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SS481

**American Defense Policy in American Grand Strategy Perspective**

**Spring Term 2012**

**I-J Hour (0950-1155) 2-Days**

Lincoln Hall B201

Colonel Isaiah (Ike) Wilson III, U.S. Army, Ph.D.  
Lincoln Hall Room B119  
Office Phone: 938-3894  
Home Phone: 845.859.4183  
Cell Phone: 845.269.1741  
Email: [isaiah.wilson@usma.edu](mailto:isaiah.wilson@usma.edu)

**A grand strategy is a nation's comprehensive plan of action that coordinates and directs all political, economic, and military means and their associated factors in order to attain large ends.**

## 1. Introduction

“Grand’ strategy must involve much more than the supervision of battles . . . [G]rand strategy should both calculate and develop the economic resources and manpower of nations in order to sustain the fighting services. Also the moral resources—for to foster the people’s willing spirit is often as important as to possess the more concrete forms of power. Grand Strategy, too, should regulate the distribution of power between the several services, and between the services and industry. Moreover, fighting power is but one of the instruments of grand strategy—which should take account of and apply the power of financial pressure, of diplomatic pressure, of commercial pressure, and, not least, of ethical pressure, to weaken the opponent’s will . . . It should not only combine the various instruments, but so regulate their use as to avoid damage to the future state of peace—for its security and prosperity.”<sup>1</sup>

This course aims to examine the theory and practice of grand strategy. It does so in historical and contemporary context, from a variety of analytical perspectives, and most importantly . . . from an ‘American’ perspective. In this course, we generally define grand strategy as the calculated relation of means to large ends. We focus on how parts relate to the whole in whatever an individual, a corporation, a nation, or a collective of nation-states might be seeking to accomplish. The strategists and their strategies we consider “strategists” and their “strategies” that range over some two and a half millennia. Some of them represent the “best” thinking and writing on this subject; others exemplify success and failure in the implementation of grand strategy. From a careful examination of them, we will endeavor to

<sup>1</sup> Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2d rev. ed. (New York, 1974), p. 353.



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extract a set of principles for the making of grand strategy that will be useful in any future leadership role in which we may be called upon to connect desired ends with available means. Specifically, this gathering of lessons and “principles” from grand strategy will serve a practical purpose: to familiarize ourselves with the U.S. policymaking process(es) as it (they) relate to America’s national defense. All policy decisions involve tradeoffs (“the art of the possible”) and defense policy is no-exception.

## Why Study Grand Strategy?

The famous Prussian theorist and military officer, Carl von Clausewitz, wrote,

if we keep in mind that war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it. The political object is the goal, war is the means of achieving it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.

In other words, armed forces officers cannot afford the luxury of exclusively focusing on tactical competence. The American people and their elected representatives utilize military operations to achieve larger political ends. If graduates of West Point are to effectively serve the American people as Army officers, they must understand the larger political context in which wars are fought. War is a means to an end, and an armed forces officer who does not understand the war’s purpose may ultimately undermine it.

## Why Study Grand Strategy from an ‘American’ Perspective?

The following two quotations offer us a bald, introductory answer . . .

“God has a special providence for fools, drunks, and the United States of America.”

~ Attributed to Otto von Bismarck

“Oh posterity. You will never know how much it cost us to preserve your freedom. I hope that you will make a good use of it. If you do not, I shall repent in heaven that I ever took half the pains to preserve it.”

~ John Adams

The first, attributed to Otto von Bismarck—considered one of the world’s greatest “grand strategists”—speaks to a general prevailing sensibility within the international community of nation-states that tends to see America in, shall we say . . . a *less than sober* light. We are probably more versed in the contemporary version of this Bismarckian statement . . . “The Lord watches over (takes care of) idiots and children.” Regardless of which version you prefer, the message comes with the same indictment: the world, in general, tends to see the American Hegemon in adolescent, if not child-like terms—immature and unpredictable, albeit affable and endearing. Some go further in charging that to search for an ‘American Grand Strategy’ that frames and guides and legitimizes America’s actions, at home and abroad, is a *fool’s errand*—that the United States has never had a grand strategy much less a coherent one.



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Yet, the truth of the matter is this: the United States has had a “more successful foreign policy than any of the other ‘great powers’ that [she] has faced—and faced down.”<sup>2</sup> Walter Russell Mead goes on to argue that . . .

Beginning as an isolated string of settlements at the edge of the known world, this country—in two centuries—drove the French and the Spanish out of North America; forced Britain, then the world’s greatest empire, to respect American interests; dominated coalitions that defeated German and Japanese bids for world power; replaced the tottering British Empire with a more flexible and dynamic global system built on American power; triumphed in the Cold War; and exported its language, culture, and political values throughout the world.

That said, American foreign policy—and the domestic politics upon which that “foreign” policy is grounded and energized—has shown itself in real terms, and on more than just a small set of isolated occasions, to be amateurish and blundering.”<sup>3</sup>

This is a point of paradox that brings us to the points of warning offered in the quotation by John Adams. Gathering a better “knowing” of the “pains and sufferings” of the United States of America, and a better, blunt and honest appreciation of what it means to be an American *republic* is essential in “keeping” our republic *as a republic* . . . even as the United States moves forward as the world-system *guaranteeing and regulating power* of the Westphalian Order. In order to ensure that we—that ‘posterity’ to which John Adams spoke—are continuing to make good use of American power, we must understand what that power is *and what it is not*.

Additionally, U.S. armed forces officers have an obligation to plan and conduct military operations in a manner that will support the U.S. grand strategy and ultimately achieve the larger political objective. Immersing ourselves in the preeminent grand strategic thinking as well as making ourselves knowledgeable of the success and failures of past grand strategies will help us fulfill this obligation. This course not only teaches the future armed forces officer how to identify and understand the political, the economic, the diplomatic, the demographic, the cultural, and the psychological factors that impact war and state welfare . . . it prepares those leaders for their future responsibilities as those that are expected to effectively connect desired ends with available means in their day-to-day duties, and to do so in a manner congruent with and promotive and preserving of traditional American values and ideals; limitations and reservations.

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence* (2001).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



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## 2. Course Goals and Objectives.

This course is conducted as a graduate-style seminar; student preparation and participation in seminar discussion is essential.

**Goal 1: graduates of this seminar will be familiar with the major theoretical works of grand strategy and will be able to discuss how these theories have been implemented successfully and unsuccessfully throughout history.**

Objective 1: Cadets will understand the major ideas of strategists such as Sun Tzu, Thucydides, and Clausewitz.

Objective 2: Cadets will be able to provide thoughtful and supported critiques of these works.

Objective 3: Cadets will be familiar with major grand strategies throughout history, as well as more modern nation-state examples.

Objective 4: Cadets will be able to analyze the grand strategies of past rulers, empires, or nation-states, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their respective grand strategies.

**Goal 2: Graduates of this seminar, utilizing their newly acquired knowledge of the past theory and practice of grand strategy, will be able to critique current U.S. foreign policy and 'domestic defense' policy, as well as provide thorough and well-supported recommendations for future U.S. grand strategy.**

Objective 1: Cadets will be able to analyze current U.S. policy using past theoretical work as a guide.

Objective 2: Cadets will be able to cite previous grand strategies from history in order to characterize the strengths and weaknesses of current U.S. grand strategy.

Objective 3: Cadets will be able to synthesize the past theory and practice of grand strategy with the current global environment in order to develop a future U.S. grand strategy.





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**Goal 3: Graduates of this seminar will improve their analytical reasoning and oral and written communication skills.**

Objective 1: Cadets can present theoretically and historically grounded oral and written prescriptions for U.S. foreign policy.

Objective 2: Cadets can employ logical reasoning and oral communication skills in a formal presentation to the class on a selected topic.

Objective 3: Cadets can write succinct and persuasive memorandums and papers, recommending a particular policy or strategy.

Objective 4: Cadets can present a thorough and persuasive policy proposal briefing to a skeptical superior, confidently defending the logic and wisdom of the proposed policy.

**Goal 4: Graduates of this seminar will gain a deeper knowledge of and appreciation for the U.S. Defense policymaking process(es) and the “politics” behind the in perspective of American grand strategy-making.**

Objective 1: Cadets understand and recognize the internal and external factors that influence defense policy decisions.

Objective 2: Cadets understand the role of military leaders in formulating defense policy.

Objective 3: Cadets understand the threats—contemporary and future—that influence defense policy.

### **3. Required Textbooks.**

There are four primary texts for this course. All books are at the USMA book issue or are available for purchase on amazon.com or any other online bookstore. As a supplement to the required texts, additional readings will be issued later and either distributed in class, posted on the course BlackBoard website, or placed on reserve in Jefferson Library. Cadets are required to complete the assigned readings prior to the lesson scheduled for seminar discussion. Those students indicating an unpreparedness will be denied the privilege of participating in that day's in-class seminar discussion session.



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**NOTE:** The abbreviation at the end of the bibliography below denotes how the texts will be referred to in the lesson schedule (See Syllabus). Citations with the abbreviation **(WEB)** denote readings and supplements posted to BlackBoard.

Bolt, Paul J., Damon V. Coletta and Collins, G. Shackleford, Jr., eds., *American Defense Policy*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. **(ADP)**

George, Roger Z. and Harvey Rishikof. *The National Security Enterprise: Navigating The Labyrinth*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2011. **(George & Rishikof)**

Mead, Walter R. *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*. New York, NY: Routhlege Press, 2002. **(WRM)**

Wilson, George C. *This War Really Matters: Inside the Fight for Defense Dollars*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2000. **(Wilson)**

\*\*Also, a great resource focusing on Grand Strategy is <http://www.classicsofstrategy.com/>. I encourage you to peruse the site and explore the treasures posted there.

\*\*And here is an excellent pseudo-comprehensive e-bibliography on Strategy (last updated: February 2011) <http://www.au.af.mil/au/aul/bibs/strategy2011.htm>

#### 4. Course Requirements and Grading.

<b>Marshall Policy Study</b>	<b>700 points</b>
Topic Proposal	100 points
The Strategic Assessment	200 points
The Defense Policy Review	200 points
The Marshall Presentation	200 points (TEE)
<b>Participation</b>	<b>300 points</b>
Strategist's Journal/Discussant Paper(s)	200 points
Seminar Discussion	100 points
<b>TOTAL POINTS:</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

#### Grading.

Department of Social Sciences Grading Policy



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Level of Achievement	Letter Grade	Percentage	Subjective Interpretation
<i>Mastery</i>	A+	97-100	Mastery of concepts. Can apply concepts to new situations.
	A	93-96.9	
	A-	90-92.9	
<i>Excellence</i>	B+	87-89.9	Solid understanding of concepts. Strong foundation for future work.
	B	83-86.9	
	B-	80-82.9	
<i>Proficiency</i>	C+	77-79.9	Acceptable understanding.
	C	73-76.9	Questionable foundation for future work.
<i>Marginal Proficiency</i>	C-	70-72.9	Doubtful understanding.
<i>Proficiency</i>	D	67-69.9	Weak foundation for future work.
<i>Failure</i>	F	<67	Failed to demonstrate understanding.

**COL Wilson's Late Policy:** Assignments are due per dates and times in the syllabus, or, as adjusted by the instructor. A minimum of 10% penalty will be assessed for each day the assignment is late—beginning on the day it was due. As lateness is a sign of inattention to detail and a failure to plan, I will submit a Cadet Observation Report (COR) for any unexplained and approved late assignments.

## 5. The Marshall Policy Study.

Named in honor of Secretary of State George Catlett Marshall, the Marshall Policy Study consists of a strategic assessment, a defense policy/planning analysis, and a formal presentation (no more than five slides).

The purpose of the study is to give student's an opportunity to synthesize much of what they have learned in the course as well as offer students opportunity to hone their research, analytical, and communications skills.

Students will identify a specific "security challenge" facing the United States, currently or on the horizon that lies at the nexus of two or more of the four broad categories as depicted in the adjoining graphic (source: National Defense Strategy of the United States, 2003.)



Student papers and Marshall Briefs should be global, interdisciplinary, inter-agency, intra/inter-governmental (if applicable), and "ambitious" in nature. Students should specifically address values,



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interests, threats, opportunities, costs/benefits, risks and risk mitigation, etc. within their analysis and in discussing their grand strategic analyses.

## 6. The Strategist's Journal.

Keep an electronic journal in electronic form for this seminar course. Make an entry for each lesson covered, incorporating the following, at a minimum:

- Summary of the readings (main arguments)
- Key concepts and theoretical frameworks—what are they? What is your assessment of these concepts and the theoretical apparatus' used?
- Lessons for gathering—applicability? Linkages? Relevancy?
- Gaps and counter-arguments/propositions
- 2-3 discussion questions

## 7. Discussant Papers and Presentations.

This is a formal part of the Strategist's Journal requirement. Each student will be a primary seminar discussion facilitator for at least one seminar session. The duties and responsibilities of the present are to read the lesson material (same as for ALL of us!), and present the same as a preamble to that lesson's seminar discussions. The formal presentation will be no longer than 15 minutes. Presenters are not permitted to use PowerPoint or any similar visuals for these presentations (exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis and will typically be limited to map displays). The presentation should be a summation of the reading(s), plus an analysis and critique, similar to the journal entry format.

Each presenter will end their presentation with at least two questions for the class, which we may then use to ignite seminar discussions. "Energy" in your presentations is expected and encouraged.

A majority (at least two-thirds) of the discussion paper should be devoted to critical analysis and assessment of the reading(s). The papers will be no longer than two pages.

Students will email a copy of their discussion paper to the cadets in their section as well as to the instructor no later than 0800 hours the day of the in-class seminar session.





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## 8. (a) Potential Guests.

Guest	Dates	Block / Topic of Discussion
MG Ben Hodges, Director of Office of Legislative Liaison (OCLL), Washington, D.C.	Friday, 27 Jan	Mod-3 Theory, History, Practice of Grand Strategy and Force Planning
Professor John Mearsheimer (University of Chicago)	Friday, 27 Jan	Mod-3 Guest Lecture (SS483) – “Imperial by Design”
Dr. Ray Raymond, SUNY-Ulster	Wednesday, 8 Feb	Mod-4 AGS in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century, Part I
Dr. Benjamin Mitchell and Dr. Hugh Liebert, assistant professors (political thought and ideas), Department of Social Sciences, USMA	Friday, 24 Feb Thursday, 1 Mar	Mod-5 ‘Greater Western’ Philosophical & Comparative Civilizational Perspectives
Walter Russell Mead, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations (NYC)	Invited	TBD
Professor John Lewis Gaddis	Invited	TBD
Dr. Jason Lyall, Yale University	Invited	TBD
Max Boot, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations (NYC)	Friday, 30 Mar	Mod-7 Evolutions and Revolutions in Military Affairs
GEN (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal, former COMISAF	Monday, 7 May	War in Afghanistan – A Discussion
GEN (Ret.) Abizaid, Distinguished Fellow, Combating Terrorism Center (CTC); former Commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)	Wednesday, 9 May	Mod-10 “Imagining an American Grand Strategy”
Mr. Bill Sutey (SASC) and Mr. Doug Bush (HASC)	TBD	TEE Marshall Briefs (T)

## 8. (b) A Broad, Analytical Framework: Reconsidering the Relationship of Force and Power<sup>4</sup>

This semester students should take into consideration the differences and the relationship between American power and American force and consider the potential role of U.S. power from multiple

<sup>4</sup> Sources: (1) SCUSA-62 Theme Paper (Nov 2010); (2) Wilson, Isaiah III. “Rethinking American Power.” Keynote Address, 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on World Affairs (CWA), Boulder, CO (April 2009).



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perspectives. Students should then determine how policy makers could best employ U.S. power vis-à-vis the challenges the contemporary international system poses, while acknowledging the transnational and globalizing aspect of the issues. Students of American Grand Strategy must consider the latent capacity of the United States to affect change, the purpose for doing so, and how best to influence outcomes. This will require a deep consideration of the relationship between American power and American instruments of force.

## Power and Force Defined<sup>5</sup>

There are multiple definitions of power, but its essence is the capacity to affect change and the ability to influence others.<sup>6</sup> This is the foundation for Joseph Nye's further dissection into hard and soft power.<sup>7</sup> Where power was once based on geography, population, and raw materials, today the basis lies increasingly on technology, education, and economic growth. Hard power, power that physically compels or directs other states to act in a manner consistent with the goals of the exercising state, typically appears in the form of incentives or threats to alter what another state does.<sup>8</sup> This hard power assumes various forms: the size and capacity of the economic marketplace, political influence, and military strength most notably. The United States has used these forms of hard power to achieve its goals since its birth, but just as important has been soft power. Soft power, instead of inducement or coercion, co-opts and attracts; it shapes and changes what other states want.<sup>9</sup> Quite simply, soft power is getting others to want what you want. It influences others because of attraction, and the means of soft power are less tangible but no less potent – values, culture, ideology, and institutions. The United States has seen many of its policy objectives achieved at least in part due to its soft power. American ideals stood in stark contrast to those of Soviet communism and acted as a beacon for citizens trapped behind the Iron Curtain. In consideration of hard and soft power, where does the discussion of force begin? Does it span the continuum of power or is it a separate consideration? Have we conflated the ideas of power and force? Has our definition of force been too restrictive?

Force, of which military power is only one element, is the most blatant display of power.<sup>10</sup> Power and force have a unique relationship and may be far too easily conflated, contributing to errors in strategic judgment and actions. While military force is an essential element of American national power, it is neither the only essential element nor as a single instrument of force is it a sufficient proxy for American power. In terms of politics, power rests on a state's prestige and capacity to affect change or to prevent change and it requires legitimacy, which it derives from those who may be subject to it. True power is self-legitimizing, purposeful, and strategic in securing national interests. As such, power grows when others recognize the capacity, latent or otherwise, a state possesses. Force, on the other hand, consists of the tools that a state employs as an extension of its power, and when employed without legitimacy and strategic purpose, may be very dangerous for the state that does so. Power is the foundation of force but an excessive employment of force – not just military, but economic and political – can erode the power foundation. Paradoxically, the recognition of power comes from the display of force, but when states excessively employ force, it may lead to a decrease in power. The unmistakable link between power and

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<sup>5</sup> Excerpted from the SCUSA-62 theme paper, co-conceived and authored by MAJ Irvin Oliver.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 25-26.

<sup>8</sup> Nye, *Bound to Lead*, 31, 267.

<sup>9</sup> Nye, *Bound to Lead*, 267.

<sup>10</sup> Hannah Arendt, "On Violence," *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 134.



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force may in fact be found in national will and legitimacy. The longer a state employs force, the greater the potential for a decrease in national will, which eventually can result in the diminution of power.

power and work

$power = \frac{work}{time}$	power
$work = power \times time$	work
$time = \frac{work}{power}$	time

power and displacement

$power = \frac{force \times displacement}{time}$	power
$force = \frac{power \times time}{displacement}$	force
$displacement = \frac{power \times time}{force}$	displacement
$time = \frac{force \times displacement}{power}$	time

## Where Does American Power Stand Today?

Some analysts have proposed that American economic power may be on the decline with the recession leading to the fatigued hegemon's eventually fall from preeminence.<sup>11</sup> The recession will clearly have long lasting effects that influence U.S. policy domestically and internationally. Political power has seen successes when political force has fallen short. Successes like Libya relinquishing its nuclear ambitions stand in stark contrast to the lack of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. The United States has eschewed its military power in favor of military force, which has had a mixed record of success particularly over the past decade in Afghanistan and Iraq, as evidenced in the challenge of achieving a lasting peace and stability.

The irregular wars and military-humanitarian operations (MHOs) in which the United States finds itself have shown the limits of military force as the successful resolution of the conflicts requires some form of political agreement among the internal factions, improved capacity in host nation civil governance, and an increased emphasis on economic development. While force of arms successfully toppled the Taliban and Hussein regimes, securing Afghanistan and Iraq while developing effective domestic institutions strained

<sup>11</sup> Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order* (New York: Orient Longman, 2003).



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the limits of military and market power-capacity. The persuasive and alluring aspects of America's soft power – its ability to attract other states through its ideals, ideas, and culture is also in question.

Students of American Grand Strategy must consider these and other related questions regarding U.S. power and force: What are the elements of American "Power" and how do they differ from American "Force?" Are there limits to U.S. power? What is the current relationship between American power and American force? How does the United States best employ the power it wields and when is it appropriate for the United States to employ force in pursuit of its national objectives? What are the ramifications of the economic measures the United States took to prevent greater financial calamity? How will the moral, economic, and security aspects of the current international environment affect American power? Has the United States effectively integrated the various elements of power and force in pursuit of its objectives? Finally, is U.S. power in a state of disequilibrium? Has the United States lost the balance that George Kennan put forth as the best method to counter the earlier threat of the Soviet? If so, what must the United States do to rediscover the equilibrium point between its power and its force?

**10. Seminar Schedule, AY12-2 (see SS481 Syllabus).**

