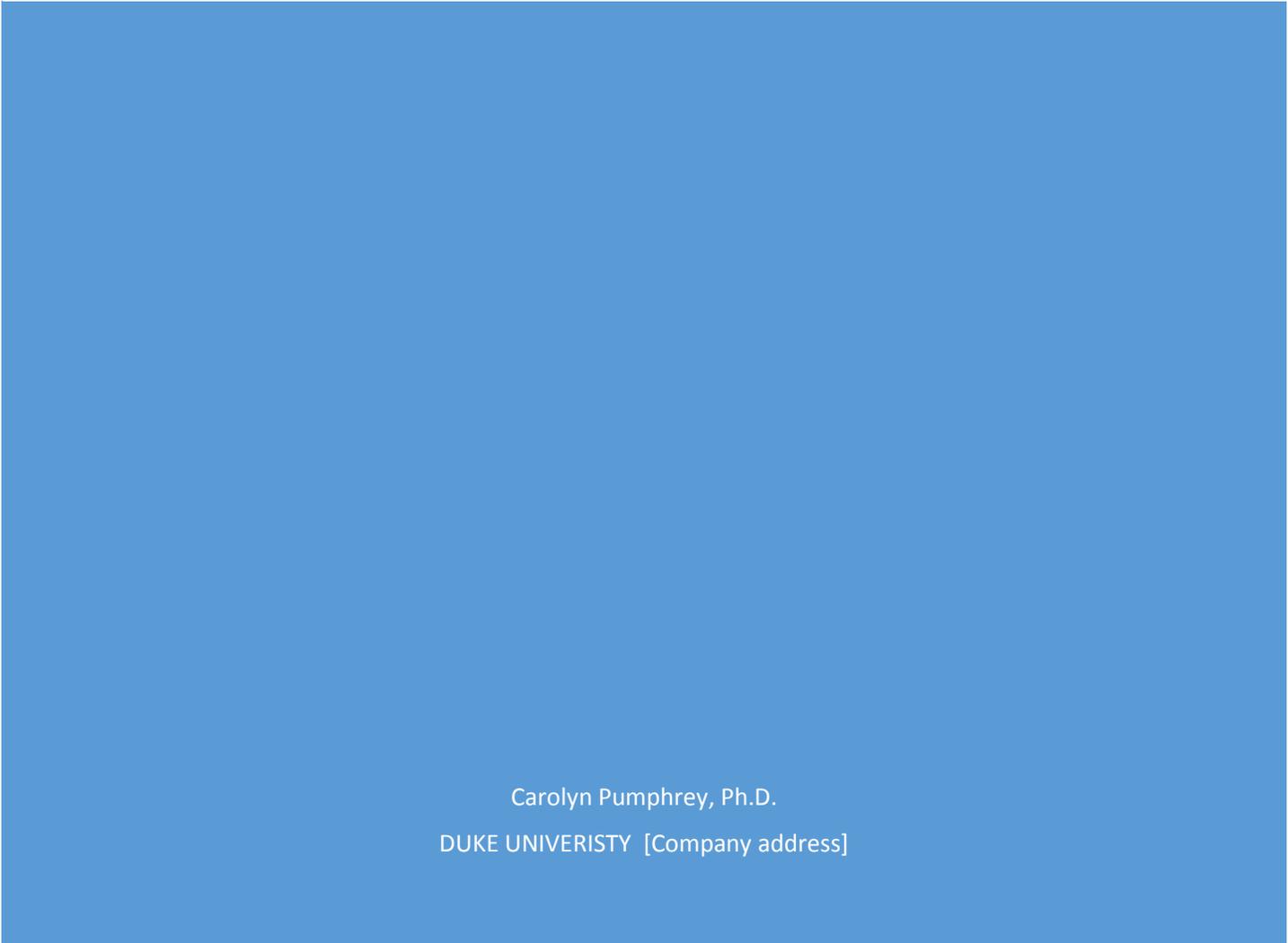




KITFIELD REPORT



Carolyn Pumphrey, Ph.D.
DUKE UNIVERISTY [Company address]

The Intellectual Challenge of Mid-Range Strategy and Planning

A recurring theme of the first panel was that the best-laid strategic plans often go awry. Why should this be so? A major culprit identified by a number of panelists was the day-to-day, crisis management atmosphere that characterizes so much of government, and its tendency to crowd out deliberate, long-range strategic planning. Other culprits pointed out by the panel included the inability of strategic planners to straddle the many stovepipes that divide government by agency, office, task type, and geographic areas of responsibility; competing and often incompatible strategic visions among key players in government; and ideological rigidity that serves as the enemy of innovative strategic planning. A number of panelists also agreed, however, that there was one successful strategic planning cell in the U.S. government that could serve as a model of planning efficiency and discipline: the White House policy planners tasked with fashioning a domestic political agenda that would get the president re-elected.

James Steinberg

James Steinberg, the Director of the Foreign Policy Studies program at the Brookings Institution and former Deputy National Security Advisor to President Bill Clinton, began his talk by citing a number of the practical and intellectual challenges to conducting serious strategic planning in way that is relevant to policymakers and decision-making. Quoting former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, he equated strategic planning to gardening: The best that can be expected, Lake argued, was for the gardener to try and understand the lay of the land, to wisely invest in equipment and pesticides, and when the time came, to hope to harvest some “cash crops” among the weeds. The most important question for strategic planners, Steinberg said, was how to insure some cash crops emerge from the policy-planning process?

Impediments to bumper crops are manifest. As Steinberg noted, in government service the urgent often crowds out long-range planning. Someone in the planning process thus has to be looking to the long-term horizon and thinking about how decisions made today could lead to “grand” payoffs, or how the failure to make timely decisions can have a huge negative impact down the road. The major point Steinberg made was that people responsible for day-to-day operations rarely have time for long-range strategic planning. Conversely, unless strategic planners can make their policy prescriptions make sense to those tasked with day-to-day operations, they will not get serious consideration.

To understand the impediments to effective long-term strategic planning the issue of “stovepipes” must also be considered. Much of the government is still organized around functional or geographic stovepipes, and relatively few people are tasked or resourced to look across the horizon at how the various stovepipes are linked together, and determine how policies taken in one area can have intended, or unintended, consequences in other areas. At its essence, Steinberg said, policy-planning is about understanding these linkages and synergies between government agencies and entities.

Steinberg also talked about the difficulty of producing strategic planning that was innovative and the result of “thinking out of the box.” Such innovation, he noted, can run up against a culture of “risk aversion,” where time constraints often act as blinders for many operators.

On a practical level, Steinberg cited three major challenges for strategic planners: deciding what areas to work on, determining the proper baseline for strategic analysis, and figuring out how numerous policy variables fit into the analysis.

In terms of selecting what areas to focus on, Steinberg noted that merely deciding whether to focus on “offensive” or “defensive” strategies can open up nearly infinite possibilities. As an example of a defensive strategy, for instance, Steinberg noted that the most important work of his tenure on the National Security Council involved analyzing an emerging threat and trying to determine ways to prevent it from leading to catastrophic consequences for the government – namely, the emergence of trans-national threats in an increasingly globalized world. As an example of offensive policy planning, Steinberg talked about the strategy which evolved in the 1990s of consolidating and expanding the spread of democracy in the post-Cold War era, which translated into the policy of NATO enlargement, “one of the more foresighted decisions that we undertook,” said Steinberg.

Strategic planners face some of the same challenges confronted by the intelligence community, Steinberg argued, namely deciding how to extrapolate from present trends to likely future scenarios. Statistical analysis and other traditional models for trying to predict the future, he noted, have only limited appeal for strategic planners who may, for instance, be more concerned with a threat that has only a low probability of becoming a reality, but a high impact in the event that it does occur – say catastrophic terrorism.

Regardless, Steinberg argued that strategic planners are informed with distinct worldviews that will invariably color their analysis and inform their choices. As an example, he noted that

analysts generally have differing explanations of how the Cold War was won, depending on whether they saw it as the result of an increasingly muscular U.S. foreign policy towards the former Soviet Union, or rather the result of engagement with Moscow, or the inherent weaknesses of the Soviet system that brought it crashing down from within. “The key is not to pretend that you have no worldview, but rather to make that worldview explicit, and to be willing to consider alternatives if your worldview turns out to be wrong,” said Steinberg.

Strategic planners can also handcuff themselves on the one hand by assuming political and resource constraints that severely limit their options going in, Steinberg argued, just as they can conversely fall into the trap of assuming no constraints and coming up with unrealistic solutions that are of little practical use to policymakers. The solution is to find a workable middle ground of policies that are both relevant in the near and mid-term, yet still offer potentially high payoffs in the long-term.

Lynn Davis

Perhaps the preeminent strategic planning cell in the government, said Lynn Davis, a Political Scientist at RAND Corporation and a former Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs, is the one in the White House devoted to getting the President of the United States reelected. Their plan for the president’s reelection ultimately serves as the blueprint which determines the work that other strategic planners throughout government can do. Strategic plans are especially important for new administrations, she noted, because those plans inform new officials coming into power what policies they are inheriting, and thus guide them in plotting a different course.

For those reasons, Davis believes that successful strategic planning that cuts across the government has to originate with the president and his small cadre of advisers. “If the president wants to implement a national security strategy that cuts across the various agencies, for instance, then he has to become personally involved in the formation of such a policy, which should be coordinated by the National Security Adviser,” she said. “That one person should then engage the agency heads and their key advisers, avoiding a bottom-up process that insures premature leaks. The reason that kind of strategic planning is rarely done, however, is that apart from the fact that few presidents want that much specificity in terms of policy direction, most officials would rather control their own departments.”

Davis points out that their very nature, strategic plans represent potential change, and change can be upsetting to those invested in the status quo: “When you think about strategic planning inside the government, you have to understand that in the process, planning options are introduced that will produce winners and losers,” said Davis. “Just putting a strategic option out there for comment suggests that someone actually believes in the proposed change, and therefore people will have to decide how they think about it. If they don’t like it they will start worrying, and if they do like it they will start aligning themselves with others who support the change.”

As an example of that process, Davis recalled her own experience as a strategic planner studying a wide array of options for fundamentally reshaping U.S. nuclear posture. “That whole process was eventually destroyed by those in government who didn’t want the president to consider a whole new set of options concerning our nuclear forces,” said Davis. “So I learned my lesson early. That was the last time I led such a strategic planning process in the U.S. government.”

Like Steinberg, Davis noted that in many ways the U.S. government is still organized around stovepipes that can serve as powerful impediments to sweeping strategic change. “In government we tend to be divided as subject-matter experts or geographic experts who focus on regions of the world and functional experts who focus on topics such as terrorism, or proliferation, or human rights, or specific regions of the world. Typically, no single person cuts across this divide,” said Davis. “Largely for that reason, we were never able to find a workable balance concerning China. We could never seem to establish a strategic plan for China to guide our future dealings, because we could never find a balance between priorities that dealt with political engagement, reform, human rights, and non-proliferation.”

Stewart Patrick

Stewart Patrick, a research fellow at the Center for Global Development and a former member of Secretary of State Colin Powell’s Policy Planning Staff, organized his talk around ten hurdles to effective long-range planning. Like the speakers who preceded him, Patrick also started out by noting that many was the day when “big think” and the best-laid plans were overwhelmed by day-to-day crises and bureaucratic infighting. This difficulty of focusing on the future without becoming irrelevant to the present – essentially not missing the forest for the trees – is central to the core challenge of strategic planners.

The first hurdle to effective strategic planning Stewart called the “quest for relevance.” He paraphrased Dean Acheson, who was on the planning staff of former Secretary of State George

Marshall and his successor as secretary of state, as saying this amounted to trying to look beyond the smoke of the present battle to discern emerging threats and challenges. George Kennan himself, considered by many a father of modern-day strategic planning in the State Department, found success elusive. Patrick said that Kennan declared his policy-planning staff a “failure” in 1950 (not sure what this is maybe 1949/50?), “like all that came before it.”

The second hurdle to strategic planning cited by Patrick was the difficulty of planning in extremely uncertain and fluid times. As an example, he noted the internal discussions among administration strategists who continually debated the degree to which the 9/11 terrorist attacks had changed the geo-strategic environment: impacting such diverse spheres as the global economy, transatlantic relations, preemptive military doctrine and the imperative of nation-building.

Third, Patrick talked of the difficulty of “seizing opportunities” when they present themselves. As an example, he argued that the Marshall Plan was not ready to be unveiled in 1946, and might have come too late in 1948. Marshall thus seized on a historical alignment and opportunity in introducing it in 1947. Likewise, he noted that political leaders are more willing to “think out of the box” during certain “political seasons,” most notably just prior to and after an election, when on the one hand a politician is trying to differentiate his or herself from an opponent, and then trying to maximize the political capital gained by a victory. As an example, Patrick noted that fully one third of the memos the State Department’s policy-planning staff produced were finalized in the three-months after the election. Likewise, he believes the Iraqi elections have created possibilities on the ground in Iraq that simply did not exist before. The core point, said Patrick, is that policy-planning ideas, just like buns, should only be taken out of the oven when they are ready.

Fourth, Patrick talked of the perils of “overarching doctrine.” While “big ideas” matter and are important, he said, grand doctrines imprison as much as they liberate. As an example, he noted that even Dean Acheson described his own famous NSC 658 report – credited by many as the foundation for the strategy of “containment” of the Soviet Union – as “clearer than truth,” and an instrument to “bludgeon” the mass mind of the government to get behind the strategy. One of Patrick’s own disappointments, he said, was that the State Department never made a concerted effort to write an equivalent of George Kennan’s “X” article which laid out the philosophical argument for containment strategy, only directed at the challenges of a war on global terrorism.

In a related challenge, Stewart talked of his fifth hurdle as determining which ideology was “in,” and which ideologies were “out,” in an administration’s internal thinking. As an example, he noted that some senior State Department officials considered the worldview of Pentagon

counterparts as overly “utopian,” which limited their ability to analyze fully the policy prescriptions posed by the Defense Department. “Things get tricky when you are talking ideology,” Patrick said. “What you find is that while some subjects are fair game, others are excluded from rigorous analysis by ideology.”

In yet another related subject, Patrick cited as his sixth hurdle the danger of “competing strategic visions.” Even before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he noted, the Pentagon had begun dramatically expanding its portfolio into the traditional State Department turf of foreign policy, “ensuring an extraordinary rivalry between the State and Defense Departments. Basically, it was impossible to have a coherent strategy on Iran or Iraq because the administration was at war with itself,” said Patrick.

As a seventh hurdle, Patrick talked of the “nature of defiance,” and the constant struggle to find the right balance between future strategy and ongoing operations. Secretary of State Powell, he noted, had a managerial approach that put a premium on translating “big picture” policy planning immediately into the realm of the operational.

On a related front, Patrick cited as his eighth hurdle the difficulty of implementing strategic plans. “There are reams of policy analysis that is written but never connected to concrete initiatives and interagency decision-making points,” said Patrick. Once again, he noted, Secretary Powell was most interested in policy planning that was connected to such concrete action. “Secretary Powell was always focused on implementation,” noted Patrick. “I remember he sent back one of my policy memos after jotting his thoughts. ‘Interesting,’ Powell wrote. ‘Now what do you want me to do?’”

As a ninth hurdle, Patrick spoke of differences between “policy planning” and “deliberate planning.” The State Department’s policy plans, he noted, were very different from the Pentagon’s deliberate plans, which tended to implement action plans and often result in moving large forces around the globe. “State Department policy planners were also continually outgunned in internal discussions by Defense Department officials and their Joint Staff planners who would produce these awe-inspiring charts and graphs and power-point presentations,” said Patrick.

Finally, Patrick lamented the “disengagement” of the academic community from the realm of government policy planning. “Universities no longer contribute enough policy-relevant research, and they are not sufficiently rewarded for it when they do,” he said.

Richard Falkenrath

Inside the White House there is a very effective strategic planning shop, said Richard Falkenrath, a Visiting Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution and a former senior director for policy and plans in the White House's Office of Homeland Security. During the first term the White House planning shop was focused on a domestic agenda that would get President Bush reelected. "The White House's domestic policy-planning apparatus set specific goals and utilized all the levers of power to achieve those goals, including outlining clear legislative and domestic policy objectives," he said. "It was true strategic planning on an almost Kissingerian scale."

Why should strategic planning be so much more effective on the domestic front versus in the realms of foreign affairs and national security? For one thing, Falkenrath noted, the inbox fills up much more slowly on the domestic front. Secondly, he believes that there is much more internal consensus on the goals of domestic policy. There is also a greater agreement about the salient facts that impact domestic policy, versus fundamental disputes about the nature of the challenges overseas. On the domestic front, Falkenrath also noted that cabinet officials understand that they were put in power to follow the White House lead. In the realm of national security and foreign affairs, there is far more autonomy assumed by the key actors.

"What I noticed was that in terms of domestic policy, the strategic planners were also the decision-makers, there were not very many of them, and they all worked in the White House within about 25 feet of each other and the president and vice president," said Falkenrath. "Contrast that to the national security realm, where the president basically delegated the individual agency heads the power to run their own affairs. When a cabinet head such as Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld is given such extraordinary authority to act autonomously, what you find is that he can defeat any interagency strategic plans with which he disagrees, and most problems confronting government today are multi-agency in scope."

The differences between domestic and national security policy, said Falkenrath, are perhaps most obvious in the articulation of clear goals for the government. "On the domestic side there is a pretty clear consensus that the goal is to get the president reelected and to pass legislation that he articulated during the campaign," said Falkenrath. "On the national security side of the equation, there was an endless struggle for supremacy in terms of setting the goals for government. There were guys in top positions who had articulated goals even before they entered government – such as abandoning the ABM Treaty and building a national missile defense system – and they saw

their jobs as an opportunity to finally get it done. I found that competition among competing goals in the national security arena, and the struggle for freedom of action and against micro-management from the White House, as the single biggest hindrance to effective inter-agency planning.”

Question and Answer

In the question-and-answer segment of the panel discussion, Jim Steinberg of the Brookings Institution was asked when he thought strategic planners had the best opportunity to impact policy. “I think policy planning is most likely to have leverage between a first and second term,” said Steinberg. A second example of when its potential impact is heightened, he argued, was when a policy is clearly failing.

“The collapse of the Bosnian policy in the spring of 1995 and the realization that we couldn’t keep going in the direction we were headed, for instance, forced serious discussions among the principals about the big choices we faced, and that was a good time for strategic planners to step forward and put options on the table,” said Steinberg. “Likewise, when our proposed linkages between China’s human rights record and its desire to acquire ‘most favored nation’ trading status broke down, it allowed planners to step back and think anew about the problem.”

One of the problems with China policy was that everyone had a different portfolio, said Steinberg, so different officials were tasked with looking at its human rights record, its non-proliferation policy, and its trade issues. “That made it difficult to maintain any strategic coherence to our policy,” he said. In general, however, Steinberg noted that crises are not an especially good time for strategic planning, because long-term goals often get subsumed by immediate tactical challenges.

In response to a question about the role of the intelligence community in strategic planning, Steinberg noted that policy makers “need someone who doesn’t have a dog in the fight to help them think through the implications of a given policy, and the intelligence community fulfills that role,” he said. “My sense of what has gone wrong in the last four years is that the intelligence community’s view of the world was not in sync with that of the policy planners.”

In terms of elevating the role of strategic planning, Steinberg recommended periodic retreats for policy makers and strategic planners that enable a thoughtful discussion free from the clamor of daily crises. “I think it’s important that occasionally principals get away with just a few key underlings, to really think about long-term goals and to assess underlying assumptions behind policy,” said Steinberg. “In my own case, the most useful role I played in some instances was just to be present at key meetings and speak up and raise long-term concerns.”

In response to a question about the influence of neoconservatives in the Bush Administration, Steinberg noted that they had been so successful in advancing their agenda that many observers are now looking at their path to power as a model to be emulated. “If you look at the intellectual roots of the neoconservatives, you have to concede that they developed a coherent worldview, set out a lot of policies associated with it, and then were ultimately successful in putting people in positions of power to implement those policies,” said Steinberg. “There are a lot of people who are now looking at the model to see if it could be used to advance a progressive, globalist worldview. The primary lesson seems to be that strength of the American system is such that it’s best to generate the intellectual capital before you enter government, because it’s easier to be innovative. Inside government people tend to be more incremental and risk averse in their approach.”

During the question-and-answer period, Lynn Davis of the RAND Corporation pointed out that it is extremely hard for senior members of the executive branch to publicly admit that a given policy is not working. “There’s incredible institutional resistance, even when things are going badly, to standing up and admitting that a policy is failing,” she conceded.

Stewart Patrick of the Center for Global Development responded to a question by noting how difficult it was to change direction once a fundamental strategic direction had been charted. “On the macro level, once a strategic paradigm is in place it’s very hard to dislodge,” he said. “There are relatively few battles where people are willing to take on first principles.”

In response to a question on the unusual power of Vice President Dick Cheney and his staff in the Bush Administration, Richard Falkenrath of the Brookings Institution conceded the point. “On national security issues Vice President Cheney assumes something of a chief-of-staff role and even participates in the process as sort of a surrogate president in some cases,” he said. “Cheney can also get Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld on the phone at any time to deal with problems, which happened all the time.”

On the issue of the State Department versus Defense Department divide so obvious in the first term, Falkenrath suggested that the State Department was at a natural disadvantage. “The State Department policy-planning staff had intellectual status, but little real power,” he said. “That means to be effective they would have had to align themselves with policy planners at the Pentagon and elsewhere, and that alignment did not exist. As a result, the policy planners felt irrelevant and the policy implementers continued to function on a short time horizon.”

The Institutional Challenge of Mid-Range Strategy and Planning

Mid-range strategic planning in the U.S. government has rarely lived up to the “gold standard” example set by the State Department’s planning cell in the critical years following World War II, according to members of the second panel, with the result that real power in the government has devolved to a dangerous degree to the operationally-minded Pentagon and the White House. For its part, one knowledgeable panelist noted that the Pentagon has trouble planning or even thinking beyond the “last bullet fired in the last climatic battle,” a tendency that had very negative consequences in Iraq. An even more fundamental problem is that strategic planning implies a coherent vision applied over a long timeframe, another panelist argued, whereas in reality the separation of powers written into the Constitution and the fundamental character of the U.S. government more often lead to compromise, disorder and the constant reinvention of the wheel.

Kurt Campbell

Policy planning staffs in government have rarely lived up to the early example set by the State Department’s policy planning department, which helped establish the post-World War II international order, argued Kurt Campbell, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and formerly director of the National Security Council Staff and an Assistant Secretary of Defense. “That State Department staff was really the ‘gold standard,’ and nearly all subsequent attempts in government to establish policy planning departments have been failures,” he said. “They tried it at the Pentagon in the 1960s, and then eliminated the department as soon as Robert McNamara left. They tried again in the twilight of the Cold War in the late 1980s, and it was another failure. The remark you heard in the Defense Department at the time was that we have real-world programs and responsibilities that could be affected, so we can’t afford to indulge in a lot of speculative ideas about the future.”

One consequence of that relative lack of effective long-term strategic planning at the State Department and elsewhere in the national security realm, Campbell argued, had been a steady expansion of the Pentagon's portfolio as it stepped in to handle the crisis of the day. "In 1992 and 1993, one would have reasonably anticipated a decline in defense spending and a shift in focus and importance to other government institutions," he said. "In fact, the reverse has been the case. Last year the United States spent more on defense than the rest of the world combined, which is incredible when you think that only a decade ago we were talking about a 'peace dividend.' Now you're seeing all other government institutions are impacted by the unearthly power of the Pentagon."

The expansion of Pentagon power in relation to other agencies, of course, has only been abetted by the 9/11 terror attacks and the war on global terror. "By focusing on the operational and the tactical, the war on terror has drawn attention away from the future to the here and now," said Campbell. "And I expect that dynamic to continue for quite some time. I also get the sense that the State Department has not proven itself up to the challenges of the global war on terror."

The role of think tanks and academia in informing and enlightening the policy debate, Campbell said, has also declined. "A deep divide of suspicion has grown between government and academia, and I see that divide growing," he said. "People who have worked in both arenas tend to be the most critical, and I find that deeply worrisome."

The global war on terror has impacted the policy community in another unanticipated way – by putting a premium on expertise in the Middle East and southwest Asia. "The initial period when a crisis has created a need for regional experts can be like a gold rush, because there's a large influx of money involved, but almost everyone I've talked to looks back on similar periods of crisis as very problematic," said Campbell. "It's like big development suddenly coming to a small village. Issues get politicized, which leads to deep divisions. The work becomes less friendly and fun. Certainly that happened in both China and Middle East policy."

The single most important feature of the current U.S. government, Campbell argued, is the centralization of power inside the White House. "With the occasional exception such as the Pentagon, most policy power in Washington has devolved to the White House," he said. "The problem arises from the fact that the closer you are to the White House, the more focused you become on day-to-day crises."

Joseph Collins

The policy planning challenges in a time of wars with both Afghanistan and Iraq have been manifest, argued Joseph Collins, a professor of National Security Strategy at the National War College who spent the last three years as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations. “We obviously confronted significant planning problems in both Afghanistan and Iraq,” said Collins. “In Iraq, for instance, our planning and preparation for Phase IV stability operations was insufficient. We failed to create an organizational construct for civilian reconstruction, we were very slow off the mark in realizing the importance of creating an interim Iraqi authority to enhance the perception of liberation, and we failed in deciding what to do with the Iraqi officer corps. And all of those mistakes took place against a backdrop of 15 months of hard, deliberate planning.”

The Iraqi occupation and reconstruction bore similarities to earlier stability operations and nation-building exercises, Collins said, to include Somalia, Haiti and Kosovo. In each case, however, the Pentagon’s planning system has been ineffective in anticipating and dealing with post-conflict scenarios. “In each case, what you find is that the United States had unparalleled conventional power, which meant opponents were forced to adopt guerilla tactics,” said Collins. Each time the armed services also focused overly on conventional operations, he argued, and were thus slow to react when the conflict shifted to more unconventional operations.

“The U.S. military has trouble thinking beyond the last bullet of the last climatic battle, when it needs to be thinking about occupation, reconstruction, and tasks associated with the dreaded ‘nation-building,’” said Collins, a former U.S. Army colonel. “Unlike in Bosnia, in both Afghanistan and Iraq there was also no discreet ‘post-conflict’ phase. We went from one phase of war into another phase of war. In Iraq, the enemy also decided that its best strategy was to defeat reconstruction, and thwarting that strategy required closer cooperation between civilian and military entities. So stability operations in general need to be more integrated into our war school curriculum, and the focus of more war games. We also need more effective joint, interagency planning, and that will be harder to achieve than simply rearranging the boxes on our wiring diagrams.”

Not all the news is grim. Since the 9/11 attacks, Collins noted, the U.S. government has taken significant steps to adapt to those new realities, to include: creating a new Homeland Security Department, a National Counter-terrorism Center, a State Department coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, and Joint Interagency Coordination Groups in a number of U.S. regional commands. “The 2006 Defense Department budget also emphasizes Special Operations and reconstruction capabilities at the expense of high-tech weapons, and that’s a first,” said Collins. “In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the diplomatic and military teams are now working better together than they were a year ago. What you basically have is a non-aggression

pact between the U.S. ambassador and the 4-star general on the scene. Maybe that's the best we can hope for right now, but it's not idiot proof, and there are enough people with big egos out there that a process that is 'idiot proof' is required."

What is needed to cope with future problems of failed states and stability operations, Collins argued, is a joint, interagency contingency-planning process backed by real authority and resources. "There's no getting around the fact that the kind of contingencies the U.S. military is getting involved in requires a lot of civilian interagency input," he said. "Every executive branch department should also require significant interagency experience in its senior appointees. You'd be amazed at how many junior people with no such experience are now occupying senior positions, because senior, more experienced people don't want to put up with the hours involved and the lack of rewards."

Until the State Department, U.S. AID teams, and other interagency players become more operationally capable, Collins noted, the U.S. military will continue to be ordered to fill the inevitable void. "The simple fact of the matter is that we need diplomats and aid officials in the field, and until we can get them there, young lieutenants and captains will be left to supervise reconstruction and the creation of local governments, and all kinds of other things they are not adequately trained to do," he said. "Before those civilians can become more operational, however, they must be better funded. I believe that the single greatest impediment to effective stabilization operations at this point is under-funding of the State Department. We have to start funding the State Department as a major player, or it will continue to play second fiddle to the Pentagon goliath. We also need more allied burden-sharing, which means including our allies in the takeoff of these operations as well as for the crash landings."

Richard Betts

Richard Betts was skeptical in general even about the practicality of long-range strategic planning, given that it is so often disregarded by policy makers. Betts is Director of the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University, and his service in both academia and government includes stints on the Senate Select Committee on National Intelligence, on the National Security Council, and on the National Security Advisory Panel to the Director of Central Intelligence.

The failure of strategic planning can be partially explained, argued Betts, by the fact that it implies a coherent approach and vision applied over a considerable span of time, whereas in

reality the separation of powers written into the Constitution and the fundamental character of the U.S. government more often lead to compromise and disorder. “Constant turnover in the highest levels of the government bureaucracy leads to short term coping at the expense of long-range planning, for instance, and a tendency to constantly reinvent the wheel,” said Betts. “Also, the annual budget cycle through which Congress exerts its greatest influence tends to promote short-term thinking. Finally, with no real audience above the mid-level of the bureaucracy, strategic planners also rely on reports and studies to have influence, but unless they contain new information these documents are not very valued by policy makers. Conversely, if they are short and punchy, they’re prone to oversimplification and can be misleading.”

Betts also faulted the “politicization” of intelligence analysis inside the U.S. government. “I used to think complaints of politicization were exaggerated, but presently it’s the worst I’ve ever seen, and that’s a very serious problem,” he said.

Like a number of other speakers, Betts cited the growing gulf between government and academia, and he put the majority of the fault squarely on the shoulders of academia. “In general I think government officials are open to exploiting the talents of academics, but because of the denigration of empirical work versus theoretical work in academia, academics can usually only help at the margins,” said Betts. “Occasionally, op-eds written by academics help crystallize an idea at a time when government officials are casting about for new ways to make sense of a problem.”

Question and Answer

In the question-and-answer session, Kurt Campbell was asked to elaborate on his point that the “money chase” was adversely affecting think tanks. “What’s corrupting about the environment in which think tanks now operate is that people go there believing they will spend a lot of time researching and thinking, and they actually spend a lot more time raising money,” said Campbell, who cited as causes of the problem the decline in endowments and increase in the number of think tanks now competing for finite resources.

In his remarks Campbell also rejected the notion that officials enter government service with “their intellectual bucket full,” and then spend that intellectual capital making policy before leaving government to recharge. “I think that framework for government service is wrong, and very different from how I found government service,” he said. “I think what is most important is that you enter government with a mental framework in place that allows you to tackle problems,

because you will never learn more than you do while in government. To me the biggest problem is not officials who spend their intellectual capital and have no more to offer, but rather the problem is that our thinking was profoundly polluted by the decades of Cold War. I think everyone needs to constantly work to try and shake away that intellectual residue.”

Campbell also believes the role of Congress has changed dramatically in his time in Washington. “Serving in Congress used to be a job where you thought deeply about issues, you worked fulltime and held hearings that mattered,” he said. “Those days of strategic reflection are largely gone. Today, members of Congress come in on Tuesday and they are gone by Thursday. The job is now about raising money and getting back to your district to get reelected.”

On the issue of academics and government, Campbell argued that academics make excellent policy makers. “Like government officials, academics work in a very competitive field, with tough competition, where they need to build alliances to advance, and where there’s a whole system of unstated protocols,” said Campbell. “Because of all those similarities with government service, I think academics do extremely well in government.”

In the question-and-answer session, Joseph Collins was asked about his comment that the State Department was badly under-funded. “Every conversation we had with State Department officials, no matter what the issue, always got down very quickly to a matter of money,” he said. “In terms of the Pentagon’s Global Peacekeeping Initiative, it took us six months to convince the State Department that we would actually give them the money. They originally opposed the naming of a coordinator for reconstruction, because they viewed it as an unfunded mandate. I think that’s a wound that has been inflicted by Congress, and it’s led to a stupid situation.”

Rogue States and Policy Planning – Containment, Accommodation, or Pre-Emption?

As the third panel made clear, the challenge of fashioning a coherent policy and strategic plan for dealing with “rogue states” is vastly complicated by the fact that there is little international agreement of what even constitutes a “rogue.” As one panelist noted, lumping “rogue states” into a single policy box or common theme is often unhelpful, because it suggests a common approach when each nation on the “rogue” list poses unique challenges and a discreet threat. Another major impediment to fashioning a coherent approach to “rogue states,” the panel noted, were the persistent tensions between competing policy priorities and objectives. Fundamentally,

is the United States government more interested in changing the rogue behavior, for instance, or was its priority to change the regime itself?

Miroslav Nincic

From a Cold War-era dominated by a few poles of power, where relative peers jockeyed for position and advantage, we have transitioned to a world where the vast majority of nations share common interests and norms of behavior. So argued Miroslav Nincic, a professor of Political Science at the University of California-Davis and an expert in international relations theory and national security policy. The problem, said Nincic, was that those common interests are now threatened by a relative handful of renegades – be they terrorist networks, organized crime, or rogue nations.

A primary tool of the civilized world in dealing with these threats, Nincic pointed out, remains economic pressure exerted against renegade regimes. In that context he argued somewhat counter-intuitively that economic sanctions wielded with a “light hand” are more effective and likely to change rogue behavior than sanctions wielded with a “heavy hand.”

In his upcoming book *Renegade Regimes: Analyzing Deviance in World Politics* (Columbia University Press), Nincic examines nine nations that flouted civilized norms of behavior, either by supporting terrorism, proliferating weapons of mass destruction, oppressing their domestic populations, or threatening their neighbors. In each case, Nincic posed the question of whether economic sanctions were effective in changing the renegade behavior.

“What I discovered was that renegade regimes that faced partial economic sanctions, as opposed to comprehensive or total sanctions, were about twenty times more likely to change their behavior,” said Nincic, who noted several faulty assumptions in explaining the difference in effectiveness between partial and total sanctions regimes. “The reality is that sanctions imposed by the international community don’t just offset renegade or negative behavior like a see-saw, but rather they can reconfigure negative incentives, much like a balloon that is squeezed at one end bulging or expanding at the other.”

As an example, Nincic noted that economic sanctions and outside pressures can actually increase the ideological commitment of the rogue regime, whether it is based on religious ideology as in

the case of Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, or naked nationalism such as that espoused by Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic.

“In an ideological context, what you find is that people can put greater value on a movement that is achieved and threatened from the outside, as opposed to one that is not yet achieved,” said Nincic. “Whatever objective you have embarked upon, you tend to increase your commitment to that objective once it's threatened from the outside. In the case of Milosevic, for instance, you saw the nationalism of his regime actually intensify as economic sanctions were tightened, just as the Taliban's commitment to fundamentalist principles intensified in response to sanctions. The point is heavy-handed sanctions can lead to greater ideological commitment by those targeted, and a rally-around-the-flag impulse by the populace.”

By isolating a regime from the international community, comprehensive sanctions can also help perpetuate its internal control. “With economic sanctions you often see the rise of black and gray markets, and the growth of profiteering factions that benefit from sanctions and thus help prop-up the regime,” said Nincic. “At the same time, the middle class is often decimated by sanctions, and they are usually the strongest supporters of moderation and accommodation. That dynamic was very evident in the case of Iraq.”

The lesson of past sanctions regimes is not that they don't work, Nincic argued, but rather that they have to be applied carefully. “We need to focus efforts on the notion of ‘smart sanctions,’ which like smart weapons, are designed to hurt the regime but not inflict collateral damage on the general populace,” he said. “As an example, smart sanctions might freeze the assets only of the regime itself and its cronies. The point is if the international community is going to continue to rely on the tool of economic sanctions, we should do so in a way that is not counter-productive.”

Robert Litwak

The major impediment to fashioning a coherent approach to “rogue regimes” is the persistent tension between competing policy objectives, argued Robert Litwak, Director of the International Studies Division of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a former Director for Nonproliferation on the National Security Council staff.

Was the U.S. government more interested in changing the rogue behavior or the regime itself? In case of Iran, for example, the Bush administration's National Security Council has been unable to achieve a policy consensus since 2002, according to the Washington Post. The NSC has been "unable to bridge the competing impulses within the administration between behavior and regime change," said Litwak.

Underscoring those competing objectives, he said, was the fact that internal changes in societies such as Iran and North Korea may be going slower than the weapons programs that are the more immediate threat. "That dilemma has a profound bearing on the formulation of policy, because often the two tracks are not in sync. In the case of North Korea, for instance, the changes in society are clearly being outpaced by the government's pursuit of nuclear weapons," said Litwak. That divergence was also evident, however, in the successful policy of "containment" of the Soviet Union. "The genius behind George Kennan's idea of containment was that it amounted to a holding policy that created time for the contradictions at the core of Soviet society to play out. In the end, Gorbachev initiated internal reforms that amounted to 'regime change' through a process of regime evolution."

That dichotomy between an approach emphasizing "regime change" through war or internal revolution, or a policy of changing a regime's behavior as a result of societal evolution, are at the core of policy discussions on Iran and North Korea. "In both cases, you have two competing schools of thought within the government," said Litwak. "The first school is very skeptical of the idea that changes in civil society will lead to fundamental change in behavior, because the Mullahs in Iran or Kim Jung Il in North Korea will simply stamp out dissent. That school thus argues for the hard-landing of regime change. The other school believes that the consequences of a hard-landing are too dire in a case such as North Korea, and thus they argue for a long-term engagement that leads to a soft-landing and regime moderation. Some call this idea 'assisted suicide,' and it's behind South Korea's 'sunshine policy' of engagement with North Korea."

Successful examples of both non-proliferation approaches were evident in 2003. The hard-line school of regime change saw their model applied in the decapitation of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, while the engagement school claimed success in the announcement of Libya's Muammar Qadhafi that his government was forgoing weapons of mass destruction.

"The crux of the deal with Libya, however, was that the United States was willing (in the words of one former U.S. official) 'to take yes for an answer,' and readmit Libya into the community of nations if it gave up its weapons of mass destruction, without changing the goal posts and requiring even more societal change or liberal reforms," said Litwak. "In the case of Iran and North Korea, it is unclear whether the Bush administration would be willing to offer such a deal

and take yes for an answer. At the same time, both represent the real limitations and risks of the preemptive model of regime change. Until we resolve that fundamental ambiguity in our policy towards Iran and North Korea tensions will persist, because neither of those nations will accept U.S. security assurances. They continue to believe our objective remains regime change.”

To change that dynamic, Litwak believes the United States needs to fashion deals for both North Korea and Iran that will cap their weapons programs at “tolerable” levels – much as the Clinton administration did with the 1994 Agreed Framework deal with North Korea -- in order to buy time for societal change to take root in both nations.

Andrew Erdmann

The difficulties the Bush administration has faced in forging a coherent policy in regards to Iran over the past two years, said Andrew Erdmann, the former Director of Iran/Iraq and Strategic Planning on the National Security Council and a former member of the Secretary of State’s Policy Planning Staff, has a lot to do with the fact that the war in Iraq and the dethroning of Saddam Hussein has “sucked the oxygen” out of the room in terms of internal government deliberations of other difficult policy challenges, including Iran. Erdmann also found the moniker of “rogue nation” analytically unhelpful and provocative, noting that in many places around the world the United States is sometimes derided as a “rogue superpower.”

In terms of Iran and North Korea – the remaining legs of the “axis of evil” – Erdmann noted that they both defy cookie-cutter approaches. “I’m struck by the uniqueness of each of these cases in terms of proscribing a course of action,” he said. “At the end of the day, it’s not about what to do with ‘rogue states’ in general, but specifically what to do about Iran and what to do about North Korea.”

As a strategic planner, Erdmann also found the single-minded focus on Iran’s nuclear weapons program as unduly limiting in internal discussions, although he conceded it was the one aspect of Iran policy on which there was wide consensus within the Bush administration. “While the focus on Iran’s nuclear program is perhaps understandable, since the thought of Iran armed with a nuclear weapon is not reassuring to anyone, I found it unhelpful in framing debate about Iran policy,” said Erdmann. “First of all, it may simply not be possible to keep the Iranian regime from acquiring nuclear weapons short of some military options that may ultimately be judged too costly. Secondly, of all the issues between us, the discussion of Iran’s nuclear weapons program is the one that most offends Iranian national pride and provokes a rally-around-the-flag response

by the Iranian people in a regime that is otherwise lacking popular support or legitimacy. Finally, a narrow focus on nuclear weapons obscures the fact that the Iranian challenge is much broader, and it includes a history of Iran working to sabotage Middle East peace and Iran's long ties to terrorists.

Applying a Cold War analogy to Iran may help discussions with Europeans, he said, who are immediately put off by talk of 'regime change' in Tehran. "We need a new vocabulary to talk about Iran, because using words like 'regime change' is a show stopper that stifles debate, because it conjures up images of forcibly, externally driven regime change." Analogies such as 'Iran is like Eastern Europe in the 1980s' often resonate with Europeans and open the door to discussing how to promote fundamental change within Iran. "Once you sit down and talk about the nature of the Iranian regime and the breadth and depth of its strategic challenge, however, the Europeans tend to agree the regime eventually has to go, they just think in longer timeframes."

Thus, finding a "solution" to the Iranian nuclear threat may only be possible in the context of a broader strategy aimed at transforming Iran's conduct at home and abroad. Especially in the case of Iran, Erdmann thinks the topic of economic sanctions deserves further debate. "There may be a way, for instance, to tailor economic sanctions in such a way that they widen the fissures between the regime and civil society. Once unleashed, such forces might be able to transform the internal situation in Iran. I also think we should study the role of non-governmental organizations in promoting change from within in Poland, Serbia and Ukraine, because there may be helpful lessons there that apply to Iran as well."

Any policy of economic sanctions directed at Iran, however, would surely be complicated by the fact that China and its super-heated economy get a large share of their energy supply from Iran, making a U.N. Security Council-authorized oil embargo unlikely, given China's permanent seat and potential veto.

"I also think we need to have a firm recognition of the limits of U.S. power and influence," said Erdmann. "The domestic political dynamic inside Iran is not driven by the United States, but rather by its own internal forces, and we mislead ourselves in thinking that we can dictate outcomes. I would caution that instead of thinking about how we can 'solve' the Iran problem in the near term, we may have to settle for trying to manage it now, while setting the stage for more profound changes to come later."

Steve Grummon

Lumping “rogue states” into a single policy box or strategic plan with a common theme is not a helpful policy or planning construct, argued Steve Grummon, the Director of the Office of Near East and South Asian Affairs in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department. “From working with intelligence analyses, my observation is that when it comes to thematically connecting the various rogue states, the closer you get to actually putting policy into operation, the more you are driven by discreet aspects of each situation. No matter how you try to thematically link these nations, they remain distinct entities,” said Grummon. “Whether it’s in terms of geography, resources, population, or politics, each case is unique.”

Even in the case of rogue states whose behavior is roundly derided by the international community, Grummon noted that planners must prioritize U.S. policy goals. “Just because a nation’s behavior is deemed inimical to global norms doesn’t mean you can forget about the hierarchy of policy interests,” said Grummon. In the case of Iran, for instance, despite talking about it as a “rogue state” and part of an “axis of evil,” Grummon said, “we’ve had enormous difficulty prioritizing whether it was nuclear weapons, support for terror, or its interference in the Mid-East peace process that we most objected to. . . as it becomes clear that Iran is going to acquire a nuclear weapon if something is not done, a choice is essentially being forced on the Bush administration. In the final analysis, however, we will still have to make a judgment on our hierarchy of priorities that informs our Iran strategy.”

Question and Answer

In the question-and-answer session, Robert Litwak noted that ‘regime change’ was considered such a radical proposal by U.S. allies because it ran counter to long-accepted notions of state sovereignty. “President Bush made the case that regime change was needed in Iraq to change regime behavior, but that doesn’t address the problem that a successor regime in Iraq might also at some point pursue nuclear weapons if the underlying security and other motivations that might give rise to such a program are not addressed,” he said. “[Former CIA Director George] Tenet has also stated that virtually any regime that came to power in Teheran would likely be drawn to the nuclear option.”

On the issue of sanctions, Peter Feaver, of the Triangle Institute noted that economic sanctions are likely a necessary precursor before democracies will consider military action. “One of the special roles of economic sanctions is to prove that all other avenues have been tried and have failed, because the American public will find it very hard to approve a strategy that goes directly to the use of force,” he said. “I would argue that was the reason we invaded Iraq and not Iran.

The Bush administration could make a persuasive case that all other avenues had been tried with Saddam, and they had failed. The problem is, by the time sanctions have been tried and failed, the problem can get much more acute. I would argue that is what has happened with North Korea.”

On the issue of “rogue states” as a policy theme, Erdmann, noted that in comparison to North Korea, Iran is a far more sophisticated and complex populace, with a much greater interplay of civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations. “Iran has an educated and sophisticated urban population, and there is widespread access to the media,” said Erdmann. “Iran has also mounted a very aggressive diplomatic outreach to China, India, and South Africa, in essence looking East and South for friends in order to become less isolated and less dependent on the United States and Europe. So they are positioning themselves to be able to ride out any economic sanctions regime; the United States has done little yet to counter that effort. That tells me we still haven’t fully reconciled and prioritized our overall Iran policy with our other foreign policy objectives.”

The fact that President Bush is still rhetorically insisting that it is unacceptable for Iran to acquire nuclear weapons, said Erdmann, also inhibits strategic planners from contemplating what to do in the event it actually acquired such weapons. “That’s part of the structural problem faced by policy planners inside government,” he said. “If the President is saying categorically that Iran cannot get nuclear weapons, and it was leaked to the press that planners were contemplating what to do in case it did get weapons, we’d quickly find ourselves in trouble. So the fear of leaks inhibits the government’s ability to ‘think the unthinkable’ or plan for some particularly unpleasant contingencies.”

A fallback option if Iran acquired nuclear weapons could be a Cold War-style policy of robust containment and deterrence. “But there’s no getting around the fact that your risk of leakage of such weapons goes up the more nuclear weapons there are in the world,” said Erdmann. “That’s especially true when you’re talking about regimes with ties to terrorist groups. That doesn’t mean it’s likely that Teheran would inevitably pass nuclear weapons to Hezbollah, but the risk of leakage to terrorist groups certainly increases.” How to weigh these uncertainties and risks presents a huge challenge to policymakers.

Coalitions and International Institutional Dynamics

The United States is simply more effective on the world stage when it operates within a multinational institutional framework, a number of experts on Panel IV maintained, even while it was becoming more difficult for the world's lone superpower to receive authorization for military action from organizations such as the United Nations. The best way for the United States to maximize its chances for getting broad authorization for action, and to sustain effective coalitions of the willing within an institutional framework, some panelists believe, is to press for reforms of the United Nations that would make such authorizations more palatable and likely. Others argued that the United States multilateral and bilateral relationships are simply under increasing strain due to structural changes in international environment, especially after 9/11, and that those strains are likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

Robert Keohane

“Soft power” is the ability to persuade others to support your policy and to view your actions as legitimate, up to and including economic sanctions and military action, argued Robert Keohane, a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University and a professor of International Affairs at Princeton. He dismissed U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's argument that only the U.N. Security Council can bestow such legitimacy on military action, especially given that the Security Council was rendered ineffectual throughout much of the Cold War era by the threatened veto of opposing permanent members. However, Keohane said that having military action seen as legitimate by the international community was both very desirable, and increasingly difficult for the United States.

In an era of instant media and increasing “social mobilization” in the Third World, Keohane argued that it was much more difficult for powerful nations to intercede in the affairs of less powerful countries. That is the case even when interventions were undertaken on a multilateral basis, such as NATO's intervention in the Balkans. “My general argument, however, is that multilateral interventions are superior to unilateral interventions in terms of legitimacy. It's categorically more difficult to have unilateral interventions seen as legitimate,” said Keohane. “On the other hand, multilateral institutions tend to be deficient in ways that make it hard to get action out of them.”

For the judgment of international institutions to be seen as valid on the subject of the legitimacy of military action, Keohane argued that they must be seen as transparent and sophisticated in reaching factual findings. “Multilateral institutions must display an ability to make judgments founded on fact and to be sophisticated in their cost-effect determinations,” he said. “On that front, the United Nations gets only mixed marks.”

Part of the problem in terms of the United Nations, Keohane said, was that the Security Council essentially writes a “blank check” when it authorizes military action, with no procedures in place for follow-up or to hold entities accountable for the character of their interventions. “The fact that the U.N. Security Council authorizes powerful states to intervene, but has no control over them, reduces its willingness to authorize action in the first place,” said Keohane, who argued for a “prior contract” in such cases where intervening states agree on standards to be upheld and procedures by which they can be held accountable.

“It may seem absurd that great powers would agree to such an arrangement, but in reality we rarely offer ‘blank checks’ even to close friends,” said Keohane. “To strengthen multilateral institutions and their claim to legitimacy, we need to reform them in the direction of offering greater accountability and transparency to their authorized operations.”

Keohane also proposed a system that would essentially tax nations depending on whether they were on the right or wrong side of a vote to intervene. “Under that construct, in the case of the Iraq war the United States and the United Kingdom would pay more for the intervention, because they were wrong about the presence of weapons of mass destruction,” he said. “If weapons had been found, however, then the French and Germans would have paid more because they wrongly minimized the threat. The point is to give incentives for truthful estimates by countries on both sides of an argument.”

In the context of legitimacy of military action, Keohane criticized the Bush administration’s greater reliance on “coalitions of the willing,” as opposed to traditional and more multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and NATO. “The problem with ‘coalitions of the willing’ is that they are generally viewed as illegitimate, and thus they will be opposed,” said Keohane. “Look at how hard it was to persuade the international community that the United States had kept the interests of the Iraqi people paramount during its intervention. Compare that to NATO’s intervention in Kosovo. Even though the U.N. Security Council didn’t authorize that action, 12 of the 15 members were on record approving it. The fact that it was undertaken by a multilateral institution like NATO, rather than a ‘coalition of the willing,’ made it much more legitimate in the eyes of the world than the Iraq intervention.”

In the final analysis, said Keohane, the legitimacy bestowed on the United Nations Security Council does not flow from its “sterling qualities,” but “rather from the unappealing quality of unilateral action. That’s why we need to reform these multilateral institutions and make their focus more on accountability and less on sovereignty, because otherwise they are in danger of losing their credibility and ability to bestow legitimacy,” he said. “The alternative is a world that continues to be fragmented by nationalism, and that’s problematic for those of us who believe in

trying to shape a peaceful world, but who don't believe in the inherent peacefulness of mankind.”

Andrew Hoehn

The entire debate over multilateralism versus unilateralism is false, argued Andrew Hoehn, the Director of Strategy and Doctrine Program at the RAND Corporation and a former Principal Director for Strategy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Requirements. The real debate, he said, should be over how durable and lasting are the United States' multilateral and bilateral relationships? The answer, according to Hoehn, is that those relationships are under strain virtually across the board, and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future because of structural changes in international relations.

There's a danger in viewing alliance relations through a rose-colored prism of the Cold War, he argued, and to assume that the second half of the 20th century represented an ideal in terms of alliance relationships. The truth was that alliance relationships were constantly under strain even during the Cold War. Hoehn conceded, however, that those relationships are especially fragile at the present time.

The prism Hoehn proposed for viewing alliance relations would focus on four distinct areas: shared values, shared risks, security orientation, and exposure.

In terms of shared values, Hoehn argued that while the Western alliance shared a commitment to democracy during the Cold War, the United States was at least as concerned with maintaining stability as it was with exporting democracy. What sets the Bush administration apart, he said, was President Bush's willingness to push for the expansion of democracy even when allies are not willing to go along, as in the case of Iraq, or when they are initially reluctant as proved true in Afghanistan.

“It's not that the Bush administration and our allies disagree about the values we all hold, but rather the disagreement is often over how aggressively we should push to export those values to the rest of the world,” said Hoehn. “I don't see us resolving our differences in that regard any time soon.”

In terms of shared risk, Hoehn cites as an example the core defensive clause – an attack on one is an attack on all -- that lays at the foundation of the NATO alliance. During the Cold War the United States backed up that pledge, with its implied notion of shared risk, by stationing its troops on foreign soil, exporting arms to allied countries, conducting frequent military exercises and establishing military-to-military engagements with allied nations.

What happened after 9/11 was that we started asking our partners to share risks with us, whether by letting the United States put its troops on their soil or in other ways,” said Hoehn. “And what we found in some cases is that some of our traditional partners didn’t want to share those risks, or else they suspected that we were exaggerating the risks. That has been a source of increased strain.”

In those debates about sharing risks, Hoehn said, some nations asked for monetary compensation, which was relatively easy to provide, while others wanted their relationships with the United States upgraded to non-NATO ally status. “The hard one for us in the Pentagon was nations that wanted a U.S. commitment to their own security, which was essentially asking us to pick sides in various disputes,” he said. “In some cases where we were not willing to do that, we were left in sort of a dead zone in terms of our deliberations.”

In terms of “orientation,” Hoehn talked of the Cold War model, where the United States was essentially an “exporter” of security to the European allies in NATO, who were “importers” of security. After the end of the Cold War, he said, the United States began pressing its European allies to become “exporters” of security, which was the argument behind NATO’s ability and willingness to operate “out of area.”

“After the Cold War was over the United States had a change of heart, and we adopted the view that ‘old Europe’ should be willing to become an exporter of security, which was behind our pushing the NATO Defense Capabilities Initiative to give the alliance a power projection capability,” said Hoehn. “The debate at that time centered on the notion that NATO would ‘go out of area, or out of business.’ Frankly, however, we haven’t had a frank discussion with our allies since then about the right balance between being an ‘exporter’ or ‘importer’ of security.”

What is evident in places such as Germany, argued Hoehn, is a real ambivalence about the whole issue. “While the German military is in Afghanistan, for instance, the German people remain

decidedly unenthusiastic about being exporters of security, and if something were to go even a little wrong in Afghanistan I would expect the German commitment there to end very quickly,” he said. “That’s a point of real tension.”

In terms of ‘new Europe,’ Hoehn says countries such as Romania and Poland are much more willing to act as exporters of security -- and thus deploy troops to the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq -- because their memories of subjugation are fresh, and they are thus anxious to secure U.S. commitments to their own security. “That whole notion of ‘orientation’ in terms of being exporters or importers of security should be part of the debate about our alliances,” said Hoehn.

In the post-9/11 global war on terrorism, Hoehn also thinks that fundamentally different assessments of “exposure” to risk are creating tensions in the alliance. “When I talk to people in the finance world, they think of risk in terms of exposure to a particular threat. When we talk to our European allies about terrorism, and the need to go on the offensive against the terrorists so as to protect our societies at home, they understand the threat very well. I just don’t think we fully understand their calculations of the risks involved. Many of our allies acknowledge the threat, but they don’t feel particularly exposed to it.”

In the case of Spain, Hoehn argued that after the Madrid terrorist bombings, the Spanish government came to see its “exposure” to the threat of terrorism magnified by its support for the United States in Iraq, and thus Madrid decided to withdraw its troops from the Iraq coalition. Conversely, South Korea has been more willing to stick it out in Iraq because it feels exposed to the risk of aggression from North Korea, and thus is eager to keep the United States committed to Seoul’s defense. “Risk exposure also helps explain Japan’s behavior as well,” said Hoehn. “Japan has proven very helpful in Iraq because Tokyo is determined to maintain the U.S. commitment to its security in Asia, because it feels exposed to threats from North Korea and China.”

Anne-Marie Slaughter

The United States is more effective on the world stage when it operates within a multilateral institutional framework, whether that is supplied by the United Nations, NATO or ASEAN in the case of Asia, said Anne-Marie Slaughter, Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. A strategy of using multilateral institutions to increase legitimacy, however, does not preclude using “coalitions of the willing” to conduct actual operations.

“When you go to the United Nations for authorization for military action, for instance, it’s not as if the whole United Nations participates operationally,” she said. “Even when NATO went to war over Kosovo, not all the NATO allies were involved operationally in equal measure. The pertinent question, then, is how to maximize our chances of getting the broadest authorization for action – and in that regard the United Nations is a good place to at least start – and then how to best sustain effective coalitions of the willing within that institutional framework.”

To increase the chances in the future of getting broad authorization, Slaughter argued for pressuring the United Nations to reform its procedures for authorizing the use of force. “We need to change the incentives for the Security Council to act to authorize force, and that may well involve changing the voting rules,” she said. The U.N.’s operative theory of authorizing action only in cases of self-defense against armed attack has been stretched to the breaking point, she noted, by cases such as Somalia, Haiti and Rwanda.

“The lesson of the 1990s and cases such as Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and now Darfur, is that we need to change the rules to recognize that it is the basic responsibility of all governments to protect their own people from crimes against humanity,” said Slaughter. “Even [U.N. Secretary General] Kofi Annan has said we need to rewrite the rules regarding military interventions for humanitarian purposes.”

Given the circumstances of the 9/11 attacks and the growing threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Slaughter also argued for debate on the legitimacy of pre-emptive or preventive military action in some cases. Under present doctrines of self-defense accepted by the United Nations, pre-emptive action is allowed only in the case of an “imminent” attack. Both the Bush administration and the European Union have issued strategy documents making the case for pre-emptive action under somewhat broader guidelines.

“The United Nations High-Level Panel recently noted that in the world we now live in, some threats can require the use of force even before they become ‘imminent,’ because you might not be able to act on the threat after it has materialized,” said Slaughter. “So the U.N. is obviously offering a bargain to the United States: If you will agree to come to the U.N. Security Council for authorization, the Security Council will agree to be more proactive in authorizing the use of force.”

In terms of United Nations reforms, Slaughter argued for incentives that would encourage the Security Council to act proactively. “For instance, the United States should make clear that there are institutional alternatives to the Security Council if it decides not to act, which is essentially what happened in the case of Kosovo. When it became clear the Security Council wouldn’t act, the United States went to NATO,” she said. “Later when the United States raised the crisis in East Timor at the Security Council, and made it clear that it would take the matter to another regional forum if the Security Council didn’t act, China abstained rather than see the Security Council rendered irrelevant.”

As an additional potential fallback in such instances, Slaughter suggested possibility strengthening a ‘League of Democracies’ caucus within the United Nations which might act lacking full Security Council agreement. Other proposals include a Canadian idea to expand the G-8 grouping of industrial giants to a “G-20” that represented 80 to 90 percent of the world’s gross domestic product, and could act in concert when shared interests are threatened.

Other reform proposals which could strengthen the role of multilateral institutions include changing the rules on the Security Council governing when vetoes could be exercised by the permanent five, and perhaps even weighting voting to reflect the size and strength of individual nations, much like voting is weighted within the European Union based partially on population.

Slaughter also called for post-conflict reconstruction strategies and capabilities as a way to answer the concerns automatically raised when the use of military force is suggested. “We do better when there is a strategy for winning the peace, whether you’re talking about rebuilding after a conflict or strengthening a state after a civil war,” she said. “And while we have a plethora of U.N. agencies that can help in such circumstances, what is lacking is a whole mid-level infrastructure at the national level of officials and organizations that can be tapped and rapidly integrated as required into such reconstruction projects.”

Question and Answer

In the question-and-answer session, Robert Keohane of Princeton University addressed the issue of “shared values” among allies, noting that such values are rarely an issue between democratic allies. “The problem comes with non-democratic allies, because any security commitments we make with them tend to conflict with our expressed values in terms of democracy and freedom,” he said. “That’s where the trouble starts.”

On the issue of whether the United States was willing to make the concessions necessary to operate within the confines of multilateral institutions, Anne-Marie Slaughter of Princeton University noted that during the Cold War, the United States largely accepted those constraints in order to win more international support for its policies. “We were willing to make that trade-off in the past,” she said. “In terms of Iraq, if the Bush administration and American people draw the lesson that it’s worked just fine, there will be no incentive to accept future constraints from multilateral institutions. If, on the other hand, they draw the lesson from Iraq that this conflict has cost the United States a fortune, and that we almost failed because of a lack of legitimacy and the international support that goes with it, we might decide its worth jumping through some hoops in order to win international support the next time.”

Casualty Aversion and an Iraq Syndrome

The “conventional wisdom” that the American public is casualty phobic came to affect the U.S. military and the body politic in the 1990s, Panel V experts argued, and can be traced back to the U.S. military withdrawals in the face of casualties in Beirut and Mogadishu, and its adoption of “casualty avoidance” tactics in the Kosovo war. That perception of a superpower unwilling to pay the sacrifices of war eventually encouraged challengers such as Slobodan Milosevic, Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, all of whom voiced the belief that killing a few hundred U.S. soldiers or citizens would force an American retreat in the world. As all have since discovered in the meantime, much to their consternation, the whole notion of American casualty phobia was probably based as much in myth as in fact.

Christopher Gelpi

The conventional wisdom that the American public is casualty “phobic” can be traced back to U.S. military withdrawals from Beirut in 1983 and Mogadishu in 1991, in both cases as the result of sustaining casualties (241 Marines died as the result of a terrorist bombing in Lebanon, and 19 U.S. Army Rangers were killed in Somalia in a firefight), argued Christopher Gelpi, Associate Professor of Political Science at Duke University. In the 1999 Kosovo war, Gelpi pointed out, U.S. commanders in NATO fought a war using tactics designed to help insure that not a single American aircrew member or soldier was killed.

“The perception that the United States was unwilling to accept casualties seemed to encourage challengers around the world,” said Gelpi. “There’s evidence that Slobodan Milosevic, Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein all bought into the idea that if they just killed a few hundred American soldiers, they could prevail. Unfortunately for them, that idea runs counter to academic analyses suggesting that American ‘casualty phobia’ is simply not true.”

As an example, Gelpi cited data that tracked George Bush’s approval rating through the Iraq war. The Duke research broke the conflict down into three distinct periods, and noted three distinct patterns in terms of casualties and their affect on presidential approval. During major combat operations, rising casualties actually correlate with rising approval ratings for Bush due most likely to a “rally around the commander” phenomenon. In the insurgency phase of the Iraq conflict, rising casualties correlated with falling approval ratings for President Bush, controlling for factors such as the economy, media coverage and a spike in approval around the time of the capture of Saddam Hussein. After the transfer of sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government, researchers found no statistical relationship between casualties and presidential approval, positive or negative. Their conclusion was that “expectation of success” was the driving factor in all three phases of the conflict. Thus, during major combat the public “knows” the United States is going to win the war. During the insurgency, however, public doubts increased about the success of the mission. The transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis seemed to moderate those doubts in the public mind.

“The data suggests that the ‘media frame’ and context has a more substantial effect on presidential approval than casualties,” said Gelpi. “After the handoff of sovereignty to Iraq in June of 2004, you also saw that increased casualties failed to drag down the president’s approval rating because the transfer of authority was considered an important marker of success that made the American public less sensitive to casualties,” he said. “The most important factor in terms of the American public’s tolerance for casualties, in fact, may well be their judgment of whether or not the United States is likely to succeed.”

In terms of respondents to polls on casualties and the Iraq war, Gelpi broke them down into four groups. The “Vietnam Syndrome” cohort was strongly against the war; the “Bush Base” cohort thought that the United States was right to go into Iraq, and believed that we were going to win the conflict; the “Noble Failure” cohort believed the decision to go into Iraq was correct, but they doubted the United States was going to win; and the “Pottery Barn” cohort thought it was wrong to go into Iraq, but they were optimistic U.S. forces would succeed.

“Somewhat surprisingly, we found the ‘Pottery Barn’ group were substantially more willing to tolerate casualties than the ‘Noble Failure’ cohort,” said Gelpi. “That suggests that the perceived

likelihood of success was a more important factor in the willingness to tolerate casualties. Public willingness to tolerate casualties also varied significantly over time depending on events on the ground. The clear implication for policy makers is that if they want to maintain public support for an operation, they should focus less on casualty-free operations and more on justifying the use of force and making an operation a success.”

A final key indicator of the public’s willingness to tolerate casualties, Gelpi said, was whether the United States actions had significant international support. “More than 40 percent of those polled said that the United States should hold off from taking action if it can’t get international support, so that’s an important indicator of public support,” he said.

Albert C Pierce

Noted Prussian military theoretician Carl von Clausewitz insisted that there should be an “iron linkage” between means and ends in warfare, i.e., that the likely costs of the conflict should be proportionate with the goals, noted Albert C. Pierce, Director of the Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics at the U.S. Naval Academy, “The greater the ends, the greater the price a nation should be willing to pay in pursuit of war,” said Pierce. “In other words, the value of the object of war should determine the sacrifices a nation is willing to make in order to achieve it.”

Under Clausewitz’s construct, the U.S. government and the American people might well have been reacting rationally in Vietnam, and after the barracks bombing in Beirut in 1983, when they pressed for a withdrawal of U.S. forces. “Clausewitz argued that once the expenditure and sacrifice of a conflict exceeded the value of the objective, a nation should sue for peace,” said Pierce. “In both Vietnam and Beirut, the decision might have been made that the costs had exceeded the value of the limited goals.”

In the 1990s, Pierce argued that “casualty aversion syndrome” came to infect not the American public, but U.S. political leadership, and perhaps the professional military. “Political leaders in the 1990s developed a full-scale allergy to U.S. military casualties, to the point that whenever casualties were sustained they practically broke out in hives,” said Pierce. “Unfortunately, I think the allergy to casualties that afflicted U.S. political leaders came to infect the professional military as well.”

As evidence, Pierce pointed to the Kosovo war, when a U.S.-led NATO bombed Serbian forces from an altitude of 15,000 feet or higher – outside the range of Serb anti-aircraft systems – and refused to even consider the introduction of ground forces to stop brutal ethnic cleansing. “Under Clausewitz’s construct, the objective of preventing genocide in Kosovo should logically have translated into a considerable tolerance for allied casualties,” said Pierce. “Quite to the contrary, however, the strategy NATO adopted elevated casualty avoidance over accomplishment of the mission.”

As was the case with Bosnia and Haiti, once U.S. forces were sent into Kosovo, the emphasis placed on “force protection” sometimes seemed to dwarf mission accomplishment. “That idea that force protection trumped mission accomplishment was particularly troublesome, because it showed a professional military that was abandoning values deeply embedded in the profession, namely the primacy of mission accomplishment,” said Pierce.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he said, the American public once again showed in terms of its support for the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq that it was willing to see men and women in uniform killed in pursuit of a goal of destroying those who had attacked or were threatening the United States. “Although I’m in the group who says the jury is still out on whether the decision in Afghanistan to ‘contract out’ the pursuit of Bin Laden to local Afghans came from a desire to keep U.S. casualties low,” said Pierce. “I think it might have been one factor.”

Extended combat in Iraq has convinced Pierce that the U.S. military, at least, has put any undue “casualty aversion” behind it. “I see no evidence that military commanders are casualty averse in Iraq,” he said. “In fact, they seem to be managing continuing casualties at all levels of command. The fact that the American public by and large has stayed behind the Iraq effort, despite all the dire warnings of the pundits, also suggests to me that Bush’s determination and strong political leadership have trumped any impulse to casualty aversion.”

In a cautionary note, Pierce postulated three ways that public support for U.S. operations in Iraq could still collapse: “The American people could come to believe we’re not making enough progress, and therefore the costs in lives is not achieving the stated goals, and you could start to see people succumb to the siren song of ‘bring the troops home,’” said Pierce. “Americans could also decide at some point that the cumulative cost in casualties has climbed higher than the objective is worth. Finally, Americans could change their minds about the political objectives, especially since these have changed from capturing weapons of mass destruction, to severing Iraq’s ties to Al Qaeda, to now bringing democracy to Iraq. Just because they were in for a dime doesn’t mean the American people are necessarily in for a dollar. At some point the

administration could raise the price again, and the American people could decide they want to talk it over.”

Philip Everts

The whole idea of a “casualty aversion” syndrome had swung from accepted conventional wisdom in the 1990s, to something closer to an urban myth today, noted Philip Everts, Director Emeritus of the Institute for International Studies at Leiden University. “That’s not saying that the truth lies somewhere in between, but there are some puzzles surrounding this subject that have not been altogether sorted out,” he said.

Everts broke down the public’s perception about war and its inevitable cost in lives into distinct pre-war and war phases. In the pre-war phase, he argued, the decisive factor in terms of public support is international legitimacy. Polls conducted by the German Marshall Fund, for instance, revealed that both a majority of Americans and Europeans felt that the United States shouldn’t go to war without authorization from the United Nations. “Legitimacy is a vital factor in determining whether people think war is justified,” he said. “We also gathered public attitudes towards various conflicts, and found that even despite casualties, public support can remain strong. That suggests only a partial linkage between casualties and support.”

In concluding, Everts said that the concept of “casualty aversion” was “something of a myth perpetuated by politicians who want support for their views, or cover for avoiding difficult choices. Basically, the popularity of this myth of casualty phobia derives from it providing a good alibi for politicians who want to avoid tough decisions.”

Walter B Slocombe

While it is addressed as problem to be overcome by policy makers, “casualty aversion” is fundamentally a natural and proper reaction, noted Walter Slocombe, a former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy now with the law firm of Caplin & Drysdale. “In some sense, everyone who is sensible is casualty averse,” he said. “It’s also certainly true that military leaders and their civilian masters in most democracies today are much less willing to accept the idea of using troops as cannon fodder, or to espouse doctrines of winning wars through sheer attrition as

happened during the Civil War and World War I. That attitude that leaders can be indifferent to casualties is wholly unacceptable today.”

Slocombe also took issue, however, with the idea that in the 1990s the U.S. military placed casualty avoidance on a higher plane than mission accomplishment. “The evidence supporting this idea is military leaders saying things like, ‘Force protection is Job One.’ In actual fact, however, I don’t know of a single instance when force protection was promoted to the point of actually jeopardizing the mission. If force protection was the highest priority, our forces would just stay in Kansas. Those kinds of things are said more to remind troops that there are people out there whose aim is to get them.”

Slocombe also supports Clausewitz’s maxim that at some point the cost of war in terms of casualties can exceed the value of the stated goals. “At some point you have to say ‘Wait, this might have looked like a good idea at the beginning, but it clearly no longer is a good idea.’ The most obvious example would be World War I,” said Slocombe. While there might have been reasonable rationales to support a decision by the great powers to launch the war, he said, none could rationally sustain a conflict that cost the lives of more than one millions of soldiers and decimated an entire generation of young men. When casualties reach that sort of level, “aversion” takes on a whole new meaning.

“How much better might European history read if the great powers had reached a compromise peace in 1916?” said Slocombe. But even at those casualty levels, it may make sense to persevere. “That was the main contrast between World War I and World War II. It’s easy to argue that some kind of compromise peace with the German Kaiser was acceptable. It’s very hard to argue that a compromise peace with Hitler was acceptable.”

Some of the case histories used to support the concept of “casualty aversion,” he said, are also too complex to explain in a strict casualties-equalled-withdrawal construct. “Everyone points to Somalia as the quintessential example of casualty aversion producing a retreat, but the fact is that even before the ‘Black Hawk Down’ firefight, the Clinton administration was looking for a way out of that situation,” he said. “Nor was the pressure to cut-and-run coming from the American public, which showed in polls that it might be willing to stay the course. Rather the pressure to withdraw was coming from Congress. So there’s a lot of really bad history and analyses written on this subject.”

In the case of the Kosovo conflict, Slocombe said that the assumption going in was not that the NATO alliance would suffer no casualties, but rather that NATO would likely lose on average one aircraft each day – which had been the Gulf War pace of losses. “We knew that Milosevic had bought significant air defense assets, so we assumed that like the Persian Gulf War we would probably lose an aircraft in each day of fighting, though not necessarily the crew in every case” said Slocombe, who was inside the Pentagon during the Kosovo war. There was also an understanding inside the Pentagon, he said, that the graduated approach the alliance took in phasing the war would likely insure that it lasted for quite some time. In fact NATO aircraft were hit frequently, two were shot down (though the pilots were rescued), and the Serbs captured a couple of US soldiers on the Macedonian border. It was far from risk-free.

“The real story of the Kosovo War was that the way it developed, it was a real challenge and political problem to maintain the support both of allies and the U.S. Congress for an operation that many people just thought was wrong,” said Slocombe. “If you think the war is wrong in the first place, you will naturally argue that it’s going to cost too many lives.”

Slocombe also believes that NATO Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Wesley Clark’s concerns about casualties had less to do with “casualty phobia,” and more to do with his determination to preserve the solidarity of the alliance and the support of an ambivalent Congress through a very difficult operation. “Recall that the final result was a complete victory for NATO in which we happily, and somewhat luckily, did not lose any air crews,” said Slocombe. “The idea we conducted the war with the overriding goal of avoiding any casualties or taking any risks, however, is simply wrong.”

Anti-Americanism and responses to American Power

As the leader of the Western democracies, the United States is well acquainted with the idea that the attitudes of a people are generally reflected, however imperfectly, in government policy. Thus the phenomenon of growing anti-Americanism even among traditional U.S. allies is worrisome. Witness the opposition of France and Germany to U.S. policy on Iraq, or the denial by Turkey of base access during the war. However, the question of what to do about growing global anti-Americanism tends to break down along political lines, Panel VI experts noted, with conservatives arguing that it is the result of “superpower envy” and thus inevitable, and liberals arguing that it is the result of policies they oppose, and thus the fault of the Bush administration.

Ole Holsti

In elected democracies the attitudes of the public are supposed to be reflected, however unevenly, in official government policy. That phenomenon suggests that widespread anti-Americanism even among traditional U.S. allies can have tangible and decidedly negative effects, argued Ole Holsti, the George Allen Professor of Political Science at Duke University.

As an example, Holsti pointed to the unpopularity of the Iraq war with the Turkish public, and the subsequent decision by the Turkish parliament not to allow the U.S. military to launch a northern front in the war from bases in Turkey. Conversely, however, the Italian government staunchly supported the Bush administration on Iraq, even though the war was very unpopular among the Italian people.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks an unprecedented amount of international polling had been conducted to gauge public reaction overseas to U.S. policies. Many respondents have been asked whether they had “favorable” or “unfavorable” views of the United States. “Polls consistently show that over time favorable judgments of the United States have been declining,” said Holsti. “That was particularly true in countries with large Islamic populations such as Turkey, Morocco, and Indonesia. The one exception seems to be Nigeria, where approval of the United States remains high. But Nigeria is the exception among Muslim nations.”

In terms of supporting the U.S.-led war on terrorism, international respondents were largely favorable in 2002, he said, but public opinion abroad started to shift in the run-up to the Iraq war. “Many publics overseas made a clear distinction between the Afghanistan conflict, where the United States was seen as justifiably going after the perpetrators of 9/11, and the Iraq conflict, which many people overseas saw as illegitimate,” said Holsti. “The exception was Russia, where [President Vladimir] Putin repeatedly linked the conflict in Chechnya to the broader war on terrorism, bolstering support for the broader war among Russians.”

When asked how sensitive the United States was to the opinions and concerns of their own countries, many respondents said, in essence, “not very.” “There has been a sharp decline in the number of people who believe the United States takes their concerns into consideration, whether it’s Canadians who object to U.S. soft-wood tariffs, or Mexicans who object to U.S. immigration policy, or Turks who oppose U.S. policy towards Iraq,” said Holsti.

In the case of Turkey and Iraq, he noted that high-ranking U.S. officials implied at the time that the Turkish military should have interceded to block the Turkish parliament from denying U.S. troops base access, as it had intervened during past crises. “Turkey is a long-time ally which has been moving down the road towards greater democracy, and in this instance it was acting like a sovereign democracy and reflecting the views of more than 80 percent of the Turkish people,” said Holsti. “And as a result a high-ranking U.S. official essentially called for a military coup.”

In discussing the underlying reasons and responses to growing anti-Americanism, Holsti pointed to one theory that the United States was hated because it is rich and successful. If that was true, he noted, no policy could reverse the trend. Another theory was that anti-Americanism was spreading because of a failure of U.S. diplomacy. That would suggest more funding and focus on U.S. diplomacy.

“Newt Gingrich wrote an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine arguing that the State Department was essentially disloyal to President Bush, and the job of U.S. public diplomacy should be turned over to American business executives who had been extraordinary successful in marketing the U.S. brand overseas,” said Holsti. “That’s somewhat ironic, in that when Gingrich was in power the Gingrich revolution led to the cutting of funding for the U.S. Information Agency by 40 percent, and it was folded into the State Department where its influence was muted.”

Helle Dale

The United States is unique among history’s great powers in caring so much how the rest of the world views it, suggested Helle Dale, Director of Foreign Policy and Defense Studies at the Heritage Foundation and the former editorial page editor for the *Washington Times*. “Partly because we’re a democracy, Americans are the kind of people who worry about how the world looks at them,” she said. “We would like the rest of the world to like America, as well as respect its power. I’m just not sure that’s entirely possible to achieve at this point in history.”

Like a number of commentators, Dale noted that the Bush administration has in its second term reached out and tried to mend diplomatic and alliance fences that were damaged by the Iraq war. “Clearly the Bush administration has decided it would be a good thing to get more moral traction in the world, and it is using diplomacy to try and bring allies onboard, which is a good idea,” said Dale. Given that the wave of anti-Americanism is partially caused by “superpower envy” and is a “structural problem reflecting where we are at this point in history,” Dale doesn’t believe it can be wholly eradicated. “But we need to consider whether the phenomenon is dangerous or not.

Certainly it can be highly inconvenient,” she said. “In the case of French and Turkish opposition to our position on Iraq, it had a real impact.”

The U.S. government should focus its limited tools in the realm of public outreach to the Middle East, Dale argued, where the threat from anti-Americanism is the greatest. “We saw with 9/11 how dangerous the rising level of anti-Americanism is among extreme elements in the Islamic world,” she said. “We thus have to look to the Muslim world and try and drain away support for Osama Bin Laden’s message of hatred. Clearly, that’s a very different sentiment and degree of anti-Americanism than we see in France or Germany.”

Like other commentators, Dale noted that the U.S. government’s public diplomacy tools had declined since the end of the Cold War, and may need to be revitalized. “We should more clearly define responsibilities and lines of authority for public diplomacy within the State Department, and encourage more public outreach by U.S. embassies overseas,” she said. An upcoming Heritage Foundation report, meanwhile, will show how U.S. aid and support for victims of the tsunami disaster in Asia had helped stem the tide of anti-Americanism. “Our help following the tsunami disaster had an enormous impact in reversing anti-American opinion.”

Robert Satloff

After spending two years in Morocco and traveling in the Middle East, Robert Satloff, Executive Director of the Washington Institute, said he had adopted a “contrarian view” that anti-Americanism is actually not as bad as pundits would have the public believe. “There is a whole cottage industry in the United States devoting a lot of intellectual firepower to the topic of anti-Americanism, which is good enough reason to question whether the thesis is right,” said Satloff. “From my own personal experience, I would say we need to look more at what people do, and less at what they say in polls. At least in the Middle East, I subscribe to the insight of [Israeli Labor Party leader] Shimon Peres, who said that polls are like perfume -- they are wonderful to smell, but poisonous to drink. On the issue of anti-Americanism, we’ve gotten ourselves practically hooked intravenously to polls.”

Part of the problem with polls, said Satloff, is how subjective they are. “I actually read the raw data of one Pew Poll, and I came away with the sense that there was a lot of misrepresentation and outright fabrication involved in it,” he said. “When you ask the question of whether the United States was credible in promoting democracy on a global level, for instance, you get an obvious answer of ‘no.’ When you asked the same question of whether the United States was

credible in promoting democracy in the respondent's own country, the number of `yes' replies was much higher."

Looking beyond polls to other indicators of support or opposition to the United States, said Satloff, reveals a much less grim the picture. Satloff said he studied such factors as the number and size of public protests against the United States; the number of students from a given country enrolling in U.S. universities; the willingness to invest in the United States or buy products from American corporations; and the willingness to accept U.S. aid money. "So far my evidence suggests that anti-Americanism is not nearly as bad as we think," said Satloff. "The bottom line is that we need to be very careful before we assume that this wave of anti-Americanism is causing people to act any differently."

The proper issue is not whether the United States would rather be liked or feared, said Satloff, but rather whether it gets a fair hearing in the court of world public opinion, and whether it is successful in creating as many partnerships as possible to accomplish specific American initiatives.

"We need to put aside all this self-flagellation when it comes to addressing anti-Americanism, and focus in a practical and mature way on getting a fair hearing in the court of public opinion, and in building partnerships," said Satloff. "That is the best path for addressing whatever problem we have in terms of anti-Americanism in the Middle East region especially."

Robert Keohane

The notion that increasing anti-Americanism is caused by "superpower envy" is discredited by data which clearly shows that before the Iraq war many more countries held favorable views of the United States, said Robert Keohane of the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, and the Center for Advanced Study at Stanford, California. "So it's not the case that this has always been a problem at the level it is today," he said. "We've also seen that in both Europe and Islamic countries, attitudes towards `Americans' are more favorable than they are towards the United States, and attitudes towards the United States are more positive than they are towards U.S. policies."

Keohane noted that where you sit on the political spectrum tends to color your interpretation of polls that reveal growing anti-Americanism. “The political left takes comfort from polls that suggest anti-Americanism is the direct result of U.S. policies they oppose, and they note that it got much worse with the invasion of Iraq. For the left, it’s not that we are hated for who we are, but rather for what we do,” said Keohane. “The political right tends to think we get criticized because the United States is envied around the world, and we should just be proud of who we are.”

For policy makers who are confident in the basic soundness of their approach, however, Keohane argued that putting too much weight in the polls showing anti-American sentiment growing could be a mistake. “There’s some empirical evidence that policy makers are better off ignoring polls, and should focus instead on facts on the ground,” he said. “Anti-Americanism peaked in Japan in the 1960s, for instance, but U.S. policy makers stuck to their policies, and now anti-Americanism in Japan is at perhaps its lowest historical ebb. Anti-Americanism rose significantly in Europe in the 1980s, reflecting opposition to Ronald Reagan’s policies, but Reagan eventually reached out and signed arms control agreements with the Soviets, and the anti-American sentiment dropped. So it’s not clear to me that policy makers who are confident in their policies should change them in the face of some unpopularity.”

The longer term danger, Keohane said, is that anti-Americanism will become so entrenched that it takes on the attributes of a traditional bias or prejudice. “At that point it would be resistant even to evidence that U.S. policy was working or changing,” he said. “Without more studies and empirical evidence, however, we just don’t know how pervasive or serious anti-American bias is becoming.”

Question and Answer

In the question-and-answer session, Ole Holsti worried about a “tipping point” where general disaffection with U.S. policy turns into disaffection with American society in general. Once that point is reached, he warned, disaffection with the United States in general could infect viewpoints on U.S. policies specifically, in essence creating a self-perpetuating and vicious cycle. “That’s a potential problem that I think we really need to worry about,” said Holsti, who rejected the idea that the United States is hated simply for what it represents. “That’s the council of despair, because we’re never going to stop being a rich and powerful nation. That’s essentially arguing that there is nothing we can do about the phenomenon of anti-Americanism.”

Robert Satloff compared anti-American fervor in the Middle East today versus during the 1980s. “When Reagan bombed Libya, there were mass protests in the Middle East and our embassy was torched in Pakistan,” he said. “In contrast, when you look at Arab reaction to the Iraq war, the number of substantial anti-American protests has risen from an average of fewer than 20 per year in recent years to roughly 30 in 2003. That’s not a big jump.”