Afghanistan Advantages – Wave 1

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2AC Extensions / Backlines will be out tomorrow with the Case Neg.

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Adv \_\_ : SCO-NATO Cooperation --- Withdrawal forces regional players to negotiate --- SCO will step up, solves stability and Indo-Pak relations

Prashad ’09

(Vijay,- Chair of South Asian History and Director of International Studies at Trinity College, Hartford, CT “Afghanistan: The Regional Alternative to Escalation” http://www.apimovement.com/viewpoint/afghanistan-regional-alternative-escalation)

More US troops are being prepared for Afghanistan. The President charged them with (1) defeating or degrading the Taliban; (2) building the Afghan National Army. We have thrown in our lot with Hamid Karzai's government. Its association with warlords is uncontestable (his own brother is an opium kingpin). Our enemy is the Taliban, which recruits a family each time we accidentally kill one civilian. And we have offered the coldest shoulder to the forces of progress, like the former parliamentarian Malalai Joya (one of the first acts of the Karzai government in 2002 was to ban the communists, and he has himself refused to create the kind of political parties that might undermine warlordism). Obama's enunciated goals seem impossible. Departure in 2011 is a chimera; it is thrown like magic to assuage those with anxiety about a long-term commitment. Withdrawal will be silenced by the monstrous anger of guns.    The United States-NATO Occupation has ill-defined signposts, and those that are defined will be difficult to reach. There is a better alternative to escalation, which is to make the stability of Afghanistan a regional responsibility, and to withdraw in a very timely fashion. The regional partners with the greatest stake in the stability of Afghanistan, such as Iran, India, Pakistan, China and the various Central Asian republics, will not begin a genuine process if the US-NATO Occupation persists. Why would the Chinese or the Iranians get their hands dirty if this means that their work will reward the US with military bases at Bagram and Kabul? A prerequisite for their entry into the process is the withdrawal of the US, and a pledge that no permanent military bases will remain in the region. This is not a marker that the US is willing to put on the table. It is committed to empire. Obama said at West Point, "We have no interest in occupying your country." That is true if the definition of occupation is a 19th century one. But a 21st century occupation is conducted via military bases and extra-territorial privileges, by free trade agreements and dispensations for certain corporations. The high walls of the bases and the hum of the drones is enough to distort the fine sentiments in Obama's phrase.    When the Taliban was in power (1996-2001), the regional states formed the Shanghai Cooperation Alliance (it was the Shanghai Five in 1996, and by 2001, the SCO). The members included the various Central Asian states that border Afghanistan, Russia, and China with observer status for India, Iran, Pakistan and Mongolia. The SCO was formed to create trust on the borders of the new Republics, which were once part of the USSR, and China. In July 2001, the SCO acknowledged that the "cradle of terrorism, separatism and extremisms is the instability in Afghanistan." They pledged to work together to undermine the Taliban, and the various political Islamists in the region. It was to be a long process, but not one without possibility. None of the neighbors wanted to see the Taliban emirate exported; they had national interests at stake. And they had influence over a landlocked country whose only ally was Pakistan, itself beholden to China for diplomatic cover and much else. Pressure could have come, but time did not permit.    A few days after 9/11, elements in the Taliban reached out to the US. They wanted political cover to turn over Osama Bin Laden, and to save their own emirate. This was an important opening, but the Bush administration decided to snub them. In mid-October, the Taliban's no. 3, Haji Abdul Kabir told reporters. "We would be ready to hand [Bin Laden] over to a third country" if the bombing ended. Once more, Bush demurred. It was not his style to negotiate. This is when the Afghan war was lost: not at Tora Bora but at a press conference at Jalalabad. If the US had taken the Taliban up on this offer, Bin Laden would have been in custody in a third country and tried in an international court. Instead, the US backed one group of nasty warlords (the Northern Alliance) against the Taliban, throwing to the wind the progressive forces within Afghan society. The SCO was also disregarded. This was a costly mistake. The SCO continues to have influence in the region. This summer, the Taliban leadership sent a letter to the SCO, asking it to intervene against the Occupation. These are the leaders of the insurgency on the ground, not the "moderates" who decamped to Saudi Arabia for a Mecca meeting with their funders and the Karzai government (as reported in Asharq al-Awsat in October 2008). Those who went to Mecca, such as Mullah Mohammed Tayeb Agha and Wakil Ahmad Mutawakkil, are not linked to the Taliban resurgence (indeed, its spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, denied that they spoke for the Taliban). On the other hand, the letter to the SCO came from the Quetta Shura Taliban, the inner sanctum controlled by Mullah Omar. Since September 2009, the Quetta Shura has been trying to play up its "nationalist" credentials, including distancing itself from al-Qaeda, whose own regional leaders have continued their tirade against nationalism of all kinds. Mullah Omar's Eid message on September 19 called the Taliban "a robust Islamic and nationalist movement," a statement that earned a rebuke from the leading Salafi cleric, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi. The Salafis worry that the Taliban will go the way of Khalid Meshal's Hamas. No division of the umma, the Muslim nation, for the hard-core jihadis. There is daylight between the Taliban and al-Qaeda.    Which is why it reached out to the SCO. Of course the SCO is sitting on its hands, but it is able. The regional solution will be difficult, given that it would have to scrub off the effects of thirty years of warfare. The SCO is not going to welcome the Taliban with open arms and hand over Kabul to Mullah Omar. [Card Continued – No Text Removed]

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After 2001, the US welcomed the warlords into Kabul, handed them the keys to the kingdom and gave them a tacit amnesty for their grievous crimes (even making Ahmed Shah Masood, a ghastly warlord, the nation's icon). Such a positive fate does not seem to be on the horizon for the Taliban. It will come above ground with much less fanfare. The Taliban and the warlords obviously command a following in Afghanistan (something that was not true in the 1970s). Thanks to US, Saudi and Pakistani funding and assistance, the warlords and the Taliban have become a social force and have to be combated politically. The US and the Saudis cannot broker their entry into the political process. But the SCO has a better chance.   Right after the Taliban fled in 2001, the US convened a "donor's conference" in Bonn, where Europe, Japan and the US gathered to promise money for the reconstruction of the country. No one invited the SCO players. This has not changed. Europe, Japan and the US, the countries with the least legitimacy in Afghanistan are the ones calling the shots. Rather than conference calls with Brussels (the NATO headquarters), and Paris and London, and Kabul (with the shaky government of Karzai), the Obama administration should have called a political conference of the SCO, to see what it would have taken to hand over the Afghan imbroglio to them. The SCO met in Bishkek (capital of Kyrgyzstan) on November 24 to discuss the problem of the region, and made all kinds of suggestions. None of these are operational till the US-NATO withdraws from Kabul. China is the only power in the region with the wealth and expertise to genuinely rebuild Afghanistan (people might criticize its development policy in Africa, but mark this: Chinese investment enters countries in Africa without IMF-type conditionalities and Chinese engineers and managers live in modest conditions, not creating the kind of high-overhead NGO lifestyles of the European and US humanitarian workers).    India and Pakistan have competing interests in Afghanistan. Their Cold War is fought between their Afghan proxies. If the SCO were responsible for the situation, India and Pakistan would be forced to work together. India's sober reaction to the Mumbai attacks of 2008, and to the two bombings of its Kabul embassy have shown the Pakistani civilian leadership that it is prepared to negotiate in a serious fashion. On December 2, the Indian government announced, for the first time in decades, that it would begin to withdraw troops from Jammu and Kashmir. The moment is nigh for the Pakistani civilian leadership to put itself at the center of diplomatic discussions in the region, to isolate the ISI and the Pakistani military who have otherwise defined Pakistan's Afghan policy. But an escalation is going to set this backwards: more bloodshed in the northern borderlands of Pakistan will inflame the population, and it might set in motion a forward policy not only into Afghanistan but also its twin, Kashmir. If all this happens, I fear for the future of South Asia. In a decade it will resemble West Asia. Both broken by empire. The US media has portrayed the escalation of the Occupation in a very simplistic fashion: either the US solves the problem, or the Taliban returns. This is a false choice, one that assumes that only the US can act, the White Knight riding in to save the world. America is not exceptional. Others are ready. But they don't want to act unless they have a commitment that the US is not going to use their blood and treasure to build its empire.

It’s reverse causal --- the plan increases regional cooperation with NATO --- solves DA’s to withdrawal

Katz ’09

(Mark,- professor of government and politics at George Mason University “Assessing an Afghanistan Withdrawal” 9-9 <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?lng=en&id=105801>)

The impact of a US/NATO withdrawal, then, could well be to make these neighboring and nearby governments feel more vulnerable, and thus more willing to increase or initiate cooperation with the US and NATO to contain al-Qaida and the Taliban within Afghanistan.  This is not to say that the US and NATO will be better off after a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan or a partial one from the south. Withdrawal will surely have some negative consequences. But not withdrawing will also have negative consequences if the US/NATO intervention becomes even less popular in Afghanistan and the West than it is now.  Even if a withdrawal from Afghanistan results in the worst case scenario its opponents predict, this is highly likely to be mitigated by non-Pashtuns inside Afghanistan or the governments of neighboring and nearby countries acquiring the incentive to increase (or in some cases, initiate) security cooperation with the US and NATO against the common threat. Just as maintaining or increasing US/NATO military involvement in Afghanistan will not necessarily lead to victory, withdrawal will not necessarily lead to defeat there.

SCO 1AC

This is key to meaningful SCO-NATO cooperation

Afrasiabi ’09

(Kaveh,- former political science professor at Tehran University “Unlikely bedfellows in Afghanistan” <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/KC18Df02.html>)

Due to their geographical proximity to Afghanistan and the threats of conflict spillover, the SCO members are naturally concerned about the security meltdown in Afghanistan. As a result, it is not far-fetched to anticipate a near-term breakthrough over SCO-NATO cooperation on Afghanistan. This would be despite lingering SCO suspicions of NATO's "out of area" operations in their backyard. NATO's decision to put on hold the accession of Georgia and Ukraine dampens these suspicions. The key issue is the nature of any possible SCO-NATO cooperation. In 2005, the SCO and Afghanistan set up a liaison group based in Beijing to deal with drug trafficking, cross-border crime and intelligence-sharing. But not much has happened and then-president Vladimir Putin's 2004 call for a SCO "security belt" around Afghanistan to stop the drug trade has not materialized This is partly because the SCO is still in the process of self-definition, and unlike NATO, or for that matter the Moscow-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), it lacks the identity of a military bloc. In a recent interview, the SCO secretary general, Bolat Nurgaliev, stated that "any physical involvement by the SCO in Afghanistan has not been contemplated so far". But with NATO admittedly failing to secure Afghanistan, the NATO leadership may now be amenable to the idea of a co-security partnership with SCO. This could begin with the low-security issues of drug trafficking and arms smuggling. This would parcel out a slice of the Afghan security pie to the SCO, traditionally viewed with suspicion in the US and European capitals as a potential rival to NATO. In a separate development, according to a source at the UN, China is leaning in favor of a UN peacekeeping force for Afghanistan to which it would contribute, this in contrast to Russia's cool reception of this option. At the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which is a major organizer of The Hague Afghan conference, the idea of sending blue helmets to guard Afghanistan's porous borders is under serious consideration. Whether or not the SCO and NATO can cooperate on low-security issues depends on each organization's sober "threat analysis" and NATO's firm conclusion that it cannot handle Afghanistan alone. But, perhaps more important than any decision by the SCO and NATO leaders is whether India and Pakistan can stop competing and begin to cooperate on Afghanistan.

SCO 1AC

Hegemonic decline is inevitable, SCO-NATO cooperation beginning in Afghanistan is key to a stable transition to multi-polarity, solves global regional competition, including global resource and US-Sino conflict

Albright ’10

(Scott,- B.A. in Political Science, former Marine and author of the blog Iraqwarvets, current grad student in U.S.-Sino relations “Forging a NATO-SCO Relationship” <http://www.chinausrelations.com/nato-sco-relationship.html>)

Is the SCO trying to push NATO out of Afghanistan and Central Asia? Is the SCO and NATO at odds over security arrangements in the region, or are the two organizations cooperating in a joint effort to eliminate terrorism and extremism? Some scholars argue that Russia and China have cooperated through the SCO to not only counterbalance NATO, but to hedge the United States out of its role as world superpower. NATO and the SCO work under the auspices of the United Nations, which, if the two groups were to work more cooperatively, could become more effective in providing regional and global security. This cooperative approach will create a more multi-polar world, which can benefit China, Russia, the U.S. and the rest of the globe if careful attention is paid to how the evolution of such a relationship develops. A more multi-polar world will benefit the United States who has carried the burden of providing most of the costs for NATO operations in Afghanistan, and previously in Bosnia and Kosovo. By taking some of this burden off the U.S. in Afghanistan, the SCO could help to remove some of the risks the U.S. is taking when trying to resolve security issues, which both China and the U.S. understand to be of concern in Afghanistan. Tension over U.S. missile defense strategy in Eastern Europe and NATO’s expansionism eastward has alarmed Moscow who recently used military force in Georgia in defiance of NATO’s activities in Eastern Europe. Russia and China’s often bold stance against the U.S. and NATO make it difficult for tensions to ease, but cooperation on some levels have also provided beneficial outcomes for the world at large. A recent nuclear summit had all the nuclear powers promising to take measures that will prevent weapons grade uranium and plutonium from getting into the hands of terrorists. This type of cooperation is exactly the type that is needed for a peaceful multi-polar world to exist. The SCO is not the only multinational organization in Central and Southwest Asia counter balancing the United States’ presence there. The goal of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which consists of Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, is to preserve territorial integrity and seek closer cooperation with multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the SCO, and NATO (GlobalSecurity.org). Russia has stated that its goal is not to create a Warsaw Pact II through the CSTO; however Russia’s multilateral approach to extending its influence in the region has the potential to weaken American power, and even to strengthen Chinese influence by encouraging Central Asian states to not fully commit to American and NATO powers alone. China and Russia share similar goals in weakening American hegemony, as both countries would benefit from a more multi-polar world by being able to better assert their own power in global affairs. This multi-polar world already exists to some degree however. China is re-writing the rules of western created international institutions through its growing power and economic strength. In Southeast Asia the Yuan is the common currency of exchange, and China’s technological advances may soon mean more Chinese control over the Internet. The current Internet Protocol version 4 system is running out of space for IP addresses, and China is betting that it will be able to host trillions of new addresses using IPv6, which links an IP address to a specific device. Because each computer, cell phone, or other Internet-using device will have its own unique address, the CCP will be able to easier monitor those who are using them all across the globe (Faroohar 36-39). The United States’ power will be challenged by the economic growth of other nations as well. By 2050 it is estimated that the combined economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) will be larger than the G6 in U.S. dollars (Wilson). By utilizing their new economic powers these countries will inevitably change the structure of international politics and will create a multi-polar world where the United States is no longer seen as a sole superpower. The new multi-polar world taking shape does not necessarily mean an increase in armed conflict in Central and Southwest Asia or any other part of the globe though. Cooperation between the SCO and NATO in Afghanistan is the best option for resolving any conflict member states have regarding energy security and political stability in the region, and such cooperation will be a foundation to work from when resolving conflicts in other parts of the globe. By accepting some of the policies of the SCO and other multinational organizations in Afghanistan, the United States may lose whatever leverage it has in obtaining its own goals in the area, but resisting China and the SCO could be just as damaging. Because the United States has paved the way for economic growth in Afghanistan by providing the security necessary for Chinese and other foreign companies to operate there, its interests should also not be ignored by the SCO. But for the United States to truly benefit from its activities in Afghanistan and Central and Southwest Asia it must engage in bilateral discussions with China and other powers in the region. Such bilateral discussions will help to shape the direction of multilateral talks between SCO and NATO members and will provide guarantees about the future of Sino-American relations in regards to each country’s interests in Afghanistan and the surrounding regions. NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer was invited to attend an SCO summit meeting in 2009, and during a June 25, 2009 press conference he was questioned about the level of cooperation with the SCO and CSTO. In response to these questions he said, “You saw the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on one of the panels. . . I would qualify this as interaction we have with the SCO.

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We do not have that as we speak, as you know, with the CSTO, but the SCO, you have seen here represented in the person of the Secretary General.” NATO and SCO officials should attend each other’s meetings to help gain a better understanding of what their goals are and how they can cooperate better. There has been plenty of time for both organizations to improve their relationships, but both have been hesitant to take the appropriate steps toward cooperation. Stephen Blank, professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, argues that NATO officials should not attend SCO meetings because NATO cannot “legitimately accept the CSTO and SCO as authoritative security providers without denying the sovereign right of Central Asian states to make their own defense arrangements as they see fit. That is a clearly unacceptable position. While the severity and the urgency of the Afghan crisis is obvious to all; there are several good reasons why it would be a mistake to attend the SCO meeting and to recognize the CSTO. These are no ordinary security organizations” (Blank 15). I completely disagree with this argument and believe that the U.S. and China should take the lead in pushing NATO and the SCO closer together for the mutual benefits they can both receive. The Future of Sino-American Relations A 2005 International Security journal article by Aaron L. Friedberg asks if conflict between China and the U.S. is inevitable. Friedberg explains how China’s new rise in global power may threaten the interests of the United States, but that the west should not worry too much because of China’s eagerness to participate in international institutions. Friedberg says that “the more deeply embedded China becomes in the web of regional and global institutions, the more the beliefs and expectations of its leaders will come to conform to the merging universal consensus that those institutions embody” (Friedberg 36). But the SCO is not a western produced global institution, and the beliefs and expectations of China’s leaders do not have to conform to those of the western world when they have their own institutions to make others conform to. That is why I believe that western institutions such as NATO should actively engage the SCO so that a universal consensus over global security issues can emerge. So how are the relationships of SCO and NATO member states affected by the situation in Afghanistan, and what does all this mean for the future of Sino-American relations? Perhaps cooperative agreements can be worked out that will improve the situation in Afghanistan, or maybe the SCO and NATO will bump heads on issues in the region for years to come. The future depends on the actions taken by officials within these organizations. Questions regarding the future of the SCO-NATO relationship are not easy to answer, but they must be addressed because people across the globe are affected by the decisions of NATO and SCO members whose actions in Afghanistan and Central and Southwest Asia could bring war, or peace and stability, not just to Afghanistan, but to people across the planet. Cooperation, understanding, open dialogue, and clear objectives are vital to the development of a peaceful SCO-NATO relationship, which is driven by the economies and political motives of China and the United States more so than any other members. Bilateral and multilateral security policies in both the United States and China will set the tone for the future of the SCO-NATO relationship and more direct dialogue between China and the United States can only benefit both countries. Conclusion By looking at the past one can see that China and the United States have never attacked the other’s territory by conventional military means. One can also see that the two countries relationships have been slippery at times, and that indirect armed conflict has occurred. Both the United States and China have had rocky relationships with Russia in the past, and all three have had different alliances that have had different interests in Central and Southwest Asia. The domestic affairs of each country have shaped foreign policy at times, and at other times foreign policy did not reflect domestic affairs at all. Currently the United States and China have leading roles in NATO and the SCO which are both pursuing similar interests in Afghanistan and its neighbors. Because the interests have similar themes, they also can cause conflict if the appropriate steps toward cooperation are not taken. The U.S. and China’s competition for natural resources poses a danger if either country becomes too aggressive in their efforts to obtain these resources. Cooperation and dialogue between NATO and the SCO can prevent future conflict from occurring, but it is also important for the United States and China to engage in high level bilateral talks with each other and other countries in Central and Southwest Asia. By focusing on this area, and particularly Afghanistan, the two countries and their multinational counterparts can benefit tremendously. Joint ventures between American and Chinese companies in Afghanistan can help to create a more secure Sino-American-Afghan relationship. Such a venture requires a multinational security force to ensure these companies can operate safely until Afghanistan is capable of providing its own security. Joint security and anti-terrorist operations between China and the United States, along with their multinational counterparts, in Afghanistan and other nearby places could foster a cooperative relationship that could bring stability to the region. Such cooperation should not endanger the sovereignty of Afghanistan or any neighboring country however, and the United Nations should take the necessary steps to ensure neither the SCO nor NATO become too aggressive or more powerful than the international community they represent within the United Nations.

SCO 1AC

Specifically, Energy conflicts between member states will intensify competition in the Artic and Baltic Sea Region

Lin ’09

(Christina,- Visiting Fellow at American Institute for Contemporary German Studies and Researcher for Jane's Information Group. Aug 19th, <http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/showArticle3.cfm?article_id=17881&topicID=31> Accessed 7.19.10)

Moreover, this meeting was followed by the ninth SCO summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia on 15-16 June, where Russia concurrently hosted the first meeting of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) heads of states. The outcome of the BRIC meeting was a call to restructure the global financial architecture while the SCO summit produced an agreement to establish an SCO currency (to supplant the U.S. dollar as the dominant reserve currency), in addition to settling issues of NATO in Afghanistan, Iran’s SCO membership, and other regional se- curity issues. Given SCO’s increased presence in Afghanistan, outgoing NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in a July Chatham House conference discussed NATO’s new strategic concept and the need to engage other organizations—“I believe NATO should also develop closer contacts with the Arab League, the Organization of the

Islamic Conference—and indeed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization”—in a “comprehensive approach” to new security challenges. Indeed, the increasing role of the Sino-Russian-led SCO in Afghanistan and its interaction with NATO and the West will have important impli- cations for transatlantic relations. Energy Security and SCO as an Emerging Military Alliance The SCO began as the “Shanghai Five” of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in 1996 to resolve border disputes after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was institutionalized in 2001 when Uzbekistan joined and became the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Over the years, SCO watchers have witnessed its transformation from a loose interest-based collection of authoritarian states involved in resolving border disputes and counter-terrorism, to a formidable energy bloc when it established the Energy Club in 2007 (and calls to form a gas OPEC), to an increasingly militarized security bloc with joint military exercises. While not yet a military alliance, there seems to be a trajectory toward militarization of the organization, as outlined in a 2007 paper published by Lt. Colonel Dr. Marcel de Haas of the Royal Netherlands Army. This is measured by: (1) Increased security cooperation; (2) Increased CSTO-SCO ties; (3) Militarization of Energy Security; and (4) Connection with the West. First, despite denials of the military nature of the SCO, in 2007 for the first time a political summit (Bishtek 2007) was amalgamated with war games (Peace Mission 2007). Hitherto defense ministers were the highest-ranking officials to participate in the military exercises, thus the heads of states’ presence at the war game was perhaps signaling SCO’s determination to be in command of regional security. This trend is underscored by the increasingly ambitious nature of SCO military exercises from bilateral to multilateral to joint all-SCO level. Second, SCO policy documents may include the concept of “military assistance” (e.g., attack against one is an attack against all). In October 2007 SCO (a political-economic organization) signed defense agreements with CSTO (a political-military organization). Since “military assistance” is a key element of a mature security alliance such as CSTO, and because SCO signed a defense agreement with a purely military organization, this may promulgate the SCO toward a more military trajectory. Third, CSTO-SCO cooperation is tied into the increasing military aspects of energy security, such as guarding security of oil and gas pipelines against terrorist attacks, protecting railway lines, and deploying rapid reaction forces. In light of SCO’s new cooperation with CSTO, this may lead to eventual standing of reaction forces in the near future regarding energy security. Finally, SCO is in- creasing ties with NATO—which has arrangements for cooperation with all SCO states except China. Since the 1990s, NATO has had bilateral cooperation with five central Asian states within the Partnership for Peace (PfP) framework, as well as with Russia via the NATO-Russia Council since 2002. In November 2005 SCO developed a contact group in Afghanistan and has had oper- ational cooperation with NATO. It is looking to expand its military operations westward from central Asia. Militarization of Energy Security and SCO Challenges to NATO Moreover, energy security is an issue where China’s economic priority and Russia’s military priority converge within the SCO. Some pundits have opined that the Sino-Russian axis in the SCO is one merely of convenience and mutual interests, not necessarily a partnership at the strategic level. China is an energy importer and focused on economic growth, while Russia is an energy exporter and focused on military growth. However, militarization of an economic issue such as energy security is where Sino-Russian interests converge. This is underscored by the recent Russian national se- curity strategy unveiled on 12 May 2009 on the theme of security through economic development, and the military power necessary to protect security of energy supply. Due to insecurity of energy supply and dependency on the U.S. for protection of SLOCs (sea lines of communication) that connect vital energy resources in the Middle East and Africa, China has tried to hedge itself and adopted a military “string of pearls” strategy in an effort to create access to ports and airfields, develop special diplomatic relationships, and modernize military forces that extend from the South China Sea through the Strait of Malacca, across the Indian Ocean, and on to the Arabian Gulf.10Each “pearl” is a nexus of Chinese geopolitical or military presence, such as upgraded military facilities on Hainan Island, an upgraded airstrip on Woody Island located in the Paracel archipelago, a container shipping facility on Chittagong, Bangladesh, construction of a deep water port in Burma, a navy base in Gwadar, Pakistan, or increasing ties with Iran in the Persian Gulf. It is also undergoing rapid naval modernization, including aircraft carrier ambitions to eventually challenge U.S. naval dominance. Similarly, Russia is increasing militarization of its energy security policy. The Russo-German Nord Stream pipeline that would run under the Baltic Sea has met stiff resistance from other Baltic littoral nations due to negative implications for this proposed pipeline—increased EU energy dependency on Russia, constraints on small members to act as regional security providers if energy security is undermined, and increased Russian military presence in the Baltic region.

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Sweden for one fears the risk of Nord Stream as a catalyst for increased Russian military presence and intelligence surveillance, especially in light of Putin proclaiming that during the construction phase, Russia’s BalticSea Navy would protect Nord Stream pipelines. The risers and pipelines are excellent platforms for sensors of various kinds—radars, hydro-acoustic systems and sonar to act as eyes and ears for monitoring the system, as well as intelligence surveillance. This would provide Russian intelligence an edge in the Baltic Sea concerning all air, surface, and sub-surface activities—especially around Estonia, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, and subsequently NATO members’ military exercises. This is indeed a realistic risk, given Russia’s past history of installing fiber optic cable along the Yamal pipeline without first informing the Polish government.Sweden has thus stipulated that Nord Stream needs approval of all countries whose territories will be traversed by the pipeline. Should the Russians build pipelines without approval of countries in the region, the Swedish military has drawn up plans to sabotage the pipeline if and when it is built. The Sino-Russian strategic partnership is further reinforced by increased bilateral joint military ex- ercises. On 28 April 2009, at a Moscow meeting between Russian and Chinese defense ministers, both announced closer military cooperation and as many as twenty-five joint maneuvers to be staged this year in a demonstration of strengthening the Sino-Russian axis and underscored the SCO’s growing military role. From Afghanistan to Militarization of the Arctic—NATO’s New Arena Indeed, concerns on militarization of energy security in light of the Russo-German Nord Stream in the Baltic are carried over to carbon-resource exploitation in the Arctic—both of which consist part of the “High North.”In 2007 Norway and Germanyunveiled plans to exploit some of the Arctic’s vast energy reserves.Germany imports 40 percent of its natural gas from Russia—the highest within the EU—so it needs to carefully calibrate its energy-dependent relationship on Russia with its relations to NATO and the Arctic region—NATO’s new energy security arena. Since August 2007 when Russia staked territorial claims on the sea bed of the North Pole with a titanium flag, this has unleashed militarization of the Arctic region by other littoral states, all of which are NATO or NATO PfP members except Russia: U.S., Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. U.S. interests in the Arctic region culminated in the January 2009 U.S. Arctic Policy Report (NSPD- 66), underscoring U.S. national security interests in the region and presenting the U.S. as “prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests… [including] such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight.” It also underscored the need to preserve global maritime mobility of U.S. armed forces throughout the Arctic region and sovereign rights over ex- tensive marine areas including natural resources. 2008 U.S. Geological Survey estimated that 25 percent of the world’s oil and gas reserves lie in the Arctic, which is increasingly accessible due to climate change and melting of the polar ice caps. Moreover, in 2007 a Russian press source stated that the Northwest Passage, running through the Arctic Ocean along Russia’s northern coast, is the shortest way from Europe to Asia and the Pacific coast of the Americas, enabling shorter transport of oil and gas from Arctic deposits. On 27 March 2009 Russia subsequently released its own Arctic policy paper entitled, “The Foundations of State Policy of Russian Federation in Arctic Area for the Period Up to 2020 and Beyond,” declaring its intent to develop Arctic military forces to protect the continental shelf that would become the nation’s leading resource base by 2020. A few days later, Canadian officials announced similar plans to create a 500-strong Army unit for Far North operations, followed by Denmark creating a new Arctic military command in June. Even without an Arctic coastline, China had sent its icebreaker, the Snow Dragon, on its third Arctic expedition in summer of 2008 and has earned observer status to the Arctic Council. It is seeking to install its long-term deep-sea monitoring system in the Arctic. NATO is thus becoming involved in the Arctic race for hydrocarbon resources. On 28-29 January this year, NATO held a meeting in Iceland entitled “Security Prospects in the High North” to address militarization of energy security. General John Craddock, then-Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), suggested that while the Arctic was not yet a region of conflict, environmental and geopolitical developments risk potential military conflict among the eight stakeholders. Indeed, there has already been increased Russo-Canadian regional tension since 2007 over the disputed territoryof the Lomonosov Ridge, a 1,200 mile underwater mountain range running close to the Pole. NORAD spokesperson Michael Kucharek said Canadian and U.S. fighter jets have been scrambled more than twenty times since early 2007 to perform visual identification of Russian bombers and to direct them away from North American airspace. The Arctic is a vital Russian strategic region not only for energy resources but also for nuclear de- terrent capabilities. Given U.S./NATO missiles, satellite radars, and interceptor missile facilities around the world and in space, a key place for Russian deterrence/retaliatory capacity against a nuclear first strike is under the polar ice cap. On 7 July 2007, a RIA Novosti article reported that, “A Sineva ICBM24[…] was fired in the summer of 2006 from the North Pole by the submarine Yekater- inburg […] Under a thick icecap the submarine remains invisible to hostile observation satellites till the last moment. As a result, a retaliatory nuclear strike would be sudden and unavoidable.” A Russ- ian naval commander underscored the importance of Russian strategic submarines operating under Arctic ice: “This training is needed to help strategic submarines of the Russian Fleet head for the Arctic ice region, which is the least vulnerable to an adversary’s monitoring, and prepare for a re- sponse to a ballistic missile strike in the event of a nuclear conflict […] to preserve strategic sub- marines—it is necessary to train Russian submariners to maneuver under the Arctic ice.”Thus, Arctic polar ice caps are a key Russian submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM)26 strategy of deception and deterrence. Given German energy interests in the High North—with a Norwegian joint energy venture in the Arctic and the Nord Stream venture with Russia in the Baltic—Germany needs to tread carefully in its relations with Russia and with NATO allies. The militarization of the High North between Russia and NATO members and partners will impact German energy interests as well as wider geopolitical interests.

SCO 1AC

Absent mediation, Baltic energy tension causes NATO-Russian miscalculation --- Neg takeouts are wrong

Rozoff ’09

(Richard,- author and geopolitical analyst. he is editor of Stop NATO and a frequent contributor to Global Research “Baltic Sea: Flash Point For NATO-Russia Conflict” <http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/08/27/baltic-sea-flash-point-for-nato-russia-conflict/> Accessed 4.1.09)

Neither Europe nor the world required a further reminder of the fact, but Miliband’s words foreshadowed a concrete implementation for NATO military plans in Europe as two weeks later his government proposed “that Nato member states should set up a standing force of 3,000 troops that would be permanently committed to defending the Alliance’s collective territory from any future attack.” [25]   At last week’s NATO defense ministers meeting in Krakow, Poland Britain’s Defence Secretary John Hutton argued “that [a] standing force should be created to underpin Nato’s Article 5 commitment to the mutual defence of any member state that finds itself under threat” and “that the creation of the standing force would be reassuring to Nato’s eastern European members – above all the Baltic states….” [26]   American expatriate and current Estonian president Toomas Hendrik Ilves had anticipated Hutton by two weeks when at the Munich Conference he advocated: “No longer can we assume that international aggression, (as opposed to the civil wars of the Balkans) is excluded as a possibility in Europe….We can and must revisit the assumptions held in the past 17 years about the use of military force in Europe and we must follow our own legislation to ensure that we not become politically hostage to energy supplied by an outside power….NATO itself must deal with the new paradigm of in area armed aggression….” Between the Munich and the Krakow gatherings NATO’s Baltic clients performed their appointed roles with Lithuanian Defense Minister Rasa Jukneviciene stating she plans to tell her American counterpart Robert Gates “that Lithuania would like to see NATO and the United States expand their presence in the Baltics, considering the nervousness that has followed Russia’s invasion of Georgia in August.” [27] Not since the end of World War II, since the advent of the nuclear era, have major powers, ones moreover united in the world’s first global military bloc, so openly brandished plans for military action in Europe and just as indisputably named their intended target. NATO has been pounding a steady, relentless drumbeat for the activation of its collective military plans in the Baltic Sea region and all it will take to bring that about is something as otherwise insignificant as the crash of an Estonian government website or Western proxies in Ukraine refusing to pay standard market prices for Russian natural gas. Nothing more.

SCO 1AC

Escalation is guaranteed --- outweighs all other scenarios for nuclear war

Rozoff ’09

(Richard,- author and geopolitical analyst. he is editor of Stop NATO and a frequent contributor to Global Research “Baltic Sea: Flash Point For NATO-Russia Conflict” <http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/08/27/baltic-sea-flash-point-for-nato-russia-conflict/> Accessed 4.1.09)

In such an environment of international lawlessness and heightened alarm over military threats, otherwise minor contretemps and even fears of a neighbor’s and potential adversary’s intents can spark a conflict – and a conflagration. The world has been on edge for a decade now and a form of numbing has set in with many of its inhabitants; a permanent condition of war apprehension and alert has settled over others, particularly those in areas likely to be directly affected. Over the past six years the worst and most immediate fears have centered on the prospects of three major regional conflicts, all of which are fraught with the danger of eventual escalation into nuclear exchanges. The three are a renewed and intensified Indian-Pakistani conflict, an outbreak of hostilities on the Korean Peninsula and an attack by the U.S., Israel or both in unison against Iran. The first would affect neighbors both in possession of nuclear weapons and a combined population of 1,320,000,000. The second could set Northeast Asia afire with China and Russia, both having borders with North Korea, inevitably being pulled into the vortex. The last could lead to an explosion in the Persian Gulf and throughout the Middle East, with the potential of spilling over into the Caspian Sea Basin, Central and South Asia, the Caucasus and even the Balkans, as the U.S. and NATO have strategic air bases in Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and, at least for the time being, Kyrgyzstan that would be employed in any major assault on Iran, and the latter would retaliate against both land- and sea-based threats as best it could. In the event that any of the three scenarios reached the level of what in a humane and sensible world would be considered the unthinkable – the use of nuclear weapons – the cataclysmic consequences both for the respective regions involved and for the world would be incalculable. Theoretically, though, all three nightmare models could be geographically contained. There is a fourth spot on the map, however, where most any spark could ignite a powder keg that would draw in and pit against each other the world’s two major nuclear powers and immediately and ipso facto develop into a world conflict. That area is the Baltic Sea region. In 2003, months before NATO would grant full membership to the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Russian Defense Minister at the time, Sergei Ivanov, warned that such a development would entail the deployment of NATO, including American, warplanes “a three-minute flight away from St. Petersburg,” Russia’s second largest city. And just that occurred. NATO air patrols began in 2004 on a three month rotational basis and U.S. warplanes just completed their second deployment on January 4 of this year. Had history occurred otherwise and Soviet warplanes alternated with those of fellow Warsaw Pact nations in patrolling over, say, the St. Lawrence Seaway or the Atlantic Coast off Nova Scotia, official Washington’s response wouldn’t be hard to imagine or long in coming. A 2005 report by the Natural Resources Defense Council confirmed that the U.S. maintained 480 nuclear bombs in Europe, hosted by six NATO allies, Belgium, Britain, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey. More recent estimates indicate that over 350 American nuclear weapons remain in Europe to the present time. If the six above-mentioned nations continue to host nuclear arms, what would new NATO members Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – the first and third currently governed by former U.S. citizens, president Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Valdas Adamkus, respectively – deny the Pentagon?

NATO-Russia competition over the Arctic goes nuclear

Wallace and Staples ‘10

(Michael,- Professor Emeritus at the University of British Columbia and Steven, President of the Rideau Institute in Ottawa. “Ridding the Arctic of Nuclear Weapons: A Task Long Overdue” http://www.arcticsecurity.org/ docs/arctic-nuclear-report- web.pdf Accessed 7.1.10)

Jayantha Dhanapala, President of Pugwash and former UN under-secretary for disarmament affairs, summarized the situation bluntly: “From those in the international peace and security sector, deep concerns are being expressed over the fact that two nuclear weapon states – the United States and the Russian Federation, which together own 95 per cent of the nuclear weapons in the world – converge on the Arctic and have competing claims. These claims, together with those of other allied NATO countries – Canada, Denmark, Iceland, and Norway – could, if unresolved, lead to conflict escalating into the threat or use of nuclear weapons.”61 Many will no doubt argue that this is excessively alarmist, but no circumstance in which nuclear powers find themselves in military confrontation can be taken lightly. The current geo-political threat level is nebulous and low – for now, according to Rob Huebert of the University of Calgary, “[the] issue is the uncertainty as Arctic states and non-Arctic states begin to recognize the geo-political/economic significance of the Arctic because of climate change.” 62

SCO 1AC

Failure to handle the transition from U.S. Hegemony ignites every scenario for nuclear war

Kagan ‘07

(Robert,- senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace “End of Dreams, Return of History”, 7/19, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/07/end\_of\_dreams\_return\_of\_histor.html)

This is a good thing, and it should continue to be a primary goal of American foreign policy to perpetuate this relatively benign international configuration of power. The unipolar order with the United States as the predominant power is unavoidably riddled with flaws and contradictions. It inspires fears and jealousies. The United States is not immune to error, like all other nations, and because of its size and importance in the international system those errors are magnified and take on greater significance than the errors of less powerful nations. Compared to the ideal Kantian international order, in which all the world 's powers would be peace-loving equals, conducting themselves wisely, prudently, and in strict obeisance to international law, the unipolar system is both dangerous and unjust. Compared to any plausible alternative in the real world, however, it is relatively stable and less likely to produce a major war between great powers. It is also comparatively benevolent, from a liberal perspective, for it is more conducive to the principles of economic and political liberalism that Americans and many others value. American predominance does not stand in the way of progress toward a better world, therefore. It stands in the way of regression toward a more dangerous world. The choice is not between an American-dominated order and a world that looks like the European Union. The future international order will be shaped by those who have the power to shape it. The leaders of a post-American world will not meet in Brussels but in Beijing, Moscow, and Washington. The return of great powers and great games If the world is marked by the persistence of unipolarity, it is nevertheless also being shaped by the reemergence of competitive national ambitions of the kind that have shaped human affairs from time immemorial. During the Cold War, this historical tendency of great powers to jostle with one another for status and influence as well as for wealth and power was largely suppressed by the two superpowers and their rigid bipolar order. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has not been powerful enough, and probably could never be powerful enough, to suppress by itself the normal ambitions of nations. This does not mean the world has returned to multipolarity, since none of the large powers is in range of competing with the superpower for global influence. Nevertheless, several large powers are now competing for regional predominance, both with the United States and with each other. National ambition drives China's foreign policy today, and although it is tempered by prudence and the desire to appear as unthreatening as possible to the rest of the world, the Chinese are powerfully motivated to return their nation to what they regard as its traditional position as the preeminent power in East Asia. They do not share a European, postmodern view that power is passé; hence their now two-decades-long military buildup and modernization. Like the Americans, they believe power, including military power, is a good thing to have and that it is better to have more of it than less. Perhaps more significant is the Chinese perception, also shared by Americans, that status and honor, and not just wealth and security, are important for a nation. Japan, meanwhile, which in the past could have been counted as an aspiring postmodern power -- with its pacifist constitution and low defense spending -- now appears embarked on a more traditional national course. Partly this is in reaction to the rising power of China and concerns about North Korea 's nuclear weapons. But it is also driven by Japan's own national ambition to be a leader in East Asia or at least not to play second fiddle or "little brother" to China. China and Japan are now in a competitive quest with each trying to augment its own status and power and to prevent the other 's rise to predominance, and this competition has a military and strategic as well as an economic and political component. Their competition is such that a nation like South Korea, with a long unhappy history as a pawn between the two powers, is once again worrying both about a "greater China" and about the return of Japanese nationalism. As Aaron Friedberg commented, the East Asian future looks more like Europe's past than its present. But it also looks like Asia's past. Russian foreign policy, too, looks more like something from the nineteenth century. It is being driven by a typical, and typically Russian, blend of national resentment and ambition. A postmodern Russia simply seeking integration into the new European order, the Russia of Andrei Kozyrev, would not be troubled by the eastward enlargement of the EU and NATO, would not insist on predominant influence over its "near abroad," and would not use its natural resources as means of gaining geopolitical leverage and enhancing Russia 's international status in an attempt to regain the lost glories of the Soviet empire and Peter the Great. But Russia, like China and Japan, is moved by more traditional great-power considerations, including the pursuit of those valuable if intangible national interests: honor and respect. Although Russian leaders complain about threats to their security from NATO and the United States, the Russian sense of insecurity has more to do with resentment and national identity than with plausible external military threats. 16 Russia's complaint today is not with this or that weapons system. It is the entire post-Cold War settlement of the 1990s that Russia resents and wants to revise. But that does not make insecurity less a factor in Russia 's relations with the world; indeed, it makes finding compromise with the Russians all the more difficult. One could add others to this list of great powers with traditional rather than postmodern aspirations. India 's regional ambitions are more muted, or are focused most intently on Pakistan, but it is clearly engaged in competition with China for dominance in the Indian Ocean and sees itself, correctly, as an emerging great power on the world scene. In the Middle East there is Iran, which mingles religious fervor with a historical sense of superiority and leadership in its region. 17 Its nuclear program is as much about the desire for regional hegemony as about defending Iranian territory from attack by the United States.

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Even the European Union, in its way, expresses a pan-European national ambition to play a significant role in the world, and it has become the vehicle for channeling German, French, and British ambitions in what Europeans regard as a safe supranational direction. Europeans seek honor and respect, too, but of a postmodern variety. The honor they seek is to occupy the moral high ground in the world, to exercise moral authority, to wield political and economic influence as an antidote to militarism, to be the keeper of the global conscience, and to be recognized and admired by others for playing this role. Islam is not a nation, but many Muslims express a kind of religious nationalism, and the leaders of radical Islam, including al Qaeda, do seek to establish a theocratic nation or confederation of nations that would encompass a wide swath of the Middle East and beyond. Like national movements elsewhere, Islamists have a yearning for respect, including self-respect, and a desire for honor. Their national identity has been molded in defiance against stronger and often oppressive outside powers, and also by memories of ancient superiority over those same powers. China had its "century of humiliation." Islamists have more than a century of humiliation to look back on, a humiliation of which Israel has become the living symbol, which is partly why even Muslims who are neither radical nor fundamentalist proffer their sympathy and even their support to violent extremists who can turn the tables on the dominant liberal West, and particularly on a dominant America which implanted and still feeds the Israeli cancer in their midst. Finally, there is the United States itself. As a matter of national policy stretching back across numerous administrations, Democratic and Republican, liberal and conservative, Americans have insisted on preserving regional predominance in East Asia; the Middle East; the Western Hemisphere; until recently, Europe; and now, increasingly, Central Asia. This was its goal after the Second World War, and since the end of the Cold War, beginning with the first Bush administration and continuing through the Clinton years, the United States did not retract but expanded its influence eastward across Europe and into the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Even as it maintains its position as the predominant global power, it is also engaged in hegemonic competitions in these regions with China in East and Central Asia, with Iran in the Middle East and Central Asia, and with Russia in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. The United States, too, is more of a traditional than a postmodern power, and though Americans are loath to acknowledge it, they generally prefer their global place as "No. 1" and are equally loath to relinquish it. Once having entered a region, whether for practical or idealistic reasons, they are remarkably slow to withdraw from it until they believe they have substantially transformed it in their own image. They profess indifference to the world and claim they just want to be left alone even as they seek daily to shape the behavior of billions of people around the globe. The jostling for status and influence among these ambitious nations and would-be nations is a second defining feature of the new post-Cold War international system. Nationalism in all its forms is back, if it ever went away, and so is international competition for power, influence, honor, and status. American predominance prevents these rivalries from intensifying -- its regional as well as its global predominance. Were the United States to diminish its influence in the regions where it is currently the strongest power, the other nations would settle disputes as great and lesser powers have done in the past: sometimes through diplomacy and accommodation but often through confrontation and wars of varying scope, intensity, and destructiveness. One novel aspect of such a multipolar world is that most of these powers would possess nuclear weapons. That could make wars between them less likely, or it could simply make them more catastrophic. It is easy but also dangerous to underestimate the role the United States plays in providing a measure of stability in the world even as it also disrupts stability. For instance, the United States is the dominant naval power everywhere, such that other nations cannot compete with it even in their home waters. They either happily or grudgingly allow the United States Navy to be the guarantor of international waterways and trade routes, of international access to markets and raw materials such as oil. Even when the United States engages in a war, it is able to play its role as guardian of the waterways. In a more genuinely multipolar world, however, it would not. Nations would compete for naval dominance at least in their own regions and possibly beyond. Conflict between nations would involve struggles on the oceans as well as on land. Armed embargos, of the kind used in World War i and other major conflicts, would disrupt trade flows in a way that is now impossible. Such order as exists in the world rests not merely on the goodwill of peoples but on a foundation provided by American power. Even the European Union, that great geopolitical miracle, owes its founding to American power, for without it the European nations after World War ii would never have felt secure enough to reintegrate Germany. Most Europeans recoil at the thought, but even today Europe 's stability depends on the guarantee, however distant and one hopes unnecessary, that the United States could step in to check any dangerous development on the continent. In a genuinely multipolar world, that would not be possible without renewing the danger of world war. People who believe greater equality among nations would be preferable to the present American predominance often succumb to a basic logical fallacy. They believe the order the world enjoys today exists independently of American power. They imagine that in a world where American power was diminished, the aspects of international order that they like would remain in place. But that 's not the way it works. International order does not rest on ideas and institutions. It is shaped by configurations of power. The international order we know today reflects the distribution of power in the world since World War ii, and especially since the end of the Cold War. A different configuration of power, a multipolar world in which the poles were Russia, China, the United States, India, and Europe, would produce its own kind of order, with different rules and norms reflecting the interests of the powerful states that would have a hand in shaping it. Would that international order be an improvement? Perhaps for Beijing and Moscow it would. But it is doubtful that it would suit the tastes of enlightenment liberals in the United States and Europe. The current order, of course, is not only far from perfect but also offers no guarantee against major conflict among the world 's great powers. Even under the umbrella of unipolarity, regional conflicts involving the large powers may erupt. War could erupt between China and Taiwan and draw in both the United States and Japan. War could erupt between Russia and Georgia, forcing the United States and its European allies to decide whether to intervene or suffer the consequences of a Russian victory. Conflict between India and Pakistan remains possible, as does conflict between Iran and Israel or other Middle Eastern states. These, too, could draw in other great powers, including the United States. Such conflicts may be unavoidable no matter what policies the United States pursues.

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But they are more likely to erupt if the United States weakens or withdraws from its positions of regional dominance. This is especially true in East Asia, where most nations agree that a reliable American power has a stabilizing and pacific effect on the region. That is certainly the view of most of China 's neighbors. But even China, which seeks gradually to supplant the United States as the dominant power in the region, faces the dilemma that an American withdrawal could unleash an ambitious, independent, nationalist Japan. In Europe, too, the departure of the United States from the scene -- even if it remained the world's most powerful nation -- could be destabilizing. It could tempt Russia to an even more overbearing and potentially forceful approach to unruly nations on its periphery. Although some realist theorists seem to imagine that the disappearance of the Soviet Union put an end to the possibility of confrontation between Russia and the West, and therefore to the need for a permanent American role in Europe, history suggests that conflicts in Europe involving Russia are possible even without Soviet communism. If the United States withdrew from Europe -- if it adopted what some call a strategy of "offshore balancing" -- this could in time increase the likelihood of conflict involving Russia and its near neighbors, which could in turn draw the United States back in under unfavorable circumstances. It is also optimistic to imagine that a retrenchment of the American position in the Middle East and the assumption of a more passive, "offshore" role would lead to greater stability there. The vital interest the United States has in access to oil and the role it plays in keeping access open to other nations in Europe and Asia make it unlikely that American leaders could or would stand back and hope for the best while the powers in the region battle it out. Nor would a more "even-handed" policy toward Israel, which some see as the magic key to unlocking peace, stability, and comity in the Middle East, obviate the need to come to Israel 's aid if its security became threatened. That commitment, paired with the American commitment to protect strategic oil supplies for most of the world, practically ensures a heavy American military presence in the region, both on the seas and on the ground. The subtraction of American power from any region would not end conflict but would simply change the equation. In the Middle East, competition for influence among powers both inside and outside the region has raged for at least two centuries. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism doesn 't change this. It only adds a new and more threatening dimension to the competition, which neither a sudden end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians nor an immediate American withdrawal from Iraq would change. The alternative to American predominance in the region is not balance and peace. It is further competition. The region and the states within it remain relatively weak. A diminution of American influence would not be followed by a diminution of other external influences. One could expect deeper involvement by both China and Russia, if only to secure their interests. 18 And one could also expect the more powerful states of the region, particularly Iran, to expand and fill the vacuum. It is doubtful that any American administration would voluntarily take actions that could shift the balance of power in the Middle East further toward Russia, China, or Iran. The world hasn 't changed that much. An American withdrawal from Iraq will not return things to "normal" or to a new kind of stability in the region. It will produce a new instability, one likely to draw the United States back in again. The alternative to American regional predominance in the Middle East and elsewhere is not a new regional stability. In an era of burgeoning nationalism, the future is likely to be one of intensified competition among nations and nationalist movements. Difficult as it may be to extend American predominance into the future, no one should imagine that a reduction of American power or a retraction of American influence and global involvement will provide an easier path.

\*\*\*Iran Adv\*\*\*

Iran 1AC

Advantage \_\_\_ : US-Iran Cooperation

The surge has inflamed Iranian fears of American military presence, power-bombing cooperation on drugs, the insurgency and terrorism

Mitra Farnik is the pseudonym of an Iranian writer and political analyst based in Washington DC Jan. 15th , 2009 <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LA15Ak02.html> Accessed 7.13.10

Though Tehran shares Washington's desire for the Taliban to be neutralized, it is wary of an increased American military presence in Afghanistan, even if this is aimed at achieving such a goal. Since the 2001 United States invasion of Afghanistan, the US and Iran have engaged in a complicated competition for influence that  has been swayed by events on the ground in Afghanistan but also ideological battles inside both Iran and America. This competition has been tempered by the reality of shared interests and objectives between Washington and Tehran that include the establishment of security and the removal of al-Qaeda and the Taliban from Afghanistan, reconstruction of the country, and the fight against narcotics. These shared interests created an optimistic atmosphere with the election of Obama to the US presidency, the priority he gave to the security of Afghanistan, and the appointment of Richard Holbrooke as special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Iran's participation and Holbrooke's encounter with Iran's Deputy foreign Minister Mehdi Akhundzadeh at a conference on Afghanistan on April 1, 2009, was seen as a promising sign regarding future cooperation between Iran and other world powers on how to deal with the deepening problems in Afghanistan. However, events in both Afghanistan and Iran, including contested elections, as well the decision by the Obama administration to send more American troops to Afghanistan, in all likelihood have further delayed the prospects of Tehran-Washington cooperation in that country despite shared interests.

Iran 1AC

Troop withdrawal is Iran’s biggest sticking point toward greater cooperation in Afghanistan, gradual withdrawal is key --- its vital to prevent drug trafficking and instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Hillary Mann Leverett is CEO of Strategic Energy and Global Analysis (STRATEGA), a political risk consultancy, 7/8 2010 <http://www.raceforiran.com/iran%E2%80%99s-strategic-stake-in-afghanistan-hillary-mann-leverett-in-foreign-policy> Accessed 7.12.10

On Iran’s core interests in Afghanistan:  “Iran has a strategic stake in Afghanistan that has not changed in the last nine years.  Tehran’s overriding interest is to prevent Afghanistan (with its long and lawless border with Iran) from being used as a platform from which to attack or undermine the Islamic Republic or to weaken Iran’s standing as a regional power.  To prevent Afghanistan from being used as an anti-Iranian platform, the Islamic Republic has worked, over many years, to form relationships with Afghan players who could keep Iran’s Afghan enemies (principally the Taliban but also other anti-Shiite and anti-Persian groups) and their external supporters (principally Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, two of Iran’s most important regional antagonists) in check.  To this end, Iran has worked to strengthen and unite Afghanistan’s Shiite Hazara and other Dari/Persian-speaking communities (which together comprise about 45 percent of the population) as a counterweight to anti-Iranian, pro-Saudi, and pro-Pakistani elements among Afghan Pashtuns (roughly 42 percent of the population).  The Hazara and other Dari/Persian-speaking communities were, of course, the core of the Northern Alliance that fought the Taliban during the 1990s, and were supported by India and Russia as well as Iran.” On allegations of Iranian support for the Taliban:  “Iran knows from bitter experience that the Hazara and the other Dari/Persian-speaking communities provide, at best, inadequate protection for Iranian interests in Afghanistan, because they cannot govern the country in a way that keeps it relatively stable and minimizes Pakistani and Saudi influence.  So, alongside its alliances with the Hazara and the other Dari/Persian-speaking groups, Iran has also cultivated ties to some Pashtun elements in Afghanistan and supported the country’s Pashtun President, Hamid Karzai. As part of its cultivation of ties to Pashtun elements, Iran has almost certainly reached out to some Taliban factions.  But I would wager a substantial sum that America’s ‘ally’ Pakistan is providing vastly more support to the Afghan Taliban than anything the Islamic Republic might be doing.  And Tehran remains strongly opposed to the Taliban’s resurgence as a major force in Afghan politics, for two reasons.  First, the Taliban have traditionally persecuted Iran’s Afghan allies—especially the Shia Hazara—and have even murdered Iranian diplomats.  Second, Tehran sees the Taliban as a pawn for the expansion of Pakistani and Saudi influence in Afghanistan… In the political and security vacuum that is today’s Afghanistan, Karzai’s effort to engage the Taliban is generating deep unease among Iran’s allies in Afghanistan’s Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara communities.  Already, the leadership of these non-Pashtun communities—who also dominate the upper echelons of the Afghan military—are organizing to resist, by force, any serious attempt at power-sharing between Karzai’s government and the Taliban.  If the Taliban’s political influence across Afghanistan continues to grow—particularly in an environment conditioned by what Tehran sees as America’s strategic and tactical incompetence—Iran will support its Afghan allies as they ‘push back’ against a resurgent Taliban.”    [Note from Flynt Leverett:  The Washington Post’s Colum Lynch reported this week on his “Turtle Bay” blog at www.ForeignPolicy.com that the Obama Administration’s “Afpak” special envoy Richard Holbrooke is in New York this week “to help Afghanistan negotiate the removal of select Taliban members from a U.N. anti-terror blacklist, according to senior U.N.-based officials”.]     On the complementarity of Iranian and U.S. goals in Afghanistan:  “As Tehran pursues this strategy of multiple alliances within Afghanistan, it must also assess the evolving role of the United States there and the implications of the U.S. posture toward Iran for Iran’s Afghanistan policy.  If the United States and NATO could convince Iran that they want an independent and stable Afghanistan that would be friendly to Iran, then U.S./NATO and Iranian strategies and tactics could complement each other very constructively.  (This was very much the case in the months following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, when I was one of a small number of U.S. officials engaged in ongoing discussions with Iranian counterparts about how to deal with Afghanistan and al-Qaeda, and U.S. and Iranian policies regarding these issues were rather closely coordinated.) But, if Tehran perceives Washington as hostile to its interests—which, unfortunately, is currently the case, given the Obama administration’s drive to impose sanctions and continued use of covert operations to undermine the Islamic Republic—then Iranian policymakers will regard the United States, along with America’s Pakistani and Saudi allies, as part of the complex of anti-Iranian external players that Iran needs to balance against in Afghanistan.  In this context, Iran has a strong interest in preventing U.S. troops in Afghanistan from being used to attack Iran directly, used as covert operatives to undermine the Iranian government, or used to strengthen Iran’s regional rivals.” On Iran’s reaction to a drawdown in U.S. military forces in Afghanistan:  “In contrast to the United States, which seems at least to be looking for a viable exit strategy from Afghanistan, there is no exit strategy for Iran.  Iran publicly calls for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, partly because U.S. forces there could be used against Iran.  But Tehran also calls for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan because Iranian policymakers believe that the extended U.S. presence there is seen by much of the population as an occupation and that it is this occupation which is fueling an increasingly fierce cycle of violence and instability.  From Tehran’s perspective, this cycle of violence and instability empowers Iran’s Afghan adversaries, principally the Taliban, and their external backers, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, both of which are regional rivals to the Islamic Republic.

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From an Iranian standpoint, the most constructive American strategy would have been for the United States to begin a gradual but steady withdrawal of troops a few years ago when that could have helped shape a political settlement based on power sharing among all of Afghanistan’s major constituencies.  From an Iranian perspective, such a settlement could have included the Pashtun, though, at least at the time, not necessarily the Taliban, and would have given Iran’s Afghan allies—who, at the time, were also America’s allies—the upper hand.  Today, Iran is concerned that, as America belatedly positions itself to begin withdrawing forces from Afghanistan next year, the Obama administration still has no coherent strategy regarding President Karzai’s drive for a political deal—a deal which, because of mistakes made by Washington, must now include the Taliban and its chief external backers, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia… Iran is concerned that the United States’ interest in fostering sufficient stability in Afghanistan for long enough to allow U.S. troops to begin leaving next year will lead Washington to drop the “red lines” it has imposed on Taliban participation in a political process.  Iran is concerned that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia will be able to use the Taliban’s unchecked involvement in a power-sharing arrangement as a proxy to expand their influence in Afghanistan at Tehran’s expense and to threaten the Islamic Republic. Under these circumstances, Iran will intensify its support for key players among the Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek groups, just as it did during the civil war that broke out after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and after the Taliban took power in Kabul in 1996.  These dynamics raise the risks of renewed civil war in Afghanistan—a civil war that would simultaneously be a proxy war among Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, the country’s most powerful external players.  These were precisely the conditions under which al-Qaeda found sanctuary and thrived in Afghanistan during the 1990s.”  On Iran and post-conflict stabilization in Afghanistan:  “Post-conflict stabilization in Afghanistan requires recognizing and working with the integral connections between Afghanistan’s internal balance of power and the broader balance of power among major states in the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia.  And that means cooperation with Iran is essential to stabilizing Afghanistan and, by extension, Pakistan. Following 9/11, Iran worked with the United States on the short-term project of overthrowing the Taliban—but with the long-term goal of prompting Washington to reconsider its hostile posture toward the Islamic Republic.  In effect, the Iranians hoped that cooperation with the United States would facilitate a U.S.-Iranian “grand bargain”—but this approach did not work, largely because of American resistance to a broader opening to Iran.

Cooperation in Afghanistan spills over --- improves overall relations and cooperation in other areas --- specifically solves drug trafficking

Rensselaer Lee, Senior Fellow @ the Foreign Policy Research Institute and President of Global Advisory Services, July 7th, 2006, Baltimore Sun

Though increasingly at odds on nuclear proliferation and other issues, the United States and Iran have strong incentives to cooperate in one area of mutual concern: containment of Afghanistan's $2.8 billion opium and heroin business, the world's largest. Iran's interest in the matter is obvious: About 60 percent of Afghan opiate exports (opium, morphine and heroin) cross into Iran each year en route to consumers in Russia, Europe and Iran itself. An estimated 3 million Iranians, 4 percent to 5 percent of the entire population, consume opiates, the largest percentage of any country. Accordingly, Iran has to spend as much as $800 million each year, or 1.3 percent of its budget, on drug control, about twice as much in relative terms as the United States. The U.S. interest relates largely to its nation-building objectives in Afghanistan, which are under constant threat from the centrifugal forces unleashed by the drug trade. As many observers have noted, access to drug-related funds supports the pretensions of assorted regional warlords and renascent Taliban insurgents, hampering the central government's ability to extend its writ beyond Kabul. Additionally, Afghanistan's role as pre-eminent supplier of heroin to the European market heightens the interest of Washington's coalition partners in containing Afghan drug flows. Because of Afghanistan's difficulties in suppressing the drug traffic, which now accounts for an estimated one-third of the country's total (licit and illicit) gross domestic product, U.S. officials see stepped-up enforcement on the borders of neighboring states as a near-term necessity. Washington provides some law enforcement assistance to Pakistan and to Central Asian states. But a containment strategy is unlikely to work effectively unless coordinated with Iran, which is the transit country of choice for Afghan drug smugglers. Iran also might be brought into a long-term partnership with the coalition in scaling back Afghan poppy cultivation, the source of more than 90 percent of the world's opiates - for example, by contributing to underfunded crop substitution and alternative programs for poppy farmers. Some currents of U.S. official opinion might welcome direct engagement with Iran on drugs. This year, the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs issued a glowing report on Iran's anti-drug performance. The report cited "overwhelming evidence" of Iran's commitment to ensure that drugs leaving Afghanistan don't reach its citizens and its "sustained national political will" in combating drug production and trafficking. Of course, the United States lacks direct diplomatic ties with Iran and maintains no counter narcotics presence or initiatives in that country. Yet the absence of such ties does not preclude a relationship on drugs. For example, the U.S. Interests Section in Havana includes a Coast Guard "drug information specialist"; Cuba and the United States cooperate in maritime interdiction operations; and agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration visit the island to interview and extract information from foreign drug traffickers held in Cuban prisons. A U.S.-Iranian dialogue on drugs wouldn't necessarily solve Iran's drug abuse problems or mitigate the burgeoning authority crisis in Afghanistan. Also, Iran and the United States might differ in their expectations of the type of political order that should take shape in that country. Yet even a modicum of cooperation in an area of significant international concern would be a major step forward. Unlike the Cuban case, in which diplomacy is hostage to entrenched domestic interests, such cooperation might lay the groundwork for improved relations in other areas, or at least create a better atmosphere for more consequential exchanges on nuclear-strategic issues.

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Two Impacts --- 1st --- Drug Trafficking ---

Failure to control opium tanks Iran’s economy and stability

Lionel Beehner, 9-14-06, Council on Foreign Relations, Afghanistan’s Role in Iran’s Drug Problem

The recent boom in Afghan opium production, propelled by a resurgent Taliban, has had an increasing impact on Iranians—both young and old—across the border. Iran has an estimated 3 million drug users and “by many accounts, the world’s worst heroin problem,” says Peter Reuter, a drug expert and professor at the University of Maryland. The rise in drug use and smuggling has strained Iran’s police forces and prisons, as well as its economy, and aggravated rifts along the population’s main fault lines: young versus old, religious versus secular, modernist versus traditional. Drug abuse in Iran often gets overshadowed by other issues—namely Tehran’s nuclear program—but experts say, if left unchecked, it may leave Iran with large social, demographic, and health problems for generations.

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Economic collapse causes Iranian adventurism

Asia Times ’07

(May 30th -- http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\_East/IE30Ak03.html)

What strategic consequences ensue from Iran's economic misery? Broadly speaking, the choices are two. In the most benign scenario, Iran's clerical establishment will emulate the Soviet Union of 1987, when then-prime minister Mikhail Gorbachev acknowledged that communism had led Russia to the brink of ruin in the face of vibrant economic growth among the United States and its allies. Russia no longer had the resources to sustain an arms race with the US, and broke down under the pressure of America's military buildup. The second choice is an imperial adventure. In fact, Iran is engaged in such an adventure, funding and arming Shi'ite allies from Basra to Beirut, and creating clients selectively among such Sunnis as Hamas in Palestine. I continue to predict that Iran will gamble on adventure rather than go the way of Gorbachev. A fundamental difference in sociology distinguishes Iran from the Soviet Union at the cusp of the Cold War. Josef Stalin's terror saw to it that the only communist true believers left alive were lecturing at Western universities. All the communists in Russia were dead or in the gulags. By the 1980s, only the most cowardly, self-seeking, unprincipled careerists had survived to hold positions of seniority in the communist establishment. Only in the security services were a few hard and dedicated men still active, including Vladimir Putin. These were men who saw no reason to fight for communism 70 years after the Russian Revolution.

The US would intervene to secure Caspian oil interests

Sokolsky & Lesser ‘2K

(Richard,- Distinguished Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University and Ian,- director of studies at the Pacific Council on International Policyhttp://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph\_reports/MR1245/MR1245.ch2.pdf)

Over the next ten to fifteen years, a variety of threats could interfere with Western access to energy supplies from the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Basin, and North Africa. They include:

• military aggression in which critical oil production and transportation facilities are seized by Iraq or Iran;

• civil wars, coups, internal upheaval, and terrorism that would shut down the flow of energy from major energy-producing regions for a prolonged period;

• regional and domestic conflicts that would reduce but not halt energy supplies; and

• decisions by national governments that could curtail oil production and exports, thus affecting geopolitical alignments in critical regions.

These distinctions are important because they would affect perceptions of energy security and hence decisions by allied governments to use force to ensure access to energy supplies. The first threat, invasion with a view toward controlling key oil-producing installations, remains a key focus of U.S. defense planning. The consequences of these facilities’ falling under the control of a government hostile to Western interests merit continued vigilance on the part of the West to ensure that such an invasion continues to be deterred or, if it happens, that the invasion could be halted before achieving its goal.

The impact is nuclear conflict

Blank ‘2K

(Expert on the post-Soviet world at the Strategic Studies Institute, 2000 Stephen J., “US Military Engagement with Transcaucasia and Central Asia,” June, http://www.milnet.com/pentagon/Russia-2000-assessment-SSI.pdf)

In 1993 Moscow even threatened World War III to deter Turkish intervention on behalf of Azerbaijan. Yet the new Russo-Armenian Treaty and Azeri-Turkish treaty suggest that Russia and Turkey could be dragged into a confrontation to rescue their allies from defeat. 72 Thus many of the conditions for conventional war or protracted ethnic conflict in which third parties intervene are present in the Transcaucasus. For example, many Third World conflicts generated by local structural factors have a great potential for unintended escalation. Big powers often feel obliged to rescue their lesser proteges and proxies. One or another big power may fail to grasp the other side’s stakes since interests here are not as clear as in Europe. Hence commitments involving the use of nuclear weapons to prevent a client’s defeat are not as well established or apparent. Clarity about the nature of the threat could prevent the kind of rapid and almost uncontrolled escalation we saw in 1993 when Turkish noises about intervening on behalf of Azerbaijan led Russian leaders to threaten a nuclear war in that case. 73 Precisely because Turkey is a NATO ally, Russian nuclear threats could trigger a potential nuclear blow (not a small possibility given the erratic nature of Russia’s declared nuclear strategies). The real threat of a Russian nuclear strike against Turkey to defend Moscow’s interests and forces in the Transcaucasus makes the danger of major war there higher than almost everywhere else. As Richard Betts has observed, The greatest danger lies in areas where (1) the potential for serious instability is high; (2) both superpowers perceive vital interests; (3) neither recognizes that the other’s perceived interest or commitment is as great as its own; (4) both have the capability to inject conventional forces; and, (5) neither has willing proxies capable of settling the situation.74

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Refugee flows from Iranian instability spills-into China – causing Uighurs to spark internal strife.

Swaine ’06

(as internally quoted in this Radio Free Europe piece. Michael Swaine specializes in Chinese security and foreign policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace – RFE – April 19th -- http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/04/91cc6541-2efa-4cad-b668-9aaf6226a96a.html)

Looking For Support On Iran. Iran may not be as close a neighbor to China as North Korea, Swaine said, but trouble in Tehran could mean trouble with Muslim Uighurs in western China. "North Korea is right on [China's] border, and that represents a major threat of instability that they don't want to have to deal with," Swaine said. "And Iran also is not at all far from their border and represents, in its position in the Islamic world and in terms of Islamic fundamentalism, a potential threat for the Chinese in the western parts of their country, and they don't want to have that kind of increase in Islamic fundamentalism as a result of a meltdown in Iran or some increasing instability threaten their interests in that areas as well."

That causes Taiwan to move for independence, triggering US/China war

Klintworth ‘94

(Gary, Fmr Senior Rsrch – Northeast Asia Project – Australian Journal of International Affairs – Nov., p. 219)

China also has many problems, not least the degradation of its environment, population pressure, rising expectations, infrastructural bottlenecks, political factionalism, the Deng succession, a crisis of legitimacy for the Chinese Communist Party, the politics of corruption, regional disparities, a rising crime rate, the erosion of state authority and roving masses, numbering up to 130 million, of underemployed or dissatisfied peasants in several inland provinces.45 There are demands for independence by ethnic minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang. Given these considerations, it is by no means certain that the country will remain intact, and it may be premature, therefore, to talk about China as a great power that can dominate the neighboring region or project power and influence far from its physical borders.46 The breakup of China or at the very least a weak government in Beijing, might unleash fissiparous tendencies in China’s outer regions, including Taiwan and Hong Kong. This could trigger intervention by outside powers, such as Japan, the US, Britain and India that in turn, would provoke a strong military response from the PLA, if it was not meanwhile distracted trying to maintain law and order in the cities. The possibilities are endless and that is why, of the two alternatives, a disintegrating China poses the greatest risk to regional and global security.

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2nd --- Relations --- US-Iran Relations are key to prevent Middle East War

Dr. Nasser Hadian, Professor of Political Science, Tehran University Visiting Professor, Columbia University, 10-28-2003, Federal Document Clearing House Congressional Testimony, Iran: Security Threats & U.S. Policy

Iran's Centrality and the Myth of Isolation: Iran is the most important linkage state in the Middle East. For the reasons of its geography, its revolution and ambitions, and its peculiar and jealously guarded sense of independence and thus centrality, all issues of importance in the Middle East from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, proliferation, terrorism, future of Iraq, stability in Afghanistan, future of relations between Islam and the West, regional political change and reform, Persian Gulf security, to access to secure energy both in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian, etc., either by default or design, run in one way or the other, through Iran. Isolation of Iran is not an option. What underscores this centrality is the significance of US-Iran relations in shaping Middle East dynamics; no other factor in the last 25 years has had a more transformative impact on this region than the Iranian revolution and the hostile nature of US-Iranian relations.

Middle East instability results in global escalation and nuclear use

Ian O. Lesser, Woodrow Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar and Adjunct Staff Member @ Rand, 2004, The Future Security Environment in the Middle East

Several factors contribute to the prominence of WMD and ballistic missiles in Middle Eastern security today. First, the Middle East is the place where unconventional weapons and missiles have been used, at least in a limited, tactical fashion, in modern conflict. Egypt employed chemical weapons in Yemen in the 1960s, and Libya is alleged to have used them in Chad. They were reportedly employed in Afghanistan and, more recently, in Sudan. Iraq used them against the Kurds, and they were employed on a large scale by both sides in the Iran-Iraq war. Missiles were used in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war (Egyptian Scuds and Syrian Frog-7s), in the “war of the cities” between Iran and Iraq, in the civil war in Yemen, and during the 1991 Gulf War. They have been fired, ineffectively, at Italian territory by Libya. Threats to employ these systems are a regular feature of confrontation in the region, and on its periphery. Second, even without use, the Middle East is a leading area of proliferation. Most of the world’s leading WMD proliferators are arrayed along an arc stretching from North Africa to Pakistan (and nuclear and missile tests in South Asia may affect proliferation norms in the Middle East). The presence of active conflicts and flashpoints across the region means that the possession of WMD is not just a matter of national prestige and strategic weight, but a very real factor in military balances and warfighting. Third, the prominence of WMD in the Middle Eastern security environment is accompanied by great uncertainty about the motivations and strategic culture of regional actors. The ways of thinking about WMD, especially nuclear weapons and missiles, developed during the Cold War, are often assumed to have less relevance in a Middle Eastern setting. The question of whether “rogue” proliferators will act rationally and can be deterred in the conventional sense is unclear. In this and other contexts, the prospect of conflict involving WMD in the Middle East raises a variety of uncomfortable issues for Western strategists, and presumably for regional actors themselves. The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli confrontation, with the risk of regional escalation, lends greater weight and immediacy to these issues. Fourth, the pace and character of WMD proliferation in the Middle East is of intense interest to extraregional actors. Russia, China, North Korea, and potentially others are leading suppliers of weapons, materials, and the technological know-how for developing indigenous capabilities. Pursuit of Middle East peace and access to the region’s energy supplies are extraordinarily prominent issues in international affairs, and will compel continued American and Western attention. For these and other reasons, the region is demanding of Western military presence and intervention. Proliferation can interact with the Middle East peace process and stability in the Gulf and the Mediterranean. The potential for new nuclear powers in the region, coupled with the deployment of missiles of increasing range, could profoundly alter the calculus of Western intervention and engagement in the Middle East. So, too, could a shift to a “world of defenses,” operationally and strategically. And as the 2003 war against Iraq shows, the issue of WMD possession and potential use can be a casus belli in its own right. Finally, and to a growing extent, American concerns about WMD capabilities in the Middle East reflect a more profound concern about the security of the U.S. homeland itself, especially after September 11. The prominence of international terrorism with ties to the Middle East together with the growing lethality of the “new terrorism” pose the risk of terrorist use of WMD on American territory. The easy mobility of people, materials, and technology means that proliferation in the Middle East is not a remote phenomenon for the United States and its allies. Whether delivered by missiles or couriers, highly destructive weapons are the most dramatic illustration of the transregional character of the new security environment. The growing reach of these weapons challenges traditional notions of regional security. Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Eurasia, and the Western Hemisphere are now far more interdependent in security terms. The spread of WMD in the Middle East affects security on a global basis, and developments far afield can influence patterns of proliferation inside the region.