



Eagle Forum Report

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Defending American Interests

WHAT AMERICAN LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE

by Hon. Keith Self, Texas Collin County Judge, U.S. Army, ret'd., served in Afghanistan and Qatar, and chief negotiator at NATO for Allied Forces in Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo, Emergency Action Officer at Single Integrated Operational Plan operations, administered U.S.-Israeli Bilateral Training Program, and EO deploying Small Atomic Demolition Munition.

The world experienced a major shift around 1990 when the Soviet Union collapsed, and we moved from a bi-polar world controlled by the United States and the Soviet Union to an uncertain world order. For a short period, America was the world's only superpower.

Soon after, our own retreat from the world, in the form of a "peace dividend," created a power vacuum around the world. We are now reaping the consequences of a chaotic world, including our own never-ending conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We also witnessed the rise of new major powers, primarily China.

The question at that time was whether power would evolve to a new multi-polar world featuring more major powers, or instead, devolve to non-state regional actors with diminished roles for nation states. The answer today is "yes". Both have come to pass, creating a confusing picture for those who grew up in the simple but dangerous bi-polar world of the Cold War.

Today the world's attention is focused on two very dangerous regions, each with its own personality and actors. While these two regions garner

the most attention, much of the rest of the world is in flux or experiencing unrest.

The Middle East represents the most complex region that can be viewed through any number of prisms; Muslim states/Jewish state, Sunni/Shia, OPEC/U.S. shale oil, Islam's internal struggle to enter the 21st century, myriad state and non-state threats surrounding Israel, Iran's quest for nuclear weapons, and of course, the constant theme of terror. All the disparate prisms are interconnected and intertwined.

Our vital relationship with Israel is critical. Israel's democracy represents what every country in the region can become if they acknowledge the right of Israel to exist and peacefully transform to allow government control by the people. Israel stands both as a condemnation of the Muslim nations and as an example to them; the best of which are the Arab Muslim Members of the Knesset. However, modern societal fissures are impacting domestic Israeli conditions with uncertain results.

Israel has a nuclear arsenal. I have traveled to Israel many times and worked with the Israeli Defense Forces, and I continue to believe that Israel would defend itself with nuclear weapons if necessary.



Iran is both an actor in the Middle East opposite Saudi Arabia and on the world stage in a broader worldwide nuclear and terror context. One of the more scientifically advanced nations of the greater Middle East, Iran is absolutely capable of developing nuclear weapons in the near future. The fact that the U.S. and Israel both have nuclear weapons drives the Iranian aspiration to acquire them as well. The nuclear agreement and covert operations have delayed nuclear weapons

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development, but when their nuclear capabilities can support their harsh rhetoric, we will have to decide what risk we are willing to accept. As their supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei ages and public unrest bubbles, there may be an opportunity for Iran to back off its harsh public positions and its support of terror in order to provide more freedom to its citizens.

Our national interest is that nuclear weapons are never again used as weapons of war. Iran is a viable threat in the Middle East. If the United States does not deal with the rising threat of nuclear Iran and potential internal political changes do not reduce the perceived threat, the regional actors may have to deal with Iran themselves as Iranian capabilities grow to match its rhetoric.

The United States has handled terror much better than Europe, which runs the risk of greatly expanded terrorism because of their inability to perceive the magnitude of the threat. I am optimistic about our future, because I believe that terror will not conquer the West. And when terror is defeated, it will signal to Islam that a culture that condones terror, female mutilation, and honor killings cannot take a seat on the civilized world stage. I am less sanguine about the ignorance in America of Sharia as a comprehensive culture that undercuts our ideals of the dignity of every person and the rule of law.

North Korea is truly dangerous. Our worst scenario has long been a madman with nuclear weapons, and

that is exactly what we have in North Korea. China has the most immediate influence over Kim Jong-Un, but the question is whether China is willing to exercise its influence. We must use every element of national power to influence North Korea, or risk the loss of South Korea to regional war. A regional war always carries the risk to expand beyond that region.

The Chinese regime is anti-democratic, no friend of free markets, and a cyber bully. Thousands of Chinese military are flooding the Third World to control raw materials. China is committed to building a true blue-water navy, and has largely succeeded in building a viable threat to our Pacific Fleet.

However, China has its own challenges, particularly due to its one-child policy that dramatically skewed its demographics. China is aging, just as much of the developed world is aging. The key difference, though, is that Europe, the U.S., and Japan are wealthy. China's general population is not yet wealthy, so sustaining an aging population is increasingly problematic.

In closing, short of global thermonuclear war, I believe the most likely existential threat to America is a major cyber-attack on government systems, followed closely by a nuclear electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack high over America that would destroy much of the electrical equipment across wide swaths of our nation. If launched from a southerly trajectory, our tracking and defens-

es are minimal. An EMP attack will cause little physical damage, but all unshielded electric equipment will cease to function. For example, the generator that you bought to provide electricity when the power goes off would not run, unless you protect the electronic controls from EMP radiation. Food, fuel, and water could not be transported. Your new SUV won't start, and you couldn't get fuel in any case. Electronic communications would not exist. Our entire society runs on electricity, so total destruction of electronic controls and devices would devastate our civilization with massive death and, potentially, the collapse of society.

By contrast, many of the topics that consume much of our attention, the social contract challenges, climate change, and federal land use all divert our attention and cause decay in our national defense capabilities.

The world is much more complex and interrelated than ever before. By any measure, as weapons capabilities and ranges grow, as ancient rivalries fester, as increased expectations in the Third World emerge, the world is not getting any safer. Our response must be a dedicated vigilance with discernment of the capabilities of our major competitors. We cannot know for certain their intentions. We must not be naïve.

"The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance." (Irish lawyer and politician John Philpot Curran, 1790.) 

STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

Phyllis Schlafly knew that a good defense is a good offense. Beginning in the 1980s, she and her Eagles whom she trained argued for a missile defense system (a.k.a. Star Wars) that could shoot down incoming missiles and protect America from rogue nations such as North Korea.

Last month, the U.S. military successfully intercepted a test intercontinental ballistic missile over the Pacific Ocean. Boeing built the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense in Huntsville, Alabama. This key test shows that the U.S. finally has a credible defense and deterrent shield against a very real threat that is hostile to the U.S. Our founder, Phyllis Schlafly, was prescient on the need for the U.S. to maintain military superiority in the world.

Anne Schlafly Cori • Chairman, Eagle Forum

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