

Thomas Barnett in RÆSON:

# A hammer looking for nails:

## THE GAP, THE CORE AND THE FINAL FRONTIER



“The tumult created by globalization’s creeping in on the Middle East was going to create anger and violence and terrorism. When 9/11 comes along, and the connections are clear to us – at least for an instant – the United States (frankly, nobody else has the firepower to do it) decides it has got to change the Middle East in a big, big way, looks around and says: “who can I start with?” It decides on Iraq, and I say “that’s as good as anybody”. So are we going to kick his ass militarily in the war? Yes, absolutely: supreme confidence there. Are we going to screw up the occupation? Absolutely! Why would you advocate going even if that is going to happen? Because this military is not going to change unless it experiences failure on that far side.”

by Henrik Ø. Breitenbauch  
co-editor of RÆSON

Thomas P.M. Barnett is an unusual and influential strategist in the American defense environment. A special element in Barnett’s work is a widening of what ‘strategy’ consists of – its conceptual space is extended from purely military perspectives to include not least economic, social and political development.

He is *Senior Strategic Researcher and Professor* at the *Warfare Analysis & Research Department, Center for Naval Warfare Studies* at the American Navy’s university, the *U.S. Naval War College*. From November 2001 to June 2003 he held the temporary assignment of *Assistant for Strategic Futures* in the centrally important office, *Office of Force Transformation* under Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, which is dedicated to the strategic transformation of the American military in response to the changed security agenda after 9/11. Barnett has given a wide-range of important briefings in the US defense community; he is the author of a number of articles about the strategic concepts he has been developing since the late 1990’s; and recently he published the book *The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*. Articles and other material is available from his website: [www.thomaspmbarnett.com](http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com).

The starting point for Barnett’s thinking is that the combination of globalization’s economic integration and the state of nuclear deterrence means that war between advanced states, who participate actively in the functional integration, will soon be practically irrelevant. Therefore, we ought therefore to focus on the non-integrating parts of the world, both because this is where the real threats stem from, but also because addressing those threats properly means helping the regions to catch up. Based on an analysis of US interventions since the end of the Cold War, Barnett constructed the Pentagon’s “new map”, where we can distinguish the integrating Core from the Non-Integrating Gap. His basic policy recommendation is simple: “shrink the Gap”.

In this interview Barnett talks among other things about how it would be possible to construct a more efficient solution model for deciding how and when the Core should use force with regard to the catastrophes of the Gap.

1. Connectivity, not democracy
2. The terrorists are those who *do* know better
3. You do not have to become a bad Moslem to live a good life
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### 1. Connectivity, not democracy

*Let us start with the Gap-Core distinction: how clear is it that either the global situation or America's challenges can be adequately summarized in the Gap-Core logic? There seems still to be some issues with the new Core-members like India, Russia China – might "old security" concerns not return at some point?*

BARNETT: The point in making the distinction between the Core and the Gap is *not* that I am saying that there is not any possibility of security issues re-arising within the Core. But simply that with the connectivity of an expanding, ever deepening, enmeshing global economy; with *that* kind of interdependence naturally arising among the old Core – between the United States, the Europeans, Japan, Canada and Australia – there is not really any danger of anything happening other than name-calling. Between us and what I call the New Core, there is and will be for quite some time, the possibility for more than name-calling: that integration process requires new rules to emerge.

You cannot bring Russia sort of into NATO without changing NATO, and not as a result make that a different Rule Set. Look at China buying up our US Treasury Bonds and becoming the biggest source of the US trade deficit; or India supplying all the IT-workers and doctors to the United States plus remitting such sums of money back to India in terms of non-residential Indians who work and live in the United States. That kind of integration processes cannot help but create new Rule Sets. They always tend to come in the economic realm first.

Typically, political understanding lags greatly behind it: it can be summed up with phrases like "nationalism", "protectionism" or that natural tendency – when you start bumping up against one another and you have not done that in the past – to assume bad things about each other. The unfamiliarity of this new interaction means that there are dangerous possibilities. So there are a lot of things that we are going to learn and adjust to as, for example, India becomes a much bigger part of not just the U.S.'s but the whole world's economy. To understand what it is to have Russia actively involved in world affairs, when for several decades it was always on the other side of the fence. To have China develop this tremendous integration with the outside world. All that forces us into all sorts of questions and issues that have been dwelling and lingering for decades that are not easy for us to answer. There are a lot of adjustments when you open up to the outside world: America thinks we have adjustments as the global economy expands. We talk about sending jobs overseas and think it is a tough adjustment for the US workers who may have a assumed that a good economy would have allowed them to stay in the same jobs for their entire life, never have to go back to school, never switch careers: that whole ideal that we cling to comes from the 1950s, and it's very unrealistic. And *we* think *that* is a big adjustment in terms of globalization.

But having just spent three weeks in China, I can tell you: *that* country is undergoing so much more adjustment, so much more change, so much more synchronization of its internal Rule Sets with those of the world's (which is what the global market economy demands from it) that it seems like such a jumping-the-gun phenomenon for us to always be looking for slippage, always be putting the worst sort of perspective on the motivations behind anything that Russia, India or China do as they deal with some significant changes. They have in recent years changed from economic policies that were very state-heavy for many decades and moved towards the embrace of markets in a very profound way. You would think we would be happier but it is almost like we look for every opportunity to say: "you are not going fast enough and far enough, and – aha! – that means you, secretly, deep down, inside, must be a threat"!

We have wished for this to happen for so many years and when it does happen we cannot believe it: we have such great suspicion towards these three big countries. I think about them a lot because they hold such a big chunk of the world's population and if you can remove that kind fear factor within the Core a lot of things will work out pretty dramatically.

ON RUSSIA, INDIA AND CHINA: We have wished for this to happen for so many years and when it does happen we cannot believe it: we have such great suspicion towards these three big countries.

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But India and China do not feel like they have been invited into the corridors of power. They are part of G20, but they are not part of G8. They kind of wonder how the G8 gets to figure out what happens in Iraq. The G8 had this meeting in Sea Island [G8 Summit, June 8-10, 2004] and there decided what they were going to do about the future of the Middle East – and there was no China there.

*So there is a homology between the global situation with the three big countries and the post-cold war challenge with the eastern European countries. In Europe, the Partnership for Peace was a way of letting the East in: an example of how we have to find ways to be receptive?*

Right, the PfP is sort of a microcosm of what I am talking about with Russia, China and India – because they are such vast countries, and the cultural distance is stronger, so the distrust is stronger. We keep complaining about our change: but we have so little understanding of the kind of change that it requires for them to make this great journey. We do not signal ways that “we can make you feel comfortable about your security situation, for you to feel confident enough to deal with these wrenching, internal social changes”.

One of the reasons why I think the Core-Gap distinction is important – and which always stuns these Cold War types when they see it – is that

my Core is basically what we used to call the First and the Second World together. And now it is finally time to deal with the Third World in some way other than hospice care through official development aid and selling them arms so that they can kill each other.

*This is an extremely interesting thing about your analysis: the European left has been saying for 30-40 years that the North-South relation is the more important, and here comes someone from the Pentagon policy making environment saying something akin to it?*

Right, I agree with that to a certain extent, even though I studiously avoid the “North-South” concept since I have my ABC’s in South America [Argentina, Brazil, Chile], like Australia and South Africa are in the South. I try to focus on: who’s connecting up? I studiously avoid “democracy” as some sort of bellwether. Instead I look at whether connectivity is growing between any specific society and the outside world, and whether its government in fact encouraging that? So I focus less on where they are in their historical development, and more on whether they are *going in the right direction*. I want to capture the integrating countries in the first, best behavior I can find, rather than having a huge standard: “a freely elected president for five times; and clean up everything!” – like the EU has been telling Turkey for how many years now? “Be perfect before we take you!”

## 2. The terrorists are those who do know better

*It seems like you do not really distinguish between a material or economic globalization on the one hand and a cultural or ideational on the other? Is that distinction meaningless?*

I really think it is. Consider the sheer physical connectivity of networks – you build networks so that you can do things, and when you do things economically the ideas and the content naturally flow. That gives such a tight synergy, and as long as that is happening I feel good about it. My argument on the political side – which is always slow – is that you have to be patient, and you have to let the local political scene evolve at a pace that it can manage. I argue for a lot of patience with Russia and China, because I watch

them just leap-frog through decades a year at a time, and we are watching them race through our past history with such a sense of impatience of them getting to the “right now”.

We do not understand that the real world we now enjoy is not something they can achieve overnight: so let us get out of our way to assure them that they will not be targeted unnecessarily in the security realm; that they will not be forced to maintain large security hedges when they are scrambling for resources, when they are dealing with aging population – as even China is – and when they have huge infrastructure and resource requirements. If they are going to move in the direction that we hope they move – which will benefit us tremendously in economic terms – then all we need to do is step beyond old fears and take advantage of the successes of the cold war. That ideology *was* defeated. We just seem unwilling to move along that line and to claim the successes. But until you do move along and see the world in terms of who is integrating and who is not – then you are not going to get to the point where you are able to amass the resources to deal with this Gap, which is where all the violence is.

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If you do not want it to be a West versus Islam thing, then do not alienate the biggest players in the East. Either they live closer to the problem, like Russia; or they see themselves as natural regional powers, like India; or they are going to have their energy requirements from the Persian Gulf doubling over the next 20 years like China. Compared to their interdependencies with that region, ours and even the Europeans’ are small. If you look strategically downstream they are the logical partners for us to be romancing. And how do you romance them? You tell them a story with a happy ending, and you say: “if you do these things, even if a lot of them will be hard, then this is where we can all go 20 years from now. It will be such a better world; you will have such a better country; and you will have done so many good things for your country...”

*This positive vision, and optimism, is interesting coming from a strategist – because it clashes with both the classical war games-stuff of the military academies, and also with the widespread critiques of globalization from both left and right on both sides of the Atlantic. Pessimism seems to be more on the agenda anywhere else – how do you “dare” to just come along with a positive strategic vision?*

Well, I am just looking at history. We have seen tremendous things happening when countries come together economically in what I call the Old Core – Europe, Japan, the United States. By 1980 that was one tenth of the world’s population controlling two-thirds of the wealth and productive power: a lot that can be done by that kind of cooperation. We have waited almost 50 years for the old socialist block to give up its pipedream and join us... I see our side gaining adherence in big, big chunks. The size of the problem set called mass violence around the world has been shrinking fairly dramatically. When I got into the business 15 years ago we were still concerned about nuclear war across the planet: people are not really concerned about that anymore, and they should not be – other than the issue of the rogue who is not part of the club. If Iran, for example, was part of the club, then their having the nukes would never be an issue – about as big an issue as Denmark having nukes. Nobody would care – they would say: “it’s the Danes, what’s the big deal?” Or the Canadians. If Canada wanted nukes tomorrow who would really care? They are read into the system and everybody trusts them, and there is a sense of familiarity and a common cause.

If the US was forced to switch territory with the Canadians, most Americans would just move to Canada: it is not the soil here that is sacred, it’s the concept. My book is constantly being accused of not understanding the irrational mind – but my response is: the irrational mind is the unconnected one. The irrational mind is the one that goes berserk because they do not have options for their talents and their ambitions.

That is the lawyer with three kids who straps a belt on with dynamite in the West Bank because that looks like the best option for him after going to law school: that is the best future he can come up with. But if you can give him a job a law firm somewhere I guarantee you, he does not get on

that bus. The terrorists are not the ones who are so poor they do not know better: it is the ones who *do* know better, that have an education they are never going to use, and dreams they are never going to fulfill. Nothing kills people more than the sense of a dead-end life.

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I see such a huge opportunity with what has happened over the last 25 years with roughly half the world's population on their way to be joining the world economy. Has it been a perfect ride for them? Absolutely not: look at Brazil or Argentina. This process is more an art than science. To join is to risk a lot: the process of connecting is such a brave act that we have to go out of our way to recognize, promote and protect it – and to do as much as possible to remove security impediments to it, and to send clear signals of transparency and security to these countries. The trajectory that Russia has been on for the last 15 years; China for the last 25; and India just for the last 10 is just stunning. Because their societies are exposed to these strong, external influences this is the perfect time to shower them with security.

We do it on one level when the US tries to deal with the big security issues in the system in a way that nobody else can because we have the world's biggest military. But how we explain that action and how we solicit their approval and their cooperation is enormously important, convincing them that this is not a zero-sum outcome. That: "we are not going to the Middle East to grab your oil, China!" That we are going to secure the flow of that energy for another 20-25 years until we

move on to hydrogen; and that in doing so there are certain things we need from, for example, China, in terms of economic and diplomatic support.

But in exchange for that we are hopefully creating an international security environment that allows China not to revert resources toward things like a blue water navy to make sure that their energy comes from the Middle East safely; or it does not force them to patron relationships with rogue regimes there out of necessity because they are scared to death they will not have access to energy over time.

### 3. You do not have to become a bad Moslem to live a good life

*This is where you advocate a special role for the US where it supplies public goods on a global level?*

I do not advocate a "one size fits all", as we have been doing for 15 years, saying as long as we have a big force that prevents war between the big powers then the system will work itself out, globalization will spread, connectivity will grow – that is sort of the benign Thomas Friedman vision...

*Regarding the special role the United States must play due to the military capabilities, how would you address the ensuing division of labor? How far should the United States be able to pursue its role in terms of making decisions on behalf of the West, the "Core of the Core", including e.g. NATO?*

The Clinton Administration put a model on the table where we go in and deal with the real nasty security stuff – and as soon as possible turn it over to the UN and everybody else, and they would do the integration process. Our niche was to be light on aid and heavy on military spending; the converse would be true for the Europeans, and the Japanese would just send money.

The problem was that the UN was not the vessel for that: it is such a Congress-like entity, a legislative branch, without a real executive function. The best you have is a group that can

cite bad activity around the world, but does not have any means to deal with it. The hope is, if the UN condemns somebody that they change their ways and somehow get beyond the violence and then we can send the peacekeepers in.

But there is a huge gap between those two situations, and that gap is filled by the US, which says “Well, if you’re really serious about this we will go in, but if we do it has to be cast in such a way that we can have freedom of action, because it is our lives that are at stake. Then hopefully you will rally around once the bad guy has been taken care of.” We have been trying to negotiate those things on the fly each time the issue comes up, and it is tortuous. It took years to get anything done in Yugoslavia. That would have continued *ad infinitum*. Given that the global economy would have run smooth enough in its expansion then the rest would just have been scary neighborhoods far away, and we would all have talked about it, but nobody would have done anything about it. The US enabled that “we’ll do a little bit, but no more” practice across the West in the 1990s by just responding enough to crises throughout the Gap.

*After Somalia, that is?*

Well, Somalia looked like a big turning point but it really was not: we kept doing these things. But while we keep everything from boiling over in the Gap we never fix anything. There is no system for dealing with fixing these countries. The only way we could avoid getting in to some imperial nonsense was to make this rule: “As soon as we cannot find anyone to kill in a situation, we’re gone!” That is the Powell doctrine! “As soon as you cannot find anymore bad guys to kill – then leave”. The problem is that if you do not leave anything in your wake, then the bad guys will reappear and we have to go back in five years. There are some in the Pentagon who argue openly for that: “Let’s go in and kill them every once in a while: they will never change anyway”. And I keep saying: “Well, that’s not much of a solution, sir”.

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That whole debate did not move along until 9/11 – which was an example of what happens if you nurse it along without curing it. Eventually, and that is my larger argument, your good thing will encroach upon their bad thing. But their bad thing is traditional and goes back centuries. And your stuff comes in through cable or the internet, and you are impinging whether you realize it or not. When the violence against and rejection of the West really starts to pick up is when globalization starts to impinge on the Middle East – and why it does so in ways it does not in Africa is of course because of the energy.

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Globalization is happening, and the Middle East will be relevant for energy reasons for at least another 25 years. But changing US foreign policies will not change anything about the Middle East. If you stop supporting Israel: does that mean there will not be repressive regimes there that suck at globalization and do not provide for their publics? No, that is not going to change that at all. The Europeans do this even more than us: constantly blaming ourselves saying “No, it’s really my fault, it’s what I did in the past. If only I was more sensitive in a multicultural sort of way; if only I could understand why they treat their women in ways I would never stand in my country, as minors their entire lives, then...”. That argument just drives me nuts!

There are all sorts of people from that region living in Europe and the United States and they like living there: they do not seem to have given up their souls to do that. You do not have to become a bad Moslem to live a good life. I reject this social Darwinist argument which to me is the real fallacy of Samuel Huntington. Thomas Friedman said some get it – globalization – and some do not; Huntington said some people are never going to get it because of who they are. I add a third pole to that argument: anybody can get it. Where the “getting it” part has not extended itself to is where all the violence is. Where they *have* “gotten it” there is still some concerns about mass violence – most of them overblown I would argue – but the real violence is where people have not had the chance to “get it” yet, the chance to join the world.

There is no mystery why these things do not happen easily. There are huge wrenching changes coming with it – in areas like marital relations; sex relations; family; the good life; good education; loyalty to your family, your tribe and your village; and concepts of mobility that are very threatening to traditional societies (especially ones that are built around the notions that you stick together, that women are for having babies, that you make food, and do not try radical changes because that will get you a bad harvest and *that* will get you dead!) They are very traditional and hard scrambling existences: they are very low on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, still working on shelter and food in many instances. Yet we expect them to embrace the same cosmopolitan lifestyles we have achieved, where people, except for the marginalized in our society, do not worry about food anymore.

#### 4. A hammer looking for nails

*You are arguing for the convergence of our policies of security and development with regard to the Gap. To which extent will we see increased coordination or convergence of these kinds of policies in the West?*

This is where the theme of connectivity is nice – it gets you off the norms of democracy, and just says: “You got to have the infrastructure and networks, and people have to have a certain level

of security”. And we start to realize that in order to deal with these security issues we also have to deal with the infrastructure and networking issues. The notion that you send aid to some places and war fighters to others breaks down: to really defeat a Saddam is to integrate Iraq, and to do that is to do development politics. What holds up our ability to get security there is people’s inability to get electricity, water and move sewage. All of a sudden the two become incredibly merged.

We have a disparity here of capabilities: [On the one side] a US with a “Leviathan force” as I call it, able to destroy real dangerous elements inside the Gap. But it is almost a hammer looking for nails, because unless you can do the integration on the far side of the conflict, wielding that hammer is almost useless, or worse than useless. It scares people so much, that you almost risk the unity of the Core to employ it. I mean: did everyone in the Core want to see Saddam gone? Sure, he was a bad guy, and it was better for that oil to flow. And the hope is that Iraq will develop on that basis – even though the record of countries developing on the basis of oil is pretty bad.

So everyone had the same desire, but the fear was that if the Unites States was going to do it, how were they going to handle the aftermath? And there we sent all the wrong signals. We said in effect: “If you’re not tough enough to show up for the war, don’t show up for the peace: don’t expect to be cut in on anything!” That was a huge, colossal blunder on our part, a very macho view of security as if the only thing that matters is the “blowing up” part. We have learned since the occupation in May 2003 that our people get killed just as quickly in the peace keeping as in the war part. Actually, *more* quickly because we do it so badly.

What would it take to get Europe and other Core countries comfortable with this process? You have to define it from A to Z – and you have the pieces for such a system now, from start to finish. How do you deal with a politically bankrupt state, a regime that everybody wants gone? We do have a version for economically bankrupt states: it is called the IMF. It is a very controversial version, and there’s a lot of suspicion and anger surrounding the IMF: but a least we have a system for dealing with economically bankrupt

states. As soon as Argentina or Brazil starts to default on their debt, we have a system where you go in at A and come out at Z, and you are successfully processed without any prejudice at the end. We are constantly fine-tuning that IMF Rule Set. But look at how it is done. Who runs the IMF? The biggest countries in the world – and why? Because they are the richest countries and you vote by how much money you put in, which is very fair: you put up the money, you get the say.

We do not have that system for politically bankrupt states. When they are really politically bankrupt like Mugabe or Kim Jong-Il we just say: “There is nothing for processing them; shouldn’t the UN do something about it?” The UN then debates it, and maybe they will get to the fact – usually well after the fact that many people were killed, and it becomes so obvious that the situation is a bad, bad thing that we finally have the conscience to say something about it, like Sudan today. And what can the UN do? They can indict you. It is actually a grand jury, even the UN Security Council: they cannot actually issue any warrants for your arrest. They can say: “you *should* stop, and if you do not stop, we will not let you sell sugar for the next ten years”, and slap some really meaningless economic sanction on you – which historically has almost never done anything of value, unless it was universal like with South Africa under Apartheid.

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That is what is at the beginning of this process. People say: when are we going to make the UN stretch across that whole process? I know it is written in the Charter, but good luck with that concept: it is never going to happen. Downstream from that grand jury you have a US Leviathan military force, which operates with a few close allies – NATO, Australia, etc – and that force is

able to make the takedown. But how do you connect that ability with the decision making process? This where the G20 comes in: the G20 is the star chamber of everyone who matters in the global economy. When you take the 20 biggest economies, you really get the whole package, about 90% of the wealth. The G20 is where you will find all the money and the authority, where you can locate the entirety of the Core. If just that body could evolve over time, as you see it struggling with ever since 9/11, where security issues have been dominating the G8 meetings. The Sea Island meeting was an Iraq meeting! They barely talked about the global economy. They are already aspiring to that role without saying it. If you made that G20 a package that could have an executive function, where it could say: “the UN has said these guys are bad, we all agree that they are: could we come to some understanding that the Leviathan should be used?”

Then you could have the Leviathan be put into service with the knowledge that a System Administration force on the far side – where the US has a much smaller role, and the allies around the world a much larger – will come in once the take-down (or “the correction” or “the security element”) has been dealt with. If you employ the Leviathan force inside the Gap in this manner, then there would be an upfront agreement that the SysAdmin force will come in the Leviathan force’s wake. That force, a very manpower intensive function, takes the occupation through its phases effectively.

Then you have another gap being filled on the far side of that: an international organization like the IMF but one that specializes in exactly what we are talking about – that weird mix of security and development. This is what Sebastian Mallaby of the *Washington Post* calls the IRF – the *International Reconstruction Fund* – like a perpetual Marshall Plan for politically bankrupt states designated for rehab. Who would fund that IRF? The same G20 that would make the decision upstream in the process. They would vote according to how much money they would put into it. And then you have the International Criminal Court on the far end. It is that kind of A to Z function: then you would have a real system.

If you can get that system up and running, I guarantee you that most of the dictators would

leave on their own volition because as soon as they went on the list they would know that their time was up. These guys are mostly about their money and their women – given the opportunity most of them would do a Baby Doc Duvalier and get the hell out of Dodge before the sheriff comes. When you lay it all out like that it all sounds kind of dreamy: “Oh, would it be nice if it all worked out!?”, but it is not that hard to work out, most of the pieces are already there.

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The UN Security Council does its thing even if it takes its time. We have a got a G20 that is moving in this direction or at least the G8 part is, as they are already having these kinds of discussions: that meeting on Sea Island was basically a meeting to bless the US decision on Iraq and get people to pony up money for the reconstruction. We are basically fumbling towards this system. We have the Leviathan force, the US military that can take down anybody that matters inside the Gap. I would argue that we do have the pieces for the SysAdmin force, but the key piece that we do not have is *an understanding of the necessity of putting together the SysAdmin force* – and this will not happen until the United States says it will invest in this force.

I talk to foreign militaries all the time: when the Americans put the hub down, then the rest of them are more than happy to supply the spokes. The SysAdmin force is a military that they can interact with; it is a technology they are comfortable with; it is a mission they are ideologically comfortable with: it mixes heavily with development issues, deals with things like AIDS, pandemics and the environment – all these holistic issues that people want to have dealt with. It is a wonderful package, but nobody is

going to move in the direction of that kind of permanent international stabilization force unless the US shows a commitment to it. But once the US does that, I would argue that the resources that the US would have to put into would not be that large. The Europeans and the Japanese – and ultimately I think you could bring the Russians, the Chinese and the Indians into this – they are more than happy to participate in this kind of thing. This simple act of cooperation on that security effort would, I would argue, create much deeper security ties across the Core as whole. Then we would have the resources between the G20’s money and military...

#### 5. Iraq: The Yugoslavia of the Middle East

*But do you see this happening within the Pentagon? Is there a move towards this kind of stabilization force?*

There is. The Pentagon will change according to failure.

*Like most organizations?*

Yes, but it is particularly true for the militaries. The worst thing that can happen to a military is that they win a war because then they sit on their mountain top and expect that it is going to last for ever – until somebody bonks them over the head. The best thing that can happen is that they lose a war, because then they really learn something. This is why – not cynically – I supported the Iraq War. Something was going to pull us into the Middle East, it was going to happen. There is not much that goes on between the Middle East and the world other than oil, a few nuts and terrorists: there is not a lot of economical interaction. But there is some real penetration content-wise, which can be destabilizing like mass media flows: young girls can watch TV-shows about life in Western Europe and the United States and they realize that women live in different ways in those parts of the world – and think: “I’m never gonna do that”. That creates much diminished expectations, anger, angst and unhappiness: Nothing drives people more nuts than that. Whereas before, they were happier because they so to speak did not know any better: being barefoot and pregnant all their lives. Because that

was all they knew. And that was all women knew in Europe 200 years ago, and in the United States 150 years ago. So these are not alien concepts to us: they are just things we have forgotten.

I knew that the tumult created by globalization's creeping on the Middle East was going to create anger and violence and terrorism. When 9/11 comes along, and the connections are clear to us – at least for an instant – the United States (frankly, nobody else has the firepower to do it) gets in its mind that it has got to go fix something, in the Middle East. It decides it has got to change the Middle East in a big, big way, looks around and says: “who can I start with?” It decides on Iraq, and I say “that’s as good as anybody”. Here we have a guy that nobody likes; a place that has been sanctioned for years; that we have been bombing for 12 years; and it is smack-dab in the middle – sort of a Yugoslavia of the Middle East. If I can go in there and create some change and stir things up, that’s as good a place as any, especially since I get two birds with one throw because he was a bad guy and should go anyway.

So are we going to kick his ass militarily in the war? Yes, absolutely: supreme confidence there. Are we going to screw up the occupation? Absolutely! Why would you advocate going even if that is going to happen? Because this military is not going to change unless it experiences failure on that far side. To see and experience that failure is a compelling reason to change. Because if we do not get better at that SysAdmin work then we will never have any successes in the Global War on Terrorism.

To me it is not illogical to pack Iraq, 9/11 and everything together, because I am trying to approach the problem at the system-level. Killing Osama is not the answer: it would be like curing one computer virus and believing that you have then solved your network security problems for the next 50 years. Either you fix the system as a whole – or you accept that you will have to shoot at anything that moves in certain parts of the world for the next 50 years, and I find that morally bankrupt. That would be condemning a big chunk of humanity to a horrible existence. But is it harder to go in and make that change happening? Absolutely. You are going to lose lives and kill a bunch of people in the process – but sitting back and hoping that the Middle East

is going to get better in 30 years without making some sort of effort is ... that will be like the last 30 years, just uglier.

**Globalization is coming to the Middle East, and we have to integrate it. If we do not go there security-wise, the Russians and the Chinese and the Indians would be coming, and eventually the Japanese too.**

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To me, all these things are racing towards the inevitable. Globalization is coming to the Middle East, and we have to integrate it. That energy has to come out of there, because developing Asia needs it, and we need developing Asia. If we do not go there security-wise, the Russians and the Chinese and the Indians would be coming, and eventually the Japanese too. We can get there first, and try to make it a good thing, make it cooperative and a benefit to the region as a whole. Or we can wait until it gets really bad, and poor China gets so desperate that it starts doing something crazy or scary or intimidating. And we would go: “Hey, you shouldn’t be doing that”, and then we would have ourselves a nice cold war brewing in the Core again. We could then tell the Middle East: “Here are some arms, pick a side” – back to the joy we knew for 50 years because it is so damned comfortable. Or we can deal with this problem, which will not go away and only get worse without our attention.

As I say somewhat controversially in the book, 9/11 was sort of a gift from history: it is this trigger that allows a lot of possible, difficult processes to begin. We need some real serious discussion over this: where is globalization going; where is China going; where are the Russians going; the Europeans? Certain things are going to happen over the next 35 years – you Europeans are aging demographically, you will need more energy. When you make that kind of empirically-based argument you can have better discussions over where this situation is going, and then maybe you will avoid phrases like “exporting democracy”, or the “global war on

terrorism” – and you can try to come up with something a little more benign, like “Shrink the Gap”; “connectivity”; “Globalization does not come with a ruler, it comes with rules”; and the mixing of security and development economics. These strategies require a lot of key players to put aside non-zero-sum attitudes that we have had for along time, and which we assumed would hold sway in a Balance of Power world that would naturally re-emerge after the Cold War.

But it has not: what has emerged is a much skewed form of power. The Europeans are the leaders in rule making; the Americans are the leaders in profound new technology and the ability to wage war; the Chinese have this amazing new power in making [manufacturing] everything; the Indians have this bizarrely tilted power in Information Technology; and the Japanese are sort of this new center of cool and design and fashion. There is a tremendous package of talent and resources, which is coming together on its own – and if there was no Gap we would not care about it, just go along with economic integration, and find something else to bitch about, like gay marriages or something.

But because the Gap is there, not only do we have to recognize this tremendous interdependence that we are developing in the global economy, but we also have to put it to some use. Doing that requires us to go back into the past that most of us would prefer to forget, especially the Europeans. The Americans come off as cowboys – I certainly do in some people’s eyes – for saying: “Hey, look at the violence there: it can perturb your system in a very negative way”. With just two planes two buildings are going down, excluding the Pentagon: that can change a lot of rules for you overnight. Either you can deal with that power and that anger, or not. But do not pretend it is not there. If you are willing to do it, you have to understand that you will be traveling back in history to some scary places, to some scary kinds of violence with people willing to scalp their victims and cut off their heads.

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Economically we are already there. Politically nowhere near. Militarily there is the US – and then everybody else standing around going:

- “What are you gonna do about it?”

- “Well, I think I am going over to kill them”, and that scares the hell out of everybody:

- “Well, we want you to go kill them but please don’t do it in a scary way!”

And we start calling each other names over who is going to pay for it. Meanwhile, the violence and the pain and the suffering go on in the Middle East – and Africa just burns. And nobody does anything about that.

I look at the package of capabilities inside the Core: we have got it all, everything we need to do this. If you can just get past your pinhead attitudes and your great power politics – elevate yourself to a strategic understanding, for just a minute: what has to be done over the next 20-30 years? This we can predict with great certainty I would argue, in terms of demographics, energy and the entire economic transformation. These are not great mysteries, even though people want to pretend that they are. The logic is of dealing with this situation in a comprehensive A to Z fashion, one that admits that you cannot foreign aid these things out of existence. Nor are you going to bomb them out of existence. You cannot kill them all, and you cannot “social work” them to death either. It has to be some very complex combination, where you will kill bad guys, and where you will nurse other people back to health. It is within the Core’s capabilities.

The political imagination, the dialogue and the language can be changed – that is why I wrote the book: to get that positive vision out there. It is sad that in democracies we have to scare ourselves so, to do something security-wise. If you make a logical argument about the exertion of security, then people will say: “Who will die for your war? You must be doing this for empire; you must be doing this so multinational corporations can go around the world and exploit labor!”

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And I say: "Your point? Yes, I am: it is called development! Talk to somebody who has no multinational corporations exploiting their cheap labor: it sucks, it's called Central Africa!" But show me a place where they do have them do it, and yes the first generation's life looks like England in the 1890s: they work in factories and the conditions are rotten. But their kids go to school and become something better, and then their kids' kids become something even better. That is how we did it. How do we expect everyone else to magically jump ahead? During the Cold War, I would watch Star Trek and dream of a future where we would get past the nuclear Armageddon thing, and all come together. It is basically here, now what?

#### 6. The final frontier

*So basically the mission in the Gap is to boldly go where no man has gone before?*

It is our final frontier! It is exotic and scary and will require difficult things of us. But you are not a bad person for doing that kind of stuff: in many ways, we are moving away from paradigms of war to paradigms of police work. Across the Core we do have cops, and it is robust system. In the Gap there are no cops: you can kill 100.000 people before anyone cares. Hack them up with machetes, and throw their bodies down the river, and maybe five months later the UN will say: "that's really bad, you should stop!" So we are talking about extending police work.

In the Gap there are no cops: you can kill 100.000 people before anyone cares. Hack them up with machetes, and throw their bodies down the river, and maybe five months later the UN will say: "that's really bad, you

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China is the only one in the Core we should really worry about, and my guess is that we only have to do that for another 10 more years. Some see a scenario like: "Oh, my God, you're gonna create a global police force, but somebody's gonna come along like Nazi Germany, and then you won't be ready for it because you'll be the British Empire tending to that instead of getting ready for the Nazis!"

But I do not think the hedge required to prevent that scenario is that big. We are at a unique point of history in terms of the interconnectedness of the global economy and the fact that nuclear weapons effectively rule out major power war: we have an opportunity – if we can just enunciate certain things, and it takes more than regular political leaders to do it. That is why I, as a Democrat, actually find myself supporting Bush more than Kerry, because he speaks in terms of right and wrong, good versus evil. You need a certain amount of that to get people up to do it, because these are not easy things. You need Putin to be Putin sometimes. If you say: "Well, why don't you negotiate with them?", then he will say: "They just killed 300 of my kids! Why don't you go negotiate with Osama bin Laden?!" At some point you have to say: "That doesn't work!" You don't have to be tragically naïve, just because you're sensitive or something like that: Sometimes bad guys need a bullet through their head. You cannot shy from that, and if you do it well you will save so many more lives.

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When I put out my vision like this it is very black and white. Some people see only the upfront sacrifices, not the potential gain, and say that what I talk about is perpetual war. And there are others who think this is really a chance to save a lot of lives. It is something that requires us to come together, like the Europeans.

Globalization *is* happening, and if we can just latch on to some of these integration processes and use them in such a way as to mitigate suffering in these parts of the world that *are not* integrating: Then we really kill two problems at the same time, not only do we deal with that suffering, but we avail ourselves of new opportunities – for investment, and yeah: for cheap labor, and we exploit it. Then we can all really get through this stalemate that we have had for many, many decades in the third world, where we used to say: “We’ll get to you eventually”.

*And eventually could be now?*

This administration is doing much of what I argue for, but I do not claim that they are following my logic – I claim it to be the logic of the world. They are employing almost a Nixonian sort of secrecy on it, as though the world would not trust them on it.

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Eventually *should* be now! I would argue that it will also be inevitable because of the demographics. The book tries to be a theory of everything, because I believe a theory of everything is required for people to understand these systems. This administration is doing much of what I argue for, but I do not claim that they are following my logic – I claim it to be the logic of the world. They are employing almost a Nixonian sort of secrecy on it, as though the world would not trust them on it. In that secrecy, which is almost pathological, many people are rushing in to fill the gap – with conspiracies, charges, accusations and labels. And then it all

gets to the point where you have this “Europe is from Venus, the US is from Mars,” as if that captures where we are in history right now! I can just hear somebody from Africa say this and add ironically “I can really see the difference! You’re rich, healthy, fat, living the good life and I live in constant war! No wonder you people can’t get along!” It is hilarious the differences we continue to see among ourselves, compared to what it really means to be shut out. Go to Africa, some parts of Latin America; South East Asia or the Middle East where people are really, really shut out of the process. And it’s not surprisingly that there are people who feel ripped of and sometimes want to do something about it.

It feels very fortunate that 9/11 came along to finally put thing into sharp relief. It allows me to make arguments that I think ultimately are very compassionate. That should attract Europeans with their nanny-state mentality: I’m giving you two and a half billion people to go nanny! And when they act up, the Americans will go kill them and you won’t have to do the hard stuff. Or, those scary people can come kill you – and they will: they’ll show up on election days and blow up their backpack bombs.

Europeans are all familiar with this sort of terrorism, by and large. You have gone through a lot of terrorism, and somehow that has deadened you to what has to be done – you have kind of made your peace with it. Americans are somewhat schizophrenic on this, since we accept 30,000 deaths a year with gun violence – but bin Laden can go commit 3,000 murders on television one day, and we will be so mad about that that we will go invade countries.

But thank God we still react violently to terrorism: that it still lights a fire under us, and it is finally lighting one under Putin. We can either deal with it or we can choose not to, but it is not going away, and this globalization process will not stop just because we stop supporting the Israelis or get off oil or something like that. The older I get the more convinced I get that life is accomplished by those rushing to embrace the bad things, because you may as well get it over as soon as possible. I learned that when my daughter got cancer at age two, which I write about in the book. It really taught me something about strategic planning: dealing with difficult things in the right fashion, not dragging them out.