

Peace On Earth Is a Real Challenge.
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American foreign policy has almost always been bipartisan. Responsible Democrats and Republicans faced the contentious Cold War together for half a century, successfully, as the outcome illustrated. But foreign policy is always the most difficult of issues for the American public to fully understand. It is difficult to deal with countries that we really cannot like, but must deal with anyway.

o Europe. Despite the efforts of elite Europeans to create something like a United States of Europe, the EU is obviously not that. Europe is not a unit; it is an assortment of countries with different histories, values, and languages. America's most natural partner is Great Britain, from whom we inherited our political and religious freedoms.

Most of Western Europe has only come by these values of participatory government, freedom of religion, free press, and independent courts, since the end of World War II. Although most of them had such values after World War I, they lost democracy to totalitarian Nazis and Communists. Real freedom and security for them is only a little more than a half-century old, owed entirely to us. They have never before been so peaceful.

Eastern Europe has a distinctly different history from the West, and to this day our dealings with Russia and the former satellites (Poland excepted) are prickly. Participatory government is not part of their heritage. Russia, whose Communist state collapsed, is still resentful of us and their democracy seems to be only window dressing. Russia will continue to be a difficult associate, but as their population continues to melt down, they will choose covert rather than overt war.

o China. During the 19th century, we and European empire-builders took advantage of China's political weakness to usurp trade benefits, to China's detriment (something they don't forget). But during World War II, we helped them in their deadly struggle against Japan, a country that behaved far worse than any imperial powers from Europe ever had. At the end of the war, an insurgent party, the Communists, prevailed in a civil war and China became the world's largest Communist state. Our policy then was to cut relations (as we did when Cuba became Communist), a policy that left us with no influence over events for fifty years.

Since President Nixon boldly (over the howls of his own Republicans) reestablished relations with China, our policy was to make certain that China and the Soviet Union were not on the same page. China, although still a totalitarian state, has largely freed up the economic sector, producing enormous wealth for them. They loan us money (undoubtedly more than is good for us) but in return, we give them a safe place to park that money. Neither country is in a position to seriously harm the other for some time to come. But our relationship must be carefully nurtured while simultaneously encouraging them to become a respectable modern power.

o Muslim World. This swath of countries share Islam, but often little else. Arab Muslims have a common history and language; Iranians have a history much older than their Muslim history; Pakistanis were once Hindu Indians, but converted to Islam. Malaysia and Indonesia (once Hindu) were the last converts to Islam and mostly practice \223Islam Lite.\224

However, flush with oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has created a totalitarian and militant form of Islam that has subverted all Muslim countries through brain-washing schools (Madrassas) that produce terrorists, terrorists who have even turned on their Saudi Arabian bankers. Most dangerous is Pakistan, a country with both nuclear weapons and a medieval religion. Militant Islam is creating bloody borders everywhere, from Africa to Thailand and Indonesia.

Dependence on Middle Eastern oil forces us to deal with Muslim countries that have no liberal democratic values. Islamism is just the latest of totalitarian ideologies that have been at war with liberal democracy for over a century. As such countries veer from totalitarian dictatorships to totalitarian Islam (watch Egypt), they will become ever more dangerous and dysfunctional. We must have no illusions about who they are.

As oil dependency ends, however, so will Militant Islam, not a moment too soon.

681 words

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