disease.

These worries are well founded. Although there is little solid data on the link between state capacity and epidemic patterns, it is known that the global infectious disease burden falls overwhelmingly (90 percent) on low- and middle-income countries that account for only 11 percent of global health spending. The Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center has devised a typology of countries by health care status, ranking nations into five categories on the basis of resources and priority devoted to public health, quality of health care, access to drugs, and capacity for surveillance and response. States in the bottom two quintiles are the main victims of the world’s seven deadliest infectious diseases: respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS, diarrheal diseases, tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis B, and measles. Sub-Saharan Africa is the hardest hit, with just 10 percent of the world’s population but 90 percent of its malaria and 75 percent of its HIV/AIDS cases.⁴³

Failed Nations are Health Threats Cont'd

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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The spread of infectious disease is being driven partly by breakdowns in public health, especially during periods of political turmoil and war. HIV/AIDS is a case in point. Nearly all instances of the disease in South and Southeast Asia can be traced to strains that evolved in northern Burma, an ungoverned warren of drug gangs, irregular militias, and human traffickers. Similarly, the collapse of the DRC made it a petri dish for the evolution of numerous strains of HIV. Nor does peace always improve matters, at least initially. In Ethiopia and several other African countries, rising HIV/AIDS prevalence has paralleled the return and demobilization of ex-combatants and their reintegration into society, exposing the wider citizenry to disease contracted during military deployments.⁴⁴

Beyond countries in conflict, many developing and transitional states possess decrepit and decaying public health systems that can easily be overwhelmed. Following the end of the Cold War, the states of the former Soviet Union all experienced spikes in the incidence of measles, tuberculosis, and HIV. In the spring of 2005, weak health infrastructure in Angola amplified an outbreak of the hemorrhagic fever Marburg. The same year, the government of Nigeria failed to enforce a national immunization program, allowing polio, a disease on the brink of eradication, to spread across a broad swath of Africa and beyond to Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia. Diseases incubated in weak and failing states pose both direct and indirect threats to the United States. Significant numbers of U.S. citizens may become infected and die. Even if they do not, such epidemics may impose high economic costs and undermine key countries or regions. The World Bank estimates that SARS cost the East Asian regional economy some \$20–25 billion, despite killing only 912 people.⁴⁵ The political costs of disease are more nuanced but no less real. In the most heavily affected African countries, HIV/AIDS has decimated human capital and fiscal systems, undermining the already limited capacity of states to deliver basic services, control territory, and manage the economy. It has strained health and education systems, eroded social cohesion, undermined agriculture and economic growth, and weakened armies. The pandemic is spreading rapidly into Eurasia and could surge to 110 million cases by 2010, with dramatic increases in countries of strategic significance such as India, China, and Russia.⁴⁶ In the growing transnational threat posed by epidemics, the weak-state problem tends to be one of capacity more than will. Although there have been prominent cases of official denial and foot-dragging (e.g., over HIV/AIDS in Russia or SARS in China), the greater problem is a genuine inability to prevent and respond adequately to disease outbreaks. The most salient governance gap in the case of epidemics is in providing social welfare, notably underdeveloped public health infrastructure.

Failed States Pose a Threat to the Whole World

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/58046/robert-i-rotberg/failed-states-in-a-world-of-terror>

Council on Foreign Relations

July/August 2002

In the wake of September 11, the threat of terrorism has given the problem of failed nation-states an immediacy and importance that transcends its previous humanitarian dimension. Since the early 1990s, wars in and among failed states have killed about eight million people, most of them civilians, and displaced another four million. The number of those impoverished, malnourished, and deprived of fundamental needs such as security, health care, and education has totaled in the hundreds of millions.

Although the phenomenon of state failure is not new, it has become much more relevant and worrying than ever before. In less interconnected eras, state weakness could be isolated and kept distant. Failure had fewer implications for peace and security. Now, these states pose dangers not only to themselves and their neighbors but also to peoples around the globe. Preventing states from failing, and resuscitating those that do fail, are thus strategic and moral imperatives.

But failed states are not homogeneous. The nature of state failure varies from place to place, sometimes dramatically. Failure and weakness can flow from a nation's geographical, physical, historical, and political circumstances, such as colonial errors and Cold War policy mistakes. More than structural or institutional weaknesses, human agency is also culpable, usually in a fatal way. Destructive decisions by individual leaders have almost always paved the way to state failure. President Mobutu Sese Seko's three-plus decades of kleptocratic rule sucked Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo, or DRC) dry until he was deposed in 1997. In Sierra Leone, President Siaka Stevens (1967-85) systematically plundered his tiny country and instrumentalized disorder. President Mohamed Siad Barre (1969-91) did the same in Somalia. These rulers were personally greedy, but as predatory patrimonialists they also licensed and sponsored the avarice of others, thus preordaining the destruction of their states.

Afghanistan as a Failed State

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Failed States and Flawed Logic

The Case against a Standing Nation-Building Office

by Justin Logan and Christopher Preble January 11, 2006

Afghanistan in the late 1990s met anyone's definition of a failed state, and the chaos in Afghanistan clearly contributed to Osama bin Laden's decision to relocate his operations there from Sudan in 1996. However, the security threat to America arose amid fitful cooperation between al-Qaeda and the Taliban government. The Taliban were aware that al-Qaeda training camps existed in Afghanistan. September 11 was the result of a failure of U.S. leadership to recognize the implications of bin Laden's plans coupled with the inability to deter the Taliban regime from actively supporting al-Qaeda.

Terrorists in Pakistan and Somalia

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122869822798786931.html>

Wall Street Journal

DECEMBER 9, 2008, 5:19 A.M. ET

In Pakistan, terrorist groups such as the Taliban, al Qaeda, and Lashkar-e-Taiba have established themselves as a state within a state. They have virtual free reign in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and a lesser but still substantial amount of leeway in the Northwest Frontier and other provinces. That makes it all too easy for them to launch attacks such as those that killed more than 170 people in Mumbai. Or other attacks that kill NATO soldiers in Afghanistan.

Across the Indian Ocean, pirates are terrorizing passing ships. The International Maritime Bureau reports that 92 ships have been attacked and 36 hijacked this year off the coast of Somalia and Yemen. At least 14 ships and 260 crew members are being held hostage. A passenger liner with more than 1,000 people aboard barely avoided being the pirates' latest prize. Vessels that were not so lucky include a Saudi oil tanker carrying two million barrels of crude oil and a Ukrainian freighter loaded with tanks and other weapons.

The predations of pirates and terrorists -- two species of international outlaws -- have caused much handwringing and a so-far unsuccessful search for solutions. The United Nations has authorized warships to enter Somalia's territorial waters and use "all necessary force" against the pirates. A number of states, including the U.S., have sent their own naval vessels to help, but their numbers are grossly inadequate to safeguard thousands of miles of water. The increasingly bold desperados are venturing farther and farther from shore in search of ever more lucrative prizes.

The response in Pakistan has been just as limited and just as ineffective. India, the U.S., Afghanistan and other concerned states have spent years begging Islamabad to crack down on terrorists. These pleas have been backed up by offers of aid and threats if inaction continues. Neither has done much good. The Pakistani army appears either unwilling or unable -- maybe both -- to take effective action against powerful jihadist groups that have longstanding links with its own Inter-Services Intelligence agency. In desperation, the U.S. has resorted to picking off individual terrorists with unmanned aerial vehicles. This tactic works and should be continued, but it is no more than a band-aid on a gaping wound.

The essential problem in both Somalia and Pakistan is a failure of governance. The question is: What if anything can outside powers do to bring the rule of law to these troubled lands? In the 19th century, the answer was simple: European imperialists would plant their flag and impose their laws at gunpoint. The territory that now comprises Pakistan was not entirely peaceful when it was under British rule. Nor was Somalia under Italian and British sovereignty.

Strong Nations are no Longer a Threat

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/cst/csatl8.pdf>

Failed States and Casualty Phobia

Implications for Force Structure and Technology Choices

Jeffrey Record, USAF

October 2000

Iraq is a major case in point. The country is a failed state by virtue of the strategic incompetence of its leadership in starting two disastrous wars and because of a decade of effective international economic sanctioning. Its infrastructure is all but gone, its wealth destroyed or looted, its air space patrolled by hostile aircraft, and its Kurdish North transformed into a foreign military protectorate. Indeed, the Gulf War never really ended; it is simply being continued at a much lower level of violence. Consider also the inevitable emergence of a Palestinian state, which seems destined to be a failure absent—perhaps even in spite of—massive injections of international capital. Political divisions within the Palestinian community are severe, as they are within Israel, the chief enemy of a Palestinian state. Successful statehood presupposes not only success in dealing with enormous economic and social challenges but also Palestinian and Israeli leadership willing and able to curb die-hard extremists on both sides. These are tall orders.

To repeat, strong states are no longer the problem; weak ones are. Failed states have become the primary source of instability in the international political system, not just because war within the advanced industrial world has drastically receded, but also because failed states invite intervention by stronger states. State failure inherently attracts humanitarian intervention even when no strategic interest is present. But because the United States and its allies also have a strong stake in the present global political and economic order, they therefore have a strong stake in containing state failures' potentially adverse regional and strategic consequences. Thus the United States invaded Haiti not just to restore democracy but also to stanch the flow of unwanted Haitian refugees into America. Thus NATO moved against Serbia in 1999 not just to stop the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo but also to preserve the Alliance's own credibility and to prevent Southeastern Europe's further destabilization.

Strong Nations are no Longer a Threat Cont'd

<http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/pab06failingstates.pdf>

The Stanley Foundation

September 2006

Failing States and US Strategy

The issue of failed and failing states is one of the principal challenges facing the United States in the first part of the 21st century. As the US National Security Strategy of 2002 correctly noted, "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones."

One failed state, Afghanistan, incubated the terrorist movement that carried out the attacks of 9/11, and after the US-led international intervention, has become the world's largest producer of heroin. The inability of the Lebanese government and armed forces to control the Hezbollah militia and prevent its attacks on Israel sparked another major conflict in the summer of 2006. Other Muslim countries in a similar condition may become future bases for terrorism, thereby posing a very serious threat to US security and American lives. Moreover, states often fail in circumstances of savage internecine violence and atrocities against civilians that are a reproach to the conscience of mankind, and a blot on America's record as the world's only superpower. So although given the US record of military intervention, it is strongly desired that the United States never carries out another one. Unfortunately, this may not be possible for several reasons. First, the United States may be attacked again as it was on 9/11, or it may face a genuinely serious threat of this. Just because the Bush administration has invented or exaggerated such threats in recent years does not mean that they may not become real in the future.

Second, there may well be new cases of genocide in small countries like Rwanda where this would be relatively easy to stop. The Rwanda genocide, and its more than 700,000 deaths, could have been prevented by quite small numbers of international troops, either including US forces or backed by US logistical support. In recent years, the word *genocide* has often been greatly overused, and extended from genuine but very rare cases like Rwanda to other conflicts that though ugly, fall far short of the attempted extermination of a people. But cases of true genocide may alas recur, and will bring with them a moral imperative to intervene.

Third, and this is more long-term, relates to the threat of global warming. If majority scientific opinion is correct, then the next decades will see drastic changes to the climate of many parts of the world, including some of the world's poorest and most heavily populated. These will include the flooding of certain areas and the desertification of others, and will place intense pressure on often fragile states—Bangladesh and Pakistan being the most obvious examples. If these states collapse, then the result will be uncontrollable movements of refugees that will first overwhelm great regional states like India, and then possibly even the West. The effectiveness of local states in meeting these challenges is therefore (after action against global warming itself) the world's first line of defense against this potential cataclysm.

Strong Nations are no Longer a Threat Cont'd

<http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/pab06failingstates.pdf>

The Stanley Foundation

September 2006

Failing States and US Strategy

Of course, international intervention in a failing state should only be the last option. Vastly preferable in every way is to mobilize effective US and international development assistance to prevent the given state from failing in the first place. Given the threat to vital US interests of Islamist terrorism and revolution, US-led efforts should be focused first and foremost on countries in the Muslim world. They will need to involve not only increased assistance but also greatly increased thought about how to apply such assistance in countries with weak and corrupt state apparatuses. This needs to include a new and more realistic mixture of attitudes and policies toward the question of democracy-building—something that I have called “developmental realism.”

The United States needs to treat this issue with the same mixture of urgency and enlightened generosity with which the United States went to the assistance of states menaced by communism during the Cold War. Indeed, given the way in which the US administration, political establishments, and media continually emphasize the dangers to the United States from Islamist extremism, there should be no real question about this. In fact, however, US assistance remains quite pitiful compared to the sums that it was willing to spend during the Cold War; this is true even in countries like Pakistan, which are universally recognized to be both in serious danger of ultimately failing and to be of absolutely critical importance in the “war on terror.” Mobilizing the US public and the political elites behind new development efforts is therefore an essential part of any US strategy concerning the issue of failing states.

Major Powers have not Threatened U.S. Power

<http://www.observerindia.com/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=15556&mmacmaid=15557>

Observer Research Foundation, Just another BRIC in the Wall?, Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan*, 23 December 2008

Richard Haass writes that despite the rise in anti-American sentiments, no alternate power bloc has been able to challenge the United States in a significant manner, due to the huge gap that the US has managed to create between Washington and centres of power in almost all spheres.

In the context of this debate, BRICs also have been identified, as potential future competitor to the US and other advanced industrial countries. Nevertheless, it should be noted that despite the relative decline in US power, the unipolarity is still a feature of the international system. Although countries like China, in an effort to counter such unilateral tendencies on the part of the US, started aligning with major powers such as Russia as well as strengthening bilateral and multilateral ties within the region, it has not been able to shift the balance in its favour or even form a wider coalition of nations to counter Washington.

Western Order Accommodates Rising Powers

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080101faessay87102/g-john-ikenberry/the-rise-of-china-and-the-future-of-the-west.html>

G. John Ikenberry, Foreign Affairs, January/February 2008

The most important benefit of these features today is that they give the Western order a remarkable capacity to accommodate rising powers. New entrants into the system have ways of gaining status and authority and opportunities to play a role in governing the order. The fact that the United States, China, and other great powers have nuclear weapons also limits the ability of a rising power to overturn the existing order. In the age of nuclear deterrence, great-power war is, thankfully, no longer a mechanism of historical change. War-driven change has been abolished as a historical process.

State power today is ultimately based on sustained economic growth, and China is well aware that no major state can modernize without integrating into the globalized capitalist system; if a country wants to be a world power, it has no choice but to join the World Trade Organization (WTO). The road to global power, in effect, runs through the Western order and its multilateral economic institutions.

Multipolarity Inevitable and More Stable

<http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/23/1192.html>

Alexander Lomanov

Russia in Global Affairs

6-15-08

China is optimistic about assessing general global tendencies – the influence of developing countries is growing; the tendency toward multipolarity is irreversible; and the global balance of forces promotes stability. This situation prompts China to engage in a gradual democratic reform of the status quo instead of challenging it. “This will give China the international peaceful image of a responsible big country, not a rebel,” says Dr Guan Li, deputy director of the International Strategy Institute of the CPC Party School.

Con Evidence

Majority of Failed States Do Not Pose a Threat

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Failed States and Flawed Logic

The Case against a Standing Nation-Building Office

by Justin Logan and Christopher Preble January 11, 2006

Although failed states can present threats, it is a mistake to argue that they frequently do. The few attempts that have been made to quantify what “state failure” means demonstrate that it is not inherently threatening. The notion that state failure constitutes a direct threat to the United States is alarmingly widespread and has been in circulation for some time.

It would be absurd to claim that the ongoing state failure in, say, Haiti, poses a national security threat of the same order as would, for example, state failure in Indonesia, with its population of 240 million, or in nuclear-armed Pakistan. In fact, the overwhelming majority of failed states have posed no security threat to the United States. The blanket characterization that failed states represent anything monolithic is misleading. Rather, the dangers that can arise from failed states are not the product of state failure itself; threats are the result of other conditions, such as the presence of terrorist cells or other malign actors within a failed state. It is not the “failure” that threatens.

Afghanistan serves as a stark reminder that we must not overlook failed states, but it does not justify moving failed states to the top of the list of security concerns. And even a cursory look at the empirical data on failed states shows that state failure rarely translates into threats to the United States.

Failed Does not Mean Threatening

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Failed States and Flawed Logic

The Case against a Standing Nation-Building Office

by Justin Logan and Christopher Preble January 11, 2006

To assess whether or not state failure poses a threat to U.S. national security, we must first define what “state failure” means and then examine the historical cases that meet that definition. The most comprehensive and analytically rigorous study of state failure was a task force report commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency’s Directorate of Intelligence in 2000.³⁸ In that report, the authors sought to quantify and examine episodes of state failure between 1955 and 1998. Working from their first definition of state failure (when “central state authority collapses for several years”), the authors were able to find only 20 cases of bona fide state failure, too small a number to produce statistically significant conclusions. As a consequence, the authors chose to broaden the definition to include the following lesser events.³⁹

- Revolutionary wars (REV), defined as “sustained violent conflict between governments and politically organized challengers that seek to overthrow the central government, replace its leaders, or seize power in one region”;
- Ethnic wars (ETH), defined as “sustained violent conflict in which national, ethnic, religious, or other communal minorities challenge governments to seek major changes in status”;
- Adverse regime changes (REG), defined as “major, abrupt shifts in patterns of governance, including state collapse, periods of severe elite or regime instability, and shifts away from democratic toward authoritarian rule”; and
- Genocides and politicides (GEN), defined as “sustained policies by states or their agents, or, in civil wars, by either of the contending authorities that result in the deaths of a substantial portion of a communal or political group.”⁴⁰

After establishing those new criteria, the authors found 114 cases of state failure between 1955 and 1998. Further, an examination of the states characterized as failures reveals that, in fact, failed states rarely present security threats. Although the authors of the task force report did not define “challenges to U.S. foreign policy,” it is clear that the vast majority of countries characterized as failures did not (and do not) present threats that warrant broad U.S. government intervention on the order envisioned by the creators of S/CRS.⁴⁴ And to the extent that any of the states listed did represent security threats, broad nation-building missions targeted at the condition of state failure rather than the threat itself would not have been the most appropriate response.

Failed Does not Mean Threatening Cont'd

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>

The Cato Institute

Failed States and Flawed Logic

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by Justin Logan and Christopher Preble January 11, 2006

Other lists of failed states confirm that state failure in itself does not constitute a security threat. The British Department for International Development (DFID) used the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessments methodology to draw up its own list of "fragile" states, defined almost exactly the same as are "failed" states in other studies.⁴⁶ DFID's list included such countries as Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, the Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu.⁴⁷ DFID says that fragile states are problematic because they "are more likely to . . . fall prey to criminal and terrorist networks,"⁴⁸ but it is difficult to understand how many of the above countries could present security threats to the United States in any foreseeable scenario.

Since the empirical research on failed states does not demonstrate that they necessarily present threats, it is difficult to understand why the belief that they do is so widely held.

Today's Threats Do Not Come from Failed States

<http://www.democracyarsenal.org/2009/05/bloggng-nagl-the-failed-states-myth.html>

Democracy Arsenal

Michael Cohen

May 01, 2009

Indeed many of the threats we confront today come from states that would hardly be considered failed or failing. Right now we are dealing with a possible pandemic and bloody drug war from a non-failed state next door (Mexico); the pot, cocaine and heroin that kills thousands and leads to crime in America comes from places like Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and even Canada. The 9/11 hijackers were trained in Afghanistan, but resided in Saudi Arabia and Egypt and other potential jihadists find support in Western Europe.

And Tuesday's [excellent New York Times article on cybersecurity](#) bears noting as well. As the article makes clear many of these attacks are coming not from failed states, but instead from places like China and Russia - and not necessarily from the government. In case you don't think this is a serious threat consider the words of former director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell who "argued that if a single large American bank were successfully attacked 'it would have an order-of-magnitude greater impact on the global economy' than the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks." McConnell also warned that "the ability to threaten the U.S. money supply is the equivalent of today's nuclear weapon."

http://74.125.95.132/search?q=cache:WwoE_4HPtJMJ:www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf+weak+states+and+global+threats+stewart+patrick&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a

Washington Quarterly 2006

Third, the relationship between state weakness and spillovers is not linear. It varies by threat. Some salient transnational dangers to U.S. and global security come not from states at the bottom quintile of the Governance Matters rankings but from the next tier up, countries such as Colombia, the world's leading producer of cocaine; Saudi Arabia, home to a majority of the September 11 hijackers; Russia, a host of numerous transnational criminal enterprises; and China, the main source both of SARS and avian flu. These states tend to be better run and more capable of delivering political goods; nearly half are eligible or on the threshold of eligibility for the MCA in 2006. Nevertheless, even these middling performers may suffer from critical gaps in capacity or political will that enable spillovers

Today's Threats Do Not Come from Failed States Cont'd

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy

Updated August 28, 2008

Current Threats

Other analysts caution, however, that despite anecdotal evidence supporting a potential nexus between state weakness and today's security threats, weak states may not necessarily harbor U.S. national security threats. Furthermore, the weakest states may not necessarily be the most significant threats to U.S. national security; relatively functional states, characterized by some elements of weakness rather than complete state collapse, may also be sites from which threats can emerge.

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=3653>

Under the Influence: What If We're Wrong?

Andrew Bast | [Bio](#) | 27 Apr 2009

[World Politics Review](#)

Lastly, are failed states the foremost threat to American security? Since Bush announced the [2002 National Security Strategy](#) -- which declared that the foremost threats to the U.S. now come from weak and failed states like Afghanistan, rather than from big-power rivals like Russia and China -- conventional wisdom about war has been turned on its head. Counterinsurgency and state-building have risen to the top of the Pentagon's agenda. But in a [2006 piece in the Washington Quarterly](#) (.pdf), Stewart Patrick, now at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote, "It is striking, however, how little empirical evidence underpins these sweeping assertions and policy developments." The entire reconceptualization of threats to the U.S. homeland may be based on little more than anecdotal evidence.

Threats from Failed States are Due to Other Factors

http://74.125.95.132/search?q=cache:WwoE_4HPtJMJ:www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf+weak+states+and+global+threats+stewart+patrick&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a

Washington Quarterly 2006

It is striking, however, how little empirical evidence underpins these sweeping assertions and policy developments. Policymakers and experts have presumed a blanket connection between **weak** governance and transnational **threats** and have begun to implement policy responses accordingly. Yet, they have rarely distinguished among categories of **weak** and failing **states** or asked whether (and how) certain types of developing countries are associated with particular **threats**. Too often, it appears that the entire range of Western policies is animated by anecdotal evidence or isolated examples, such as Al Qaeda's operations in Afghanistan or cocaine trafficking in Colombia. The risk in this approach is that the United **States** will squander energy and resources in a diffuse, unfocused effort to attack state weakness wherever it arises, without appropriate attention to setting priorities and tailoring responses to poor governance and its specific, attendant spillovers

<http://reason.com/archives/2006/07/01/are-failed-states-a-threat-to>

Reason.com

The Bush administration's nation-building efforts are a big mistake.

[Christopher Preble](#) & [Justin Logan](#) from the [July 2006](#) issue

It would be absurd to claim that the ongoing state failure in Haiti poses a national security threat of the same order as would state failure in Indonesia, with its population of 240 million, or in nuclear-armed Pakistan. In fact, the overwhelming majority of failed states have posed no security threat to the United States. Take, for example, the list of countries identified as failed or failing by *Foreign Policy* magazine and the Fund for Peace in 2005. Using 12 different indicators of state failure, the researchers derived state failure scores, and then listed 60 countries whose cumulative scores marked them as "critical," "in danger," or "borderline," ranked in order. If state failure is itself threatening, then we should get very concerned about the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Chad, Bangladesh, and on and on.

In short, state failure ranks rather low as an accurate metric for measuring threats. Likewise, while the lists of "failed states" and "security threats" will no doubt overlap, correlation does not equal causation. The obvious non threats that appear on all lists of failed states undermine the claim that there is something particular about failed states that is necessarily threatening.

Threats are Due to Other Factors Cont'd

<http://reason.com/archives/2006/07/01/are-failed-states-a-threat-to>

Reason.com

The Bush administration's nation-building efforts are a big mistake.

[Christopher Preble](#) & [Justin Logan](#) from the [July 2006](#) issue

The dangers that can arise from failed states are not the product of state failure itself. They are the result of other factors, such as the presence of terrorist cells or other malign actors.

Afghanistan in the late 1990s met anyone's definition of a failed state, and the chaos in Afghanistan clearly contributed to Osama bin Laden's decision to relocate his operations there from Sudan in 1996. But the security threat to America arose from cooperation between Al Qaeda and the Taliban government, which tolerated the organization's training camps.

Afghanistan under the Taliban was both a failed state and a threat, but in that respect it was a rarity. More common are failed states, from the Ivory Coast to Burma, that pose no threat to us at all.

It's true that Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations can operate in failed states. But they also can (and do) operate in Germany, Canada, and other countries that are not failed states by any stretch of the imagination. Rather than making categorical statements about failed states, we should assess the extent to which any given state or non state actors within it intend and have the means to attack America. Afghanistan is a stark reminder that we must not overlook failed states, but it does not justify making them our top security concern.

Terrorism not Caused by Failed Nations

http://74.125.95.132/search?q=cache:WwoE_4HPtJMJ:www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf+weak+states+and+global+threats+stewart+patrick&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=firefox-a
Washington Quarterly 2006

A closer look suggests that the connection between state weakness and transnational terrorism is more complicated and tenuous than often assumed. First, obviously not all weak and failed states are afflicted by terrorism. As historian Walter Laqueur points out, “In the 49 countries currently designated by the United Nations as the least developed hardly any terrorist activity occurs.”²⁷ Weak capacity per se cannot explain why terrorist activity is concentrated in particular regions, particularly the Middle East and broader Muslim world, rather than others such as Central Africa. Other variables and dynamics, including political, religious, cultural, and geographical factors, clearly shape its global distribution

Similarly, not all terrorism that occurs in weak and failing states is transnational. Much is self-contained action by insurgents motivated by local political grievances, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), or national liberation struggles, such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka. It is thus only tangentially related to the “global war on terrorism,” which, as defined by the Bush administration, focuses on terrorists with global reach, particularly those motivated by an extreme Salafist strand of Wahhabi Islam

http://www.twq.com/06spring/docs/06spring_patrick.pdf

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The Washington Quarterly • 29:2 pp. 27–53.

Fourth, transnational terrorists are only partially and perhaps decreasingly reliant on weak and failing states. For one, the Al Qaeda threat has evolved from a centrally directed network, dependent on a “base,” into a much more diffuse global movement consisting of autonomous cells in dozens of countries, poor and wealthy alike. Moreover, the source of radical Islamic terrorism may reside less in state weakness in the Middle East than in the alienation of de-territorialized Muslims in Europe. The “safe havens” of global terrorists are as likely to be the *banlieues* of Paris as the wastes of the Sahara or the slums of Karachi.²⁹ In other words, weak and failing states can provide useful assets to transnational terrorists, but they may be less central to their operations than widely believed.

Terrorists are Vulnerable in Failed States

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>

The Cato Institute

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Afghanistan under the Taliban was both a failed state and a threat, but, in that respect, it was actually quite a rarity. And the fact that al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations can and do operate in failed states provides no unique insight, either. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates operate effectively from Germany, Canada, and other countries that are by no means failed states. In fact, dealing with terrorist threats in failed states can in some ways be easier than dealing with them in cohesive modern states. As Gary Dempsey pointed out in 2002: Failed states are where the terrorists are most vulnerable to covert action, commando raids, surprise attacks, and local informants willing to work for a few dollars. Failed states are not “safe havens”; they are defenseless positions.³⁴

Failed Nations are Not a Terrorist Haven

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy

Updated August 28, 2008

Researchers find, however, that not all weak states serve as safe havens for international terrorists.¹⁴ Terrorists have been known to exploit safe havens in non weak as well as weak states. The Political Instability Task Force, a research group commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency, found in a 2003 report that terrorists operate in both “caves” (i.e., failed states, where militant groups can exist with impunity) and “condos” (i.e., states that have the infrastructure to support the international flow of illicit people, funds, and information). The preference for “condos” suggests that countries most devoid of functioning government institutions may sometimes be less conducive to a terrorist presence than countries that are still weak, but retain some governmental effectiveness.¹⁵

Terrorism isn't a Threat to Homeland

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=3653>

Under the Influence: What If We're Wrong?

Andrew Bast | [Bio](#) | 27 Apr 2009

[World Politics Review](#)

First, is al-Qaida worth the fight? Obviously the terrorist network pulled off the most lethal terrorist attack in American history, after having already struck American targets in Nairobi and Yemen. Since then, however, the terrorist network has been pummeled. As a result, Cambridge and Yale scholars [Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Calvert Jones argue](#) in the Harvard political science journal, *International Security*, al-Qaida may be less threatening than many think: "Many of al-Qaida's traditional strengths seem to build on a hierarchical structure, which has been increasingly difficult to sustain as the organization has come under stress." Like other non-state threats, such as drug cartels in Colombia, illicit networks are crippled when they are decentralized. In other words, al-Qaida has been shaken up and these days when it can even walk, it's limping.

Second, is terrorism an urgent threat to the U.S. homeland? Again, the magnitude of 9/11 has turned the public sector, and large parts of the private sector, into a battleground against a seemingly ubiquitous threat. But statistics tell another story. On the whole, terrorist attacks today take place mainly in Iraq and Afghanistan, two countries in the throes of war. [Harvard professor Stephen Walt points out](#) that Americans are more at risk of drowning in a bathtub than being killed by a terrorist. And, Walt says, "[T]hat would be true even if the United States were to suffer one 9/11-scale attack every 10 years. Given these numbers, does it really make sense to double down in Central Asia?" Statistically speaking, drunk driving, highway fatalities and obesity could be considered far more deadly adversaries than terrorism.

Third, is the Taliban a direct threat to the United States? In a tightly argued piece on Foreign Affairs' Web site, [Ohio State professor John Mueller makes the case](#) that President Obama's claims against the Taliban are as dubious as those George W. Bush used to justify his war against Saddam Hussein. The Taliban, he argues, were a reluctant host to bin Laden, and today have little interest outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan. "If [the Taliban] came to power again now, they would be highly unlikely to host provocative terrorist groups," Mueller writes. If that is true, he says, popular support for the war -- [which is already waning](#) -- will fade even further.

International Crime not Unique to Failed Nations

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

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Updated August 28, 2008

Some researchers contend, however, that the weakest states are not necessarily the most attractive states for international criminals. This may be because some illicit transnational groups might be too dependent on access to global financial services, modern telecommunication systems, transportation, and infrastructure that do not exist in weak states. Researchers also find that some forms of international crime are more associated with weak states than others. Narcotics trafficking and illicit arms smuggling, for example, often flow through weak states. However, other types, such as counterfeiting and financial fraud, may be more prevalent in wealthier states.²⁰

Failed Nations Cannot Handle Proliferation

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34253.pdf>

Congressional Research Service

Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy

Updated August 28, 2008

Analysts also contend that while the potential for weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) trafficking through weak states is considerable, most weak states may be unlikely destinations for smuggled WMD devices. Such equipment requires a certain level of technological sophistication that may not exist in some weak and failing states.

http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-

[American Perspectives on the Threat Posed by Weak and Failing Asian States.pdf](http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-American_Perspectives_on_the_Threat_Posed_by_Weak_and_Failing_Asian_States.pdf)

William M. Wise

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February 23-24, 2004

WMD Proliferation

The connection between state failure and WMD proliferation is less clear unless the analysis defines rogue states as fundamentally weak or failing. Even then, a review of the literature suggests that WMD proliferation tends to operate independently of state failure. For example, the proliferation risk in the 1970s and 1980s focused primarily on regimes that felt threatened militarily and isolated diplomatically – South Africa, Taiwan, South Korea, Argentina, Iraq, Israel – but they were not necessarily weak or failing.²² The contemporary proliferation risk comes from states, such as North Korea and Pakistan, that are similarly situated but, depending on the criteria employed, may also be weak or failing states. At the same time, proliferation risks such as Libya and Iran do not fit the criteria for weak or failing states. Thus, we cannot conclude from the literature either that state failure induces WMD proliferation, although some states (e.g., North Korea and Pakistan) are frequently described as weak or failing and are clearly proliferators. The cases of North Korea and Pakistan may suggest a tendency for weak or failing states that develop WMD as a consequence of national security concerns to provide weapons technology to rogue states or terrorist groups, but the link between state failure and WMD proliferation remains to be established.

States Labeled as Failed to Promote Assistance

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>

The Cato Institute

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by Justin Logan and Christopher Preble January 11, 2006

At times, the claims that failed states are inherently threatening seem so dubious that one wonders whether the arguments may not simply be a vehicle for generating support for foreign interventions. For example, Stephen D. Krasner, now the State Department's director of policy planning, and Jack Goldsmith, then a professor of law at the University of Chicago, wrote an article in 2003 in which they identified the "problematic absence of democratic support for humanitarian intervention."³⁵ Goldsmith and Krasner cite the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which argued that "the budgetary cost and risk to personnel involved in any military action may in fact make it politically imperative for the intervening state to be able to claim some degree of self-interest in the intervention, however altruistic its primary motive might actually be."³⁶

Goldsmith and Krasner conclude: This absence of democratic support is fundamental problem for those who insist that nations should intervene to arrest human suffering in other nations . . . this means that political leaders cannot engage in acts of altruism abroad much beyond what constituents and/or interest groups will support. This conclusion is fatal to the interventionist project.³⁷ With that in mind, it is wise to view sweeping claims about the supposed threats posed by failed states with considerable skepticism.

North Korea is Weak not Failed

http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/65/2004-02-American_Perspectives_on_the_Threat_Posed_by_Weak_and_Failing_Asian_States.pdf

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February 23-24, 2004

North Korea As a charter member of the “Axis of Evil,” North Korea is regularly described as a *rogue* state, but occasionally also as a failing or failed state. Rotberg’s characterization of North Korea as exemplar of a special sub-category of weak states seems most appropriate, however. North Korea possesses many of the qualities of a weak state, except that its authoritarian regime wields absolute power throughout the country. North Korea’s active nuclear weapons program, coupled with its ballistic missile capability, clearly constitutes a threat to its neighbors and to the United States.²⁹

North Korea

In his annual worldwide threat assessment presented to Congress in February 2002, then Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet warned that the cumulative effects of prolonged economic mismanagement left North Korea “increasingly susceptible to the possibility of state failure.” Tenet catalogued North Korea’s problems: economic deprivation, chronic food shortages leading to periodic famine, malnutrition and collapse of the public health system.⁵⁷ In his February 2003 report, the DCI reiterated that North Korea’s nuclear weapons program posed a danger to its region and the world. The elements of this threat are well known: developing the capability to enrich uranium, ending the freeze on its plutonium production facilities, and withdrawing from the Nonproliferation Treaty. Tenet added: “North Korea also continues to export complete ballistic missiles and co-production capabilities along with related raw materials, components and expertise. Profits from these sales help Pyongyang to support its missile and other WMD development programs and in turn generate new products to offer its customers.”⁵⁸

Secretary of State Colin Powell has also discussed the North Korean threat both in congressional testimony and speeches. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly amplified remarks in numerous presentations to the Congress during the past three years. There can be little doubt that the Bush administration has accorded North Korea a very high priority.⁵⁹

Stable Nations have Caused Economic Problems

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/~media/Files/rc/reports2008/10_global_economics_top_ten/top_ten_2008.pdf

Brookings Global Economy and Development

The Top 10 Global Economic Challenges Facing America's 44th President

China's sustained rapid growth, along with that of India, has contributed to a big jump in commodity prices. The higher costs of inputs have two negative effects: reducing profits and hence lowering the supply of the final goods; and causing the prices of final goods to rise, thus preventing profits from absorbing the entire cost increase. This stagflationary (inflationamid-contraction) situation has confronted the central banks in Europe and the U.S. with the difficult choice of contracting credit to blunt higher inflation or of expanding credit to offset reduced production. This dilemma is now complicating efforts to meet the new challenge of creating additional liquidity to calm the financial turmoil that started with the bursting of the U.S. subprime mortgage bubble in February 2007.

Inevitably, weakened demand in the U.S. and Europe is being transmitted to suppliers in Asia and elsewhere, in turn slowing down their growth, and hence moderating the commodity price boom. The lesson is that economic globalization has created such complex interdependence and new powerful actors that the guardianship of global prosperity has become a multilateral enterprise, in which widening cooperation (for example, in trade deregulation, financial flows and environmental commons) is paramount for avoiding unintended negative side effects.

Stable Nations Hold Foreign Papers

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/~media/Files/rc/reports2008/10_global_economics_top_ten/top_ten_2008.pdf

Brookings Global Economy and Development

The Top 10 Global Economic Challenges Facing America's 44th President

And as the world's biggest producer of oil and natural gas, Russia plays a crucial role in global energy security. Finally, Russia now holds the world's third-largest foreign currency reserves.

The financial challenge: Russia is third only to China and Japan as a foreign holder of Western—mainly U.S.—government securities. These massive funds represent a transfer from Western consumers to Russia's state coffers. America would be better off if these funds were recycled back into its economy in the form of equity investments.

Debt has a Negative Impact on the U.S.

<http://www.cfr.org/publication/8927/>

[budget_and_current_account_deficits_jeopardize_us_influence_warns_council_special_report.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/8927/budget_and_current_account_deficits_jeopardize_us_influence_warns_council_special_report.html)

Budget and Current Account Deficits Jeopardize U.S. Influence, Warns Council Special Report
September 29, 2005

Council on Foreign Relations

America's continued descent into greater and greater indebtedness threatens an important source of its influence: the dollar's role as the critical global currency. "A cautionary note regarding America's current path is provided by Britain's loss of military and political primacy in the twentieth century; that development followed a shift from creditor to debtor status. Similarly, a prolonged decline in the dollar's value and increasing indebtedness will erode America's dominance in political and security spheres."

As a consequence of these deficits, the United States faces several worrying outcomes. One likely result is that foreign governments and private investors, confronted with an endless vista of U.S. budget deficits, will tire of accumulating Treasury securities. Borrowing costs for the Treasury would then rise significantly and the dollar would fall sharply. The economy would slow dramatically, driven indirectly by a slump in the housing market or directly through falling private consumption.

Consumption Increases Commodity Prices

<http://www2.goldmansachs.com/ideas/brics/book/BRIC-Full.pdf>

BRICS AND BEYOND

Goldman Sachs Global Economics Group

November 2007

China is driving much of the BRICs story, with its role in the BRIC's drive for commodities most obvious in oil. China's share of world oil consumption has risen by three-quarters over the past decade, and China is projected to account for half of the BRIC's total oil consumption this year. Since 2000, China's share of world demand has nearly doubled for almost every industrial metal group.

Finally, we look at agricultural commodities, where China's dominance of the global textile industry is evident in its nearly 40% share of the world cotton market. We also find that cultural patterns rather than income dominate data on meat consumption, with national preferences (for pork in China, poultry in Russia, beef in Brazil and a vegetarian diet in India) affecting global consumption patterns.

The BRIC's share of global oil demand has been on an upward trend since 1995, jumping from 15.9% then to an estimated 18.6% in 2006. This is almost entirely due to demand growth in China. The IEA estimates that China's share of global oil demand will reach 8.2% in 2006 from just 4.7% in 1995.

China is by far the largest BRIC consumer in all of the major base metal groups, accounting for nearly 30% of global demand for zinc and more than 25% of world demand for lead.

Chinese demand for industrial metals has outpaced even the robust growth in its overall economy, which is 85% larger today than in 2000. Since 2000, China's share of world demand has close to doubled for almost every industrial metal group.

Structural factors behind rising food prices in the BRICs higher incomes and demand for alternative energy sources mean that food-related inflationary concerns are unlikely to abate. Pressures for higher crop yields are likely to intensify environmental degradation. But the BRICs are key agricultural exporters as well as importers, and higher food prices might boost rural incomes.

Stable Nations Take U.S. Market Share

http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2007/07/06/us_oil_companies_influence_wanes/?page=full

U.S. oil companies' influence wanes

By John Porretto, AP Business Writer | July 6, 2007

New research by investment bank Goldman Sachs suggests four countries in particular -- Brazil, Russia, India and China, or the so-called BRIC countries -- are grabbing the most market share from American companies. The BRIC's share of the industry's market value has grown from virtually nothing 15 years ago to more than one third today, while American companies' stake has dwindled from more than half to less than a third.

China Harms American Markets

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/~media/Files/rc/reports2008/10_global_economics_top_ten/top_ten_2008.pdf

Brookings Global Economy and Development

The Top 10 Global Economic Challenges Facing America's 44th President

China's growth has been accompanied by growing anxiety in the United States. While U.S.-based multinationals rush to establish a foothold in China's growing market and U.S. consumers stock up on "made in China" merchandise, American manufacturing workers, small business owners and politicians have become anxious about this latest wave of globalization. Though fears of a permanent loss of U.S. comparative advantage are overblown, concerns about an unequal distribution of the benefits and pains are not.

At the same time, the large U.S. trade deficit and China's rapid rise have sparked accusations that China's economic strategy is unfair. The U.S. goal in promoting China's accession to the WTO in 2001 was to bind China to increasing responsibility in the international arena. Yet China has often failed to live up to its WTO commitments and rules on intellectual property, export subsidies and import deterrents. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security reports that nearly 70 percent of products seized for infringing on intellectual property rights originate in China. Chinese firms that meet specified export performance targets are eligible for tax rebates. And firms that choose Chinese-made equipment over imported equipment also qualify for tax rebates.

China and India Add Low Wage Workers to the World

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/~media/Files/rc/reports2008/10_global_economics_top_ten/top_ten_2008.pdf

Brookings Global Economy and Development

The Top 10 Global Economic Challenges Facing America's 44th President

The adjustment pains reflect not only the integration of China but also that of India. Together, these two huge nations are adding 1.2 billion lower-wage workers to the global economy. With lagged adjustment of “capital,” this puts downward pressure on the wages of similarly skilled workers elsewhere— while increasing corporate profits and the earnings of other complementary inputs.

Stable Nations Threaten Energy Security

<http://www.power-technology.com/features/feature1417/>

Mitch Beedie, Freelance Writer

Power-Technology.com

November 1, 2007

The effect on the market is prominent; the BRIC nations have already overtaken the US in the global energy industry. Over the last 15 years the dominance of energy supply by US and European companies has weakened markedly. Largely at the expense of the US, BRIC nation suppliers have taken a third of the energy supply market. The top companies now include PetroChina, Gazprom, Petroleo Brasileiro and India's Oil & Natural Gas Corp. Mining, manufacturing and other industries are likely to follow.

There is another undercurrent caused by the rise of BRIC that in some ways is a much larger concern than the changing of the energy markets. Even now, taking only around 20% of global oil, China and India's growth is increasing international oil prices. Supplies are working almost flat out already and, if world oil supply has indeed already peaked, future worldwide scrambling could send prices rocketing.

This will damage countries that are heavily dependent on imports, prompting them to turn to other fossil fuels where possible. China and India are already ramping up power plant construction using their huge coal reserves.

Threats from China

http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20090212_testimony.pdf

Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community
Director of National Intelligence 12 February 2009

Missile Capability. China continues to develop and field conventional theater-range ballistic and cruise missile capabilities that can reach US forces and regional bases throughout the Western Pacific and Asia, including Guam. China also is developing conventionally armed short- and medium-range ballistic missiles with terminally guided maneuverable warheads that could be used to attack US naval forces and airbases. In addition, counter-command, control, and sensor systems, to include communications satellite jammers, are among Beijing's highest military priorities.

Counterspace Systems. China continues to pursue a long-term program to develop a capability to disrupt and damage critical foreign space systems. Counterspace systems, including antisatellite (ASAT) weapons, also rank among the country's highest military priorities.

Nuclear Capability. On the nuclear side, we judge Beijing seeks to modernize China's strategic forces in order to address concerns about the survivability of those systems in the face of foreign, particularly US, advances in strategic reconnaissance, precision strike, and missile defenses. We assess China's nuclear capabilities will increase over the next ten years.

Threats from India

http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20090212_testimony.pdf

Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community

Director of National Intelligence 12 February 2009

Indian Pragmatism

On the global stage, Indian leaders will continue to follow an independent course characterized by economic and political pragmatism. New Delhi will not automatically support or oppose positions favored by the United States or any other major power. However, Indian leaders often will adopt positions contrary to those favored by Washington. India will be concerned about China during the coming decade because of Beijing's political and economic power and its ability to project military force regionally, but Indian leaders will strive to avoid confrontation with China.

Threats from Russia

http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20090212_testimony.pdf

Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community
Director of National Intelligence 12 February 2009

Russian challenges to US interests now spring more from Moscow's perceived strengths than from the state weaknesses characteristic of the 1990s. US involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and general anti-Americanism have created openings for Russia to build alternative arrangements to the US-led international political and economic institutional order. Russia is actively cultivating relations with regional powers, including China, Iran, and Venezuela to increase its ability to influence events. Moscow also is trying to maintain control over energy supply and transportation networks to Europe to East Asia, and protect and further enhance its market share in Europe through new bilateral energy partnerships and organizing a gas cartel with other major exporters. Russia appears to believe the continued heavy dependence of European countries and former Soviet states on Russia's state gas monopoly, Gazprom, provides Moscow with political and economic leverage.

Russia continues to rely on its nuclear deterrent and retaliatory capability to counter the perceived threat from the United States and NATO. Moscow for the past several years has also been strengthening its conventional military force to make it a credible foreign policy instrument, both to signal its political resurgence and to assert its dominance over neighboring states, like Georgia. Moscow has actively engaged in foreign military cooperation with countries such as China and Venezuela, in part to remind the United States and others of Russia's global military relevance. Despite persistent challenges, including a long-term decline in the numbers and quality of recruits and difficulties in keeping pace with the demands of weapons modernization, the Russian military defeated the Georgian military last August.

Threats from Mexico

http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20090212_testimony.pdf

Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community

Director of National Intelligence 12 February 2009

Mexico remains the most important conduit for illicit drugs reaching the United States. As much as 90 percent of that cocaine known to be directed toward the United States, and some Colombian heroin, eventually transits Mexico before entering the United States. Despite recent successful efforts to counter precursor chemical diversion and drug trafficking, Mexico is the chief foreign supplier of methamphetamine and marijuana to the US market and produces most of the heroin consumed west of the Mississippi River. The corruptive influence and increasing violence of Mexican drug cartels, which are among the most powerful organized crime groups in the world, impede Mexico City's ability to govern parts of its territory and build effective democratic institutions.

Threats from Organized Crime

http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20090212_testimony.pdf

Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community
Director of National Intelligence 12 February 2009

Growing Transnational Organized Crime Threat

Most organized criminal activities increasingly involve either networks of interconnected criminal groups sharing expertise, skills, and resources in joint criminal ventures that transcend national boundaries or powerful, well-organized crime groups seeking to legitimize their image by investing in the global marketplace. Organized criminals and groups will increasingly pose a threat to US national security interests by enhancing the capabilities of terrorists and hostile governments.

Some organized crime networks, groups, and individuals also have invested in energy and mineral markets in an effort to diversify and legitimize their business activities. Criminals' coercive tactics, underhanded business practices, opaque motives, and self-serving loyalties can undermine the normal workings and integrity of these global markets. The most powerful, high-profile Eurasian criminal groups often form strategic alliances with senior political leaders and business tycoons and can operate from a relative safehaven status with little to fear of international arrest and prosecution. The leaders of many of these groups go to great lengths to portray themselves as legitimate businessmen and use front companies that give them more market access and leverage. They also employ some of the world's best accountants, lawyers, bankers, and lobbyists to deflect and frustrate the efforts of authorities.

The change in the structure and types of activities conducted by transnational criminal groups is making it increasingly difficult to identify and attack them. In particular, the increasing prevalence of loosely knit networks, the use of cyberspace and global financial systems, and political corruption have made it easier for them to hide their involvement, to thwart law enforcement efforts, and to create images of legitimacy.

Russia and China Pose a Military Threat

<http://www.indiadaily.com/editorial/02-03b-05.asp>

India Daily

Russia and China announce strategic partnership in a bid to counter expanding Western military and fiscal influences

Babu Ghanta, Special Correspondent

February 03, 2005

Tang Jiaxuan, a member of China's State Council, said Russia and China have similar positions on regional and global issues. Tang said Moscow is Beijing's key ally in its effort to maintain a strategic partnership.

Sources say, Russia and China have formally joined hands to stop expanding American and European military as well as economic global influences.

The strategic partnership can be very significant in providing a combined counter effect to the only Super Power of the world – America.

The partnership between China and Russia actually started last year just after the start of the Iraq war. The two countries came close to each other in terms of supporting each other. Russia now provides significant amount of China's energy needs. China now provides financial guarantee and loan to Russia without announcing the same explicitly.

Russian and Chinese military are having secret joint sessions to create the strategy of self defense in case of any invasion from other countries.

In the front of fight against terrorism, Russia and China has also formed an alliance. China and Russia both are concerned about Islamic militants in Chechnya as well Chinese Muslim areas in South West China.

China's creation of a mechanism to consult with Russia on security issues marks the first time China has ever entered into such a venture, a senior Chinese official visiting the Kremlin said.

China secretly loaned Russia US Dollar 6.0 Billion to nationalize the Yukos oil company.

International think tanks suggest that soon Russia-China strategic partnership will form a NATO type military and G7 type economic alliance. India and Brazil will be invited to join the alliance.

Russia and China Pose a Military Threat (Cont'd)

<http://www.spacedaily.com/news/china-05n.html>

China, Russia To Hold First Ever Joint Military Drill

2005 Agence France-Presse.

Beijing (AFP) Feb 01, 2005

Russia and China will conduct their first ever joint military exercises in August or September to better coordinate the fight against terrorism, state media reported Tuesday. Russian First Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Belousov confirmed the war games during talks in Beijing, the China Daily said. "We will hold our first joint command staff exercises with the Chinese army in August or September involving various forces to practice issues involving fighting our common enemy - international terrorism," he said.

In December, the Russian news agency Interfax said the exercises would be on Chinese territory and include the army, navy, air force units, and submarines. Russia and China have had tense relations, with the two sides fighting two brief border wars in the 1950s, but the border dispute was resolved last year when Moscow gave up rights to a few small disputed islands. Russia remains one of China's top arms suppliers, with a 15-year-old arms embargo in effect from the European Union. Russian-Chinese defense cooperation gained momentum in the 1990s after Western nations imposed the embargo following the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protestors in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Cooperation was cemented in 2000 at a summit meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his then Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin.

US Reason to be Concerned Militarily

<http://www.asianperspective.org/articles/v31n4-a.pdf>

Leslie Elliott Armijo

Asian Perspective

2007

But if China or others of the BRICs might be catching up, then the realist perspective gives reason to be concerned—or relieved—at the imminent demise of America’s unipolar moment. Some realists suggest that a period of particular danger for interstate war occurs when the former hegemon is declining and a new one rising.³³ Tellingly, however, many realist analysts worry about the emergence of China—and the reemergence of Russia—as major powers in the current century, but seem unconcerned about Japan, India, and Brazil. Perhaps this is because China and Russia appear to pose a greater military threat, as both are long declared nuclear states with large standing armies.

Power Transitions Lead to War

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080101faessay87102/g-john-ikenberry/the-rise-of-china-and-the-future-of-the-west.html>

G. John Ikenberry

Foreign Affairs

January/February 2008

But when the power of a challenger state grows and the power of the leading state weakens, a strategic rivalry ensues, and conflict -- perhaps leading to war -- becomes likely. The danger of power transitions is captured most dramatically in the case of late-nineteenth-century Germany. In 1870, the United Kingdom had a three-to-one advantage in economic power over Germany and a significant military advantage as well; by 1903, Germany had pulled ahead in terms of both economic and military power. As Germany unified and grew, so, too, did its dissatisfactions and demands, and as it grew more powerful, it increasingly appeared as a threat to other great powers in Europe, and security competition began. In the strategic realignments that followed, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom, formerly enemies, banded together to confront an emerging Germany. The result was a European war. Many observers see this dynamic emerging in U.S.-Chinese relations. "If China continues its impressive economic growth over the next few decades," the realist scholar John Mearsheimer has written, "the United States and China are likely to engage in an intense security competition with considerable potential for war."

BRIC Working Against the U.S.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601109&refer=home&sid=aEufOnNVjnhM>

Bloomberg

'BRIC' Nations Summit Seeks to Turn Economic Might Into Clout

May 15, 2008

By Patrick Donahue

"Besides the economic front, the BRIC group could prove to be a growing counterweight to U.S. hegemony in global affairs," Win Thin, an analyst at New-York-based bank Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., wrote in a May 12 e-mail.

<http://opinionist.com/2007/02/13/putin-makes-it-official-russia-wants-allies-to-fight-us-global-imperialism/>

Putin Makes it Official | Russia Wants Allies to Fight U.S. Global Imperialism

Last Weekend (February 9 thru 11, 2007) saw the [43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy](#) and it caused quite a stir. Putin then mentions a phrase - "BRIC - Brazil Russian India & China" - that we'll begin to hear a lot more of in coming months. [BRIC](#) refers to the growing economic - and hence political - clout of these emerging economic giants - with whom Putin obviously intends to foster greater political leadership and clarity.

"The combined GDP measured in purchasing power parity of countries such as India and China is already greater than that of the United States. And a similar calculation with the GDP of the BRIC countries - Brazil, Russia, India and China - surpasses the cumulative GDP of the EU. And according to experts this gap will only increase in the future. There is no reason to doubt that the economic potential of the new centres of global economic growth will inevitably be converted into political influence and will strengthen multipolarity."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601109&refer=home&sid=aEufOnNVjnhM>

Bloomberg

'BRIC' Nations Summit Seeks to Turn Economic Might Into Clout

May 15, 2008

By Patrick Donahue

Russia wants BRIC to become a "notable factor in multilateral diplomacy," to help strengthen "multi-polarity," acting Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman [Boris Malakhov](#) said in a statement. He said Moscow saw the talks as a way to bring the four countries closer together on the world stage.

BRIC Working Against the U.S. (Cont'd)

“Through this informal arrangement, the four nations will understand each others' policies, discuss common factors and issues and leverage their positions through dialogue,” said [Sujit Dutta](#), a strategic analyst at [Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses](#), a New Delhi-based research institution. “With this forum they will try to raise their global profile.”

http://www.brazil.org.uk/newsandmedia/articles_files/20080608.html

Embassy of Brazil in London

The BRICs and the Rearrangement of the World

Article by the Brazilian foreign minister, Celso Amorim, published in the Folha de São Paulo on 8 June 2008

The BRICs have a clear goal within the context of such coalitions variable geometry. Without impulsiveness or defiance, the time has come to begin rearranging the world towards meeting the expectations and needs of the overwhelming majority of humanity.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/india-and-brazil-rubbish-blames-of-world-food-shortage_10049515.html

Naveen Kapoor, pub. date: 5-16-08, founded PowerWeb Inc., he currently serves as the CEO and president, has led and evaluated Ph.D. programs at MIT in the field of artificial intelligence and process engineering, served on the faculties of both Rutgers and Brown University, Thaindian News, “India and Brazil rubbish blames of world food shortage,”

Addition of Brazil into the India-Russia-China troika has certainly added more seriousness, credentials and power to the club, which seems to be directly challenging the dominance of NATO and US in the international spectrum.

China is Causing the U.S. to Change Policy

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=8917>

Council on Foreign Relations.

Daniel W. Drezner, pub. date: 3-15-07, associate professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and the author of "All Politics Is Global," Yale Global Online, "The New New World Order,"

China is also aggressively courting resource-rich countries. In October 2006, it hosted a summit with more than 40 leaders from Africa to ensure continued access to the energy-rich continent. And its leaders have proposed creating free-trade areas within the SCO and APEC -- displaying such willingness to go ahead that President Bush was forced to remove the global war on terrorism from the top of his APEC agenda, and in November 2006, he called for an APEC free-trade zone.

Opposing Powers Challenge the US

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=8917>

Council on Foreign Relations.

Daniel W. Drezner, pub. date: 3-15-07, associate professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and the author of "All Politics Is Global," Yale Global Online, "The New New World Order,"

Many of the rising powers believed that the existing global governance structures stacked the deck against them. The IMF's perceived highhandedness during the Asian financial crisis of the 1990s bred resentment across the Pacific Rim. New Delhi was frustrated by Washington's objections to its 1998 nuclear tests and grew tired of being viewed by Washington strictly through the prism of South Asian security. China resented the drawn-out negotiations to enter the WTO. And NATO's bombing of Kosovo was triply problematic for Beijing: the accidental hit on the Chinese embassy in Belgrade aroused nationalist passions, Washington's willingness to cross international borders to protect human rights clashed with Beijing's notion of state sovereignty, and the United States' decision to bypass the United Nations and act through NATO highlighted the limits of China's effective influence over world politics. Heading into the new millennium, the fastest-growing economies in the world were nursing grudges toward the United States.

Opposing Powers are Reducing U.S. Power

<http://www.observerindia.com/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=15556&mmacmaid=15557>

Observer Research Foundation, Just another BRIC in the Wall?, Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan*, 23 December 2008

The lead - in politico-economic, military and strategic spheres - that the US maintains cannot be challenged soon by any power or any group of powers in the near future. While this is true, it must also borne in mind that although the US has continued to maintain a lead, it is being increasingly faced with challenges from peer competitors like China, Russia and at a lower level, from India too. More significantly, China and Russia are moving into the Western hemisphere, US' backyard in a significant manner, trying to reduce the traditional US influence in there.

Although Chinese policies in Asia and elsewhere in Africa that appear to be both more defensive and economic in nature are also meant to create a deeper foothold in these areas. Such policies in the long term could counter-balance the US interests in the region as also affect the US' relative power and influence in the region.

Unwilling to Merge with Western Organization on Our Terms

<http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/23/1192.html>

Alexander Lomanov

Russia in Global Affairs

6-15-08

Russia and China have vehemently rejected this model of external “management by objectives.” They have been quite successful in effectuating a “transition without a destination” or, in other words, a type of transformation that does not envision a merger with already existing organizations on terms set forth by the latter. This phenomenon has put up a serious challenge to contemporary political scientists, and although the concept of the “end of history” – that underlay the developed world’s politics after the Cold War – has already revealed its flawed nature, no new concept capable of explaining the ongoing processes has surfaced to date.

China Has No Plans Support US Hegemony

<http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/23/1192.html>

Alexander Lomanov
Russia in Global Affairs
6-15-08

Along with this, China will apply efforts to avert the damaging impact that the “hegemony and policy of force” – so baldly seen in aggressive actions by NATO and the U.S. in the former Yugoslavia and Iraq – may wield as regards the beneficial tendencies in the development of world order. Some political experts indicate that China has no plans for gaining successes through support of U.S. hegemony.

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080101faessay87102/g-john-ikenberry/the-rise-of-china-and-the-future-of-the-west.html>

G. John Ikenberry
Foreign Affairs
January/February 2008

China is well on its way to becoming a formidable global power. The size of its economy has quadrupled since the launch of market reforms in the late 1970s and, by some estimates, will double again over the next decade. It has become one of the world's major manufacturing centers and consumes roughly a third of the global supply of iron, steel, and coal. It has accumulated massive foreign reserves, worth more than \$1 trillion at the end of 2006. China's military spending has increased at an inflation-adjusted rate of over 18 percent a year, and its diplomacy has extended its reach not just in Asia but also in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Indeed, whereas the Soviet Union rivaled the United States as a military competitor only, China is emerging as both a military and an economic rival -- heralding a profound shift in the distribution of global power.

U.S. is Experiencing a Change in World Standing

The BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) Countries as Analytical Category:

Mirage or Insight?*

Leslie Elliott Armijo

Visiting Scholar, Portland State University

Revision of September 28, 2007

Although the United States, the sole superpower since the breakup of the Soviet Union, currently enjoys overwhelming economic, military, and soft power advantages over potential rivals, US hegemony has passed its peak. Nor will Western European countries be the US' main foil in international politics in the decades to come, despite their recent moves toward tighter monetary and political union, which enhances their relative power and influence. Instead, states that looked weak at the close of the Second World War will join the ranks of major powers. Four new poles of the twenty-first century will be those countries jointly dubbed the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China)—or so the prognosis popular in the contemporary business and financial press goes.

Power is a Zero-Sum Game

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=8917>

Council on Foreign Relations.

Daniel W. Drezner, pub. date: 3-15-07, associate professor of international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and the author of "All Politics Is Global," Yale Global Online, "The New New World Order,"

Another difficulty is that rewriting the rules of existing institutions is a thorny undertaking. Power is a zero-sum game, and so any attempt to boost the standing of China, India, and other rising states within international organizations will cost other countries some of their influence in those forums. These prospective losers can be expected to stall or sabotage attempts at reform.

Rise of Alternative Power in Negative for the U.S.

<http://www.observerindia.com/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=15556&mmacmaid=15557>

Observer Research Foundation, Just another BRIC in the Wall?, Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan*, 23 December 2008

While the US acknowledges the difficulty in maintaining a unipolar world order, given that the rise of new power centres is a reality, the US wants to maintain its primacy in the international system as an important grand strategic objective through a range of tools, including political, economic and military. Scholars have argued that “continued American hegemony is important because it is seen as the prerequisite for systemic stability,” while acknowledging that maintaining a preponderant position may not be an easy thing for the US especially after a decade or so, given the relative decline in US power along with the rise of new powers and the gradual erosion of the its extended deterrence strategy. Various analyses claim that US’ “unipolar movement is over” and the power will be increasingly spread around major power centres like China, Japan, India, Russia, the US and Europe. Haass in fact terms the emerging scenario as nonpolarity meaning to say that the power will be dispersed among not just two or three powers, but several countries will exercise various dimensions of power.

<http://www.twq.com/02spring/layne.pdf>

The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
The Washington Quarterly • 25:2 pp. 233–248.
SPRING 2002

Collectively, the “Through the Looking Glass” contributors make an important point about U.S. power that policymakers in Washington do not always take to heart: U.S. hegemony is a double-edged sword. In other words, U.S. power is a paradox. On one hand, U.S. primacy is acknowledged as the most important factor in maintaining global and regional stability. “[I]f not for the existing security framework provided by bilateral and multilateral alliance commitments borne by the United States, the world could, or perhaps would, be a more perilous place.”¹

China, specifically, wants the United States to accommodate its rise to great-power status and stop interfering in the Taiwan issue. The political elite in Moscow wants Washington to treat Russia like a great power equal to the United States and stop meddling in Russia’s domestic affairs.² Warnings are issued that for its own good—and the world’s—the United States must change its ways and transform itself into a benign, or “enlightened,” superpower. As the contributions to “Through the Looking Glass” demonstrate, the paradox of U.S. power evokes paradoxical reactions to it. U.S. primacy is “bad” when exercised unilaterally or to justify “isolationist” policies, but U.S. hegemony is “good” when exercised multilaterally to advance common interests rather than narrow U.S. ones.

Rise of Alternative Power in Negative for the U.S. (Cont'd)

Certainly, the United States has many sticks to wield. Being a hegemon, however, also means that the United States has plenty of carrots to use as coalition-building inducements. By making “side payments”—the political science jargon for what most would call bribes— Washington, for example, was able to draw a reluctant Pakistan into its antiterror coalition.

Consequently, the United States should do everything possible to maintain its current hegemony, which has been the goal of U.S. grand strategy for more than a decade. If the duchess of Windsor had been a U.S. strategist, she would have said that the United States could never be too rich, too well armed, or too powerful. Under the administrations of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush, the overriding aim of U.S. grand strategy has been to ensure that the United States maintains its lofty geopolitical perch by preventing the rise of new great powers (or the resurgence of old ones, such as Russia) that could challenge the United States as king of the hill. (In Pentagon-speak, such powers are called “peer competitors.”) In other words, U.S. grand strategy has sought for the last decade the indefinite prolongation of what one commentator called the United States’ “unipolar moment.”¹⁰

Although at first the conclusion may appear counterintuitive, states that seek hegemony invariably end up being less, not more, secure. Being powerful is good in international politics, but being too powerful is not. The reasoning behind this axiom is straightforward as well as the geopolitical counterpart to the law of physics that holds that, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Simply put, the response to hegemony is the emergence of countervailing power. Because international politics is indeed a competitive, “self-help” system, when too much power is concentrated in the hands of one state, others invariably fear for their own security. Each state fears that a hegemon will use its overwhelming power to aggrandize itself at that state’s expense and will act defensively to offset hegemonic power. Thus, one of hegemony’s paradoxes is that it contains the seeds of its own destruction.

This insight is not merely abstract academic theorizing but is confirmed by an ample historical record. Since the beginning of the modern international system, a succession of bids have been made for hegemony: the Habsburg Empire under Charles V, Spain under Philip II, France under Louis XIV as well as Napoleon, and Germany under Hitler (and, some historians would argue although the point is contested—under Wilhelm II). None of these attempts to gain hegemony succeeded.

They think that the United States is a qualitatively different type of hegemon: a “benevolent” hegemon whose “soft power” immunizes it against a backlash, that is, its liberal democratic ideology and culture make it attractive to others. U.S. policymakers also believe that others do not fear U.S. geopolitical preeminence because they believe that the United States will use its unprecedented power to promote the common good of the international system rather than to advance its own selfish aims. As then-national security adviser Sandy Berger put it:

Rise of Alternative Power in Negative for the U.S. (Cont'd)

We are accused of dominating others, of seeing the world in zero-sum terms in which any other country's gain must be our loss. But that is an utterly mistaken view. It's not just because we are the first global power in history that is not an imperial power. It's because for 50 years we have consciously tried to define and pursue our interests in a way that is consistent with the common good—rising prosperity, expanding freedom, [and] collective security.¹³

Ironically, it was U.S. intervention in Kosovo that crystallized fears of U.S. hegemony. As a result, an incipient anti-U.S. alliance comprising China, Russia, and India began to emerge. Each of these countries viewed the U.S.-led intervention in Kosovo as a dangerous precedent establishing Washington's self-declared right to ignore the norm of international sovereignty and interfere in other states' internal affairs. The three states increased their military cooperation, especially with respect to arms transfers and the sharing of military technology, and, like the Europeans, declared their support for a "multipolar" world, that is, a world in which countervailing power offsets U.S. power.

Consequently, international politics is also a self-help system in which each actor must rely primarily on its own efforts to ensure its survival and security and in which each can employ the means of its choice, including force, to advance its interests. "States operating in a self-help world almost always act according to their own self-interest and do not subordinate their interests to the interests of other states, or to the interests of the so-called international community. The reason is simple: it pays to be selfish in a self-help world."¹⁶ The nature of international politics impels great powers to think of themselves first; their natural inclination is to act unilaterally.

In alliances, however, a great power must never lose sight of some fundamental tenets of international politics. States that form alliances and coalitions typically have one common interest and many conflicting ones. The interest that binds together allies or coalition partners is the threat that a common adversary poses to the security of all. To defeat that threat, the other, divisive issues among alliance or coalition partners may be forced into the background, but they do not vanish. Even in wartime, coalition partners jockey to gain advantage in the postwar world. Occasionally, coalitions fissure during wartime because reconciliation of the partners' competing interests proves impossible. In any event, once the threat had been disposed, the glue binding an alliance or coalition surely dissolves, and the partners go their separate ways—the inevitable outcome in a self-help system.

Multipolarity is not the best outcome imaginable. The best outcome would be a world in which every other state willingly accepted U.S. hegemony—an outcome about which some may dream, but one that will never be realized in the real world. That outcome, however, is much better than the predictable outcome if the United States continues to follow a grand strategy of primacy. The outcome of that strategy will be really bad: not only will new great powers rise, they will also coalesce against what they perceive to be a U.S. threat.