# Abiding American Policymaking to Overcome American Exceptionalism

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**Abstract:**
The thesis begins with the etymology of American exceptionalism and the way in which its connotation has changed throughout American history. This change demonstrates American exceptionalism's tainted definition due to its influence in foreign policy decision making. American foreign policies today, specifically toward and within the Middle East, are beset with missteps and ill-advised actions. These policies, thereby, contribute to a fertile soil within which detractors and enemies of the United States increasingly thrive. In order to illustrate the ill effect of these policies, this thesis provides the foreign policy examples of American involvement in Iraq, of damaging strategic messaging and diplomatic missions, and of military operations spanning administrations. In conclusion, an apologist posture to defend American foreign policies is not called for. However, a deep inward look toward the foreign policy framing and decision making process is necessary to adapt that policy and address the tension between U.S. ideologies and U.S. interests. A proposed solution is the development of policy gamers (analogous to military war gamers) familiar with the regions within the Middle East, who may act as subject matter experts and top-level advisors as they strategically plan for shaping current and future interactions within the Middle East. The desired effect is a U.S. foreign policy adapted to simultaneously support and further U.S. interests while recognizing its third-order impact of the nuanced and volatile cultures within the Arab and Muslim community, and the threat to the homeland created by this impact.

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ADAPTING AMERICAN POLICYMMAKING TO OVERCOME AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

By

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Adapting American Policymaking to Overcome American Exceptionalism

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes. (Or appropriate statement per the Academic Integrity Policy)

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ABSTRACT

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In conclusion, an apologist posture to defend American foreign policies is not called for. However, a deep inward look toward the foreign policy framing and decision making process is necessary to adapt that policy and address the tension between U.S. ideologies and U.S. interests. A proposed solution is the development of policy gamers (analogous to military war gamers) familiar with the regions within the Middle East, who may act as subject matter experts and top-level advisors as they strategically plan for shaping current and future interactions within the Middle East. The desired effect is a U.S. foreign policy adapted to simultaneously support and further U.S. interests while recognizing its third-order impact of the nuanced and volatile cultures within the Arab and Muslim community, and the threat to the homeland created by this impact.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

_Happily for America, happily, we trust, for the whole human race, they pursued a new and more noble course. They accomplished a revolution which has no parallel in the annals of human society. They reared the fabrics of governments which have no model on the face of the globe._¹

- James Madison

United States foreign policy makers and those who influence U.S. foreign policy travel a comfortable and well-worn path of American exceptionalism. American foreign policies dutifully export the nation’s ideals of freedom, democracy, and opportunity, and these well-meaning policies are understandably centered on American ideals, American security, and American interests abroad. This internal focus, however, distracts the foreign policy maker from prior in-depth consideration of the ramifications of these policies and their reverberations throughout the global community. Further, where those reverberations impact a fellow nation, the policies often lack appropriate consideration of the desires of that fellow nation, or the global community, writ large.

Nation-centric policies and the desire to influence other nations is commonplace and accepted state behavior. It is when that focus and desire ignores or marginalizes its implications that American exceptionalism emerges and begets animosity and enemies. American exceptionalism is defined here by frequent action, taken from perceived moral, ethical, and/or ideological high ground; it is action heedless of extra-national cultures, priorities, and rights to self-determination. For example, policy implementation labeled by America as globally beneficial, yet perceived or intended to benefit only the few. Relationships, as a result, become strained, intentions are questioned, and gaps open

avoid the indelible consequences of ill-informed engagement and action, and reaffirm America’s place as a flag bearer of modern civilization.

It is through well-informed and adept policy decisions that the words of anti-American conspiracy theorists and anti-democratic regimes or organizations of the Middle East will begin to lose their audience. In this silence, the United States could regain much of the respect and trust lost. Here, America would be afforded an opportunity to replace its reputation of “exceptional by exception” with that of an emissary of opportunity and a partner to the global Arab and Muslim community. Regardless of amicable or acrimonious ties between the U.S. and regional governments, it is this community, writ large, which must witness such demonstrations of adept and well-informed decisions.

Globalization brought with it a far-ranging audience. That (intended or unintended) global audience in its entirety, must be addressed because it is from its ranks that the next great ally and the next dealer of violence toward America will emerge.

The Etymology and History of American Exceptionalism

American exceptionalism is defined as many things, and justified through many irrefutable examples of national strength, of global leadership, and of concern for the well-being of the global community. Classically, American exceptionalism refers to the uniquely free nation’s founding as a republic inclusive of the personal freedoms afforded by a democracy - freedoms asserted by the Declaration of Independence, and conferred by the Constitution of the United States in the aftermath of the American Revolution.3

References to American exceptionalism evoke collective images of Puritan John

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unimpeded and in security, give the global Muslim and Arab community reason to believe America is no longer that force for good, but a force for its own good. Exceptionalism once meant a nation free from tyrannical rule and offering of bountiful opportunity.

Today, American exceptionalism represents a strategic culture of immunity from challenge, exemption from judgment, and of unquestionable moral high ground. Stanley Hoffman, Professor, emeritus at Harvard University, concludes American exceptionalism is the “the lofty feeling of democratic superiority and universal relevance [that] was perfectly compatible, in practice, with a pursuit of national interest and advantage...”

To others, who consider themselves victims of American exceptionalism, America’s unique nature, its strength and liberty has curdled into a sense of entitlement.

American exceptionalism’s depreciated definition finds example in the statement of Dmitry Minin, an on-line author for the Strategic Culture Foundation and very enthusiastic detractor:

The irrational, unfounded faith in exceptionalism does not let Americans see why others reject the United States hegemony or why its foreign policy evokes such indignation in different corners of the globe. It is viewed as hypocrisy, be it the issue of human rights or the US propensity to condemn others while turning a blind eye to the slip ups and gaffs of its foreign policy course...

Zealous though the author’s sentiment may be, there is truth to be gleaned from the underlying message: it is time for America to see itself through the world’s eyes. This is not to say that policy must now be forged and shaped by external rhetoric or by the will and interests of other nations. But, as the proclaimed last best hope of man on earth,

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CHAPTER 2: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM, THE EARLY YEARS

The United States grounded its ideology in ideas about liberty, yet practiced slavery. National myths, symbols, and ideologies portrayed the United States as a bounded, sacred, and timeless space, yet actual social practice revolved around territorial expansion and the search for boundless markets.¹

- George Lipsitz

The roots of American exceptionalism flourished in the fertile soil of a nation blessed with an abundance of resources and populated from the onset by men and women seeking and willing to work for a better situation; tens of thousands of immigrants seeking an improved life and opportunity.² Young America remained isolated from the wars of the world and selected at will when and where to become involved in international affairs. As George Washington foresaw in September of 1796, “If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off...when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.”³

At an impressionable age, America defeated the world’s supreme power and gained independence. Victory left a cautious but lasting impression of the nation’s ability to effect change; and of desire for perceived good to triumph over perceived evil. That desire has not faded with the coming maturity of the nation. Nor has the outward-looking

¹ David Noble, Foreword by George Lipsitz, Death of a nation: American culture and the end of exceptionalism, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xvi.
² It should be mentioned that within this process of creation, decidedly unexceptional actions took place. An ancient nation of natives was systematically displaced or eradicated; slavery was imported; women were not afforded a vote for nearly two centuries; and many who emigrated from the Old World brought with them their own biases, corruptions and self-interests. It is the state which emerged, perhaps in spite of itself, from an amalgamation of representatives from all corners of the world to form one democratic, nationalistic, and eventually powerful nation of equals which is undeniably exceptional within the annals of history.
rejected U.S. membership in the League of Nations [...] out of concern that it would draw the United States into European conflicts.” And “during the interwar period, the U.S. Government repeatedly chose non-entanglement over participation or intervention as the appropriate response to international questions.” But as the Depression faded and the homeland was attacked, and with its allies suffering, the Land of Opportunity began to realize the worth of the nation and its unique power for good abroad. This view survives today. A recent survey conducted by the Brookings Institution sheds light on much the same belief that surfaced among 20th century Americans. The survey found that 58 percent of Americans agree with the statement, “God has granted America a special role in human history.”

This American role was welcomed by Europeans in the 20th century. Today, however, America’s recent attempts to replay that role in operations and activities throughout the Middle East and Southwest Asia take on the flavor of aggression for the sake of American interests – not limited to security. Post WWII, American actions bore the mark of being motivated by a desire for the security and prosperity of global society. Today, that message is questioned by a skeptical audience within the Arab and Muslim community. These skeptics grew from American missteps and aggressions, from the narrative that the United States pre-emptively attacked Iraq and expanded operations in

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Melians warned the Athenians of the repercussions of an aggressive pursuit of national self-interests: “Does not this mean you are strengthening the enemies you have already and are forcing others to become your enemies even against their intentions and their inclinations?” As Melos did Athens, thus many American allies warn the nation’s foreign policy makers today.

In one sense, the degeneration of America’s image began with its emergence from isolationism and is traceable to the Monroe Doctrine, in which America warned European nations to not interfere with the affairs of the Western Hemisphere. “Articulated in President James Monroe’s seventh annual message to Congress on December 2, 1823. The European powers, according to Monroe, were obligated to respect the Western Hemisphere as the United States' sphere of interest.” Several decades later, victory in the Spanish-American War caused the United States to also inherit interests in Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Surrounding itself with a swath of near abroad security, and acquiring possessions in the Pacific, the United States donned the trappings of a modest colonial empire.

In 1904, Roosevelt proclaimed the U.S.’s authority to employ an “international police power” in opposition to European collection of outstanding debts in Latin America - a little too close to the interests of the United States’ empire. Proclaiming these collections as “chronic wrongdoing,” Roosevelt deployed the Marines to Santo Domingo,

In another sense, all was soon forgiven by Europe and exceptionalism was temporarily restored, by American leadership and sacrifices on the Continent. Along with American sacrifices during WWI and II, the Marshall Plan (hereafter referred to simply as "the Plan") applied ample salve to the foreign policies of the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary. Among other motivations, U.S. foreign policy makers seized upon the long-term interest of creating a strong European market for American goods by sacrificing American treasure and goods in the short term. Economic historians Bradford DeLong and Barry Eichengreen describe the Plan as "history's most successful structural adjustment program."\(^{17}\)\(^{18}\) Meanwhile, the American propaganda machine churned continuously and the perception created is clear. Along with American sacrifices in Europe during WWII, the Plan subtly Americanized or ingratiated many. Indeed, West Germany honored George Marshall and his Plan in the form of a stamp.

A global community seeking to avoid future conflict and repair the immense damages of WWII looked to America which, against early odds, assisted in the Allies' defeat of the German Axis yet still retained the economic wherewithal to assist Europe from the ashes. So America entered the exportation business in Europe as it had in Latin America, the United States became a state from which examples should be drawn, and its leadership promoted ideologies and values that became the expected standard of a civilized society. Yet this European society, with its similar culture and ideologies, is far removed from the culturally and historically divergent society found in the Middle East—


\(^{18}\) Structural adjustment programs are typically loans provided to nations under the burdens of economic crises by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). In the Marshall Plan, the United States acted in the stead of either the IMF or WB to draw a region out of crisis.
CHAPTER 3: THE RECENT PRACTICE OF EXCEPTIONALISM

When an American says that he loves his country, he means not only that he loves the New England hills, the prairies glistening in the sun, the wide and rising plains, the great mountains, and the sea. He means that he loves an inner air, an inner light in which freedom lives and in which a man can draw the breath of self-respect.1

-Adlai Stevenson

In a survey carried out in 2003 and 2004 among 33 countries, America’s collective sense of being an exceptional nation is clear.

The U.S. ranks first in pride of the following domains: the way the democracy works; its political influence in the world; its economic achievement; its scientific and technological achievements; and its armed forces. In addition, it ranks second in terms of its pride of its history.2

Past and recent American policies both at home and abroad are the tool that created that exemplary nation. Yet today, that pride must be tempered with discernment as its wide reach affects the relationships the United States has within Arab and Muslim nations. Increasingly, these nations perceive that reach is spanned by aggressive hands, hands that sculpt America’s future enemies.

Exceptionalism in Policy and Practice

In his second inaugural address in 1997, then-President Bill Clinton spoke in the intellectual and emotional tradition of exceptionalism, which permeates American society and guides the hand of U.S. foreign policy decision making when he said, “At the dawn of the 21st century... America stands alone as the world’s indispensable nation.”3 There is no doubt that

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yourself. The debate remains as to whether American foreign policy makers knew their enemy in Iraq or their audiences in the Arab and Middle Eastern communities as they entered planning for the second Gulf War.

The Arab and Muslim community was not alone in their discomfort at President Bush’s rallying good against evil speeches and the words of the NSS. The President’s us versus them foreign policies intensified the impression of policy shaped not by dispassionate objectivity but by exceptionalism and unilateralism. Francis Fukuyama, member of the Political Science Department of the RAND Corporation illustrates this point:

Clearly, a doctrine of preventative war is not one that can be safely generalized throughout the international system. [...] The fact that the United States granted itself a right that it would deny [unless in keeping with U.S. interests] to other countries is based, in the NSS, on an implicit judgment that the United States is different from other countries and can be trusted to use its military power justly and wisely in ways that other powers could not.6

In spite of the tragic events that inspired American preventative action, and of the Bush doctrine of preemption, foreign policies must seek to be above such reproach and condemnation where possible. America must strive to be above reproach because it is, indeed, a city on the hill – observed and judged as a world leader, and demonstrably vulnerable to attack. Because if it is a shining city upon a hill to and by which others may be guided, it cannot be effective – or as secure - if it is reproachable. Fukuyama’s assessment reflects the sentiments in the Arab and Muslim community that America – as it did in the Roosevelt Corollary – felt it had a right to act (because it did so nobly) where others did not. Some within the Arab and Muslim community disagreed, loudly passing judgment from which anti-U.S. aggression was given room to grow.

statement continues to describe this effort: “As we focus on reaching peace in the Middle East, we also recognize the profound need for democracy and market economies to meet the aspirations of a new generation . . . Public diplomacy will be central to communicating our objectives and changing negative views of the United States.”

While devoid of ill intent and with a stronger global peace in mind, this mission statement, and the foreign policies and actions which arise in support of it, lack discernment and a fundamental understanding of the Arab and Muslim world. (However, the statement is spot on in mentioning a plan for propitiation abroad through public diplomacy and communication.) This mission statement assumes democracy is the aspiration of a new generation of Arabs, or that there is a “profound need” for democracy throughout the Middle East. Perhaps their need and desire today is more basic: survival, or the absence of oppressions. Perhaps in some regions within the Middle East, this lack of oppression and expectation of life is as great a gift as democracy or self-expression could be. Perhaps moderates among Muslim and Arab communities, once survival and an absence of oppression is assured, may then have the air they need to breathe in and understand and perhaps even seek the idea of democracy.

Today however, the Department of State’s statement presupposes, demonstrably incorrectly, that upon being given the freedom to remove an oppressive or corrupt or simply undesirable leader and to elect a suitable government, such a government of and for the people

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10 In 2010, political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel created the Inglehart–Welzel cultural map of the world based on the World Values Survey. This chart depicts, along an x-y axis, the divergence of needs from the fundamental need for survival to the ideal desire for self-expression. Islamic nations, Pakistan for example, are depicted as motivated by Survival and Traditional Values. Western or Protestant/Catholic nations such as Sweden, prize Secular-Rational and Self Expression Values.
culture and so unpredictable in its reaction to U.S. involvement in its evolution and rule. The
global economy would certainly survive, though perhaps be shifted. If U.S. foreign policy
makers do step aside, giving up the opportunity to intercede in the hope of a favorable
outcome for society, would it, rhetorically speaking, diminish the right of the United States to
claim itself as the last best hope of mankind? Perhaps where failed attempt follows failed
attempt, this argument may be presented successfully.

Yet America’s sense of exceptionalism, its sense that American democracy and the
American right to self-determination is exceptional and therefore must be transferred as a
universal form of government despite vast cultural and historical divergences between those
cultures, continues. It is as dangerous a mission statement as it is damaging as a foreign
policy. There is a nobility within many of America’s actions, even found within some taken
solely on the basis of American values; but America cannot understand why this nobility is
not more often seen and appreciated by others. And because foreign policy makers neither
ask beforehand nor see clearly in hindsight the consequences of their actions, it becomes a
false nobility.

**America in Iraq – Neoconservatives at the Helm**

“This tendency to over-steer is characteristic of human interaction with dynamic
systems. We let ourselves be guided not by development... but by the situation at each stage.
We regulate the situation, not the process.”

12 Did American policy makers over steer in 1980s

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12 Dietrich Domer, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations*, (New
York: Basic Books, A member of the Perseus Books Group, 1989), 30. Refers to how humans understood
and reacted to the processes to avoid the disaster at Chernobyl instead of stepping back to look at the
system in its entirety. This study of human character demonstrates general behavioral tendencies to focus
on the narrow rather than the broad solution, and extrapolates the snowball effect such myopic focus may
cause.
As previously mentioned, across Europe and the Arab world, reaction to the highly-charged words of President Bush and his foreign policy advisors in the aftermath of 9/11 called loudly for temperance and discernment. While most nations were sympathetic to the American loss of life, they understood the world in a broader context and some perceived the interloping foreign policies of the United States were due a portion of blame for motivating the attacks of 9/11. Whether due to self-referentialism, cultural centrism, or an ideological blind spot, American policy makers and influencers did not share this perception.

President Bush’s team would have done well to exercise reason over emotional generalities to better foresee the globe-altering effect of their actions, especially in Iraq – a nation irrelevant to the events of 9/11. As foretold by the title of a Le Monde article on 18 September, 2001: “L’Irak Reste Une Cible Tentante Pour l’Équipe Bush; Une Attaque Contre Bagdad Pourrait Briser La Solidarité Des Européens Et Des Pays Arabes”16 – “Iraq remains a tempting target for the Bush team. [However,] an attack against Baghdad could break the solidarity of Europeans and Arab countries.” To many within European and Arab nations, the undeniably tragic context of 9/11 did not give America leeway to invade Iraq. However, in the minds of the many American policy makers and influencers, such as Donald Rumsfeld and neoconservative Paul Wolfowitz, it did.

On 13 September, 2001, Mr. Wolfowitz attended a Pentagon briefing during which he stated, "I think one has to say it's not just simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending states

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warning was an unfortunately accurate foretelling. America retaliated against an almost unidentifiable enemy, his tactics unfamiliar outside the Special Forces realm and his politics and ethos equally foreign. America neither knew its enemy as Sun Tzu would urge, nor understood its politics and therefore its reason or means for war, as Karl von Clausewitz would assert. Yet, exceptionalism demanded immediate retaliation, and immediacy begat oversimplification. Discernment between foes be damned, America sought to battle its old enemy in Iraq as a way of putting a face to those still surviving and guilty of fostering a society in which 9/11’s could incubate.

Iraq – Bin Laden’s Success Story

Clearly, atrocities took place at the hands and orders of Hussein as he sat upon one of the world’s largest supplies of energy. Whether war for the traditional purpose of resources, or war to depose a dictatorial ruler, it was initiated amid heightened post 9/11 sentiment and justified on the basis of the Bush Doctrine for pre-emption. Certainly past and current foreign policy makers have forgiven many atrocities at the hands of Saudi, Egyptian, and Israeli rulers where they saw fit. This practice is tainted by a double standard, a duality, and brings to light the tension between American ideals and American practices and policies. When exposed, this tension opens the door for American policies and practices to be judged and condemned by members within the Middle Eastern and Arab community.

If the actual perpetrators of 9/11 could be interviewed today, their satisfaction would be palpable. In the nationalistic upheaval following their act, and after years of witnessing horrible acts at the hands of Hussein, the United States foreign policy makers justified war
limited comprehension of the motivations and limited objectives of the activists and their preparedness to act on either or both beyond mob protests. In spite of experiences as First Lady, and extensive travels as Secretary of State, she simply did not grasp a people without clear long term democratic goals or purpose or experience, nor a government beyond her own.

If the policy makers of the United States are to imbue real change in and seek stable coexistence with the Arab and Muslim world, they must first educate themselves – at the very least on Islam’s fundamental tenets – with open minds. Then they must endeavor to offer targeted assistance during the evolution of the fledgling nation, not simply help an Arab or Muslim nation from the confines of the nest of a previous regime in expectation of successful flight. To put it another way, America should avoid attempting to teach a Penguin to fly simply because it is a bird and must want to and understand how to.

Separation of Mosque and State – An Un-Muslim Ideal

Just as many U.S. foreign policy makers and influencers struggle to understand the nuances of Islam or the types of government born of it and accepted by it, those governed by the canons of Islam similarly struggle with America’s religion-free democracy. Recognizing this divergence in understanding, the United States must pause to reflect before naively encouraging political change in expectation of a democracy automatically ensuing. Foreign policy makers must consider past experiences of attempts at playing a leading role in or encouraging the removal and replacement of governments within the Arab and Muslim community. Such experiences may bring to light democracy’s fundamental conflict with Islam. Alon Ben-Meir, Senior Fellow for Global Affairs at NYU, provided a summary of this
may be room to assist or encourage growth or freedoms or success. Importantly, this approach also opens a door of opportunity to nations that do not consider democracy viable for their own form of government, but are willing to consider a democratic nation a viable ally and partner.
lesson learned was that, "A failure to recognize, acknowledge, and accurately define the operational environment led to a mismatch between forces, capabilities, missions, and goals."³

While the findings of this report address military failings, these same failures are easily found within the foreign policy making process and can just as easily be internalized and learned from. U.S. foreign policies similarly fall short in recognizing, acknowledging, and accurately defining the diplomatic and cultural operating environment within the Arab and Muslim community. As leaders of a globally-involved nation linked inextricably to the Middle East, policy makers are obliged to make the effort to reach an understanding with and of this community, earning credibility through a narrative of understanding, and setting a new tone for American security in the Middle East.

A second military example to emulate may be drawn from the success of Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN), the focus of American military operations in the Middle East. These operations give the military man and woman the opportunity to flourish by understanding, by feeling, "the pulse of the local populace, understanding their motivations and caring about what they want and need. Genuine compassion and empathy for the populace provides an effective weapon against insurgents."⁴ This weapon is essential, particularly as the gap separating Middle Eastern and Western cultures slowly closes, and globalization makes one culture keenly aware of the other. Such is the weapon with which foreign policy makers must be armed.

³ Joint Staff J-7, Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (JCOA), Decade of War, Volume I Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations Published by the Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis (Suffolk VA, 2012)
⁴ Headquarters, Department of the Army and Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency, U.S. Army and Department of the U.S. Navy (Washington, DC, 2006.)
decisions by taking the long view of second and third order consequences. As Thomas Huxley wrote of scientists, the same could be written of policy makers: “Sit down before facts as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and whatever abysses nature leads - or you shall learn nothing.”

This may be accomplished by the likes of Congressional Committees, Security Councils, and Cabinet-level briefings if they demand facts which allow them to understand the politics and means of the nations. These facts must be presented by reasoning experts and reviewed with discretion to determine when and where they may best further the American ideal of the betterment of mankind. While American interests must be furthered abroad, they can be more successfully furthered through greater judiciousness and discernment on the part of foreign policy makers. This is not a casting aside of America’s own value system or marginalization of its ideals; quite the contrary, America’s actions in pursuit of its interests would be better informed and guided.

America’s foreign policy makers must sit in the world café and watch and listen. There they must discern the necessary tool or best method by which interests essential to the United States may continue and its endeavors find success. Policy makers must make every effort to diminish the message of exceptionalism American foreign policies may promote, to know both the enemy and the broader Arab or Muslim audience and defeat or win the narrative of both. This fundamental knowledge of the enemy and audience is where foreign policy gamers may find a pivotal niche within the policy making and advising process.

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translated to the larger geopolitical world, would integrate beautifully at the foreign policy maker level. Beyond (but inclusive of) State Department advisors, policy gamers must be willing and able to knowledgeably speak truth to power. They should come from a wide range of professions, including, where necessary and available, foreign national advisors. They must span the disconnect between national interests and national misunderstanding.

Until the slow but inexorable animal of globalization brings Protestant and English speaking cultures, and the Islamic culture closer together though a combined recent history, that disconnect must be addressed. And, most importantly, that recent history must begin to be shaped in a favorable way through informed, judicious foreign policies. As a world leader, the United States is obligated to take every step possible to wisely engage its fellow cultures. The development and employment of policy gamers is one such step.

This step, however, is moot if it is not internalized and used to inform the decision-makers. Foreign policy leaders must seek out the experts from groups such as those mentioned previously and assimilate their knowledge to closely assist the national security councils, presidents and other foreign policy leaders as decisions are made that shape the indelible actions of the United States abroad. This insight and guidance is of particular value in Middle East and Arab regions where nuanced, dynamic, and volatile environments present the United States a near-insoluble Gordian knot.

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel released recently a Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments with the subject of Wargaming and Innovation. The memorandum is meant to bring attention to the essential nature and reinvigoration of the wargaming process. However, the Secretary’s opening paragraph illustrates well – when adapted – the description
"United States foreign policy has changed dramatically from George Washington's day. Although Americans always pay attention to the advice of their revered founder, the world is of course not the same. The many people that shape American foreign policy today accept the fact that the United States is a member of a world community that cannot afford to ignore the importance of getting along."

- Independence Hall Association, Philadelphia

An apologist policy is not necessary to repair the damages of exceptionalism, but rather, a foreign policy process appreciative of consequence; a process governed by those who not only “accept the fact that the United States is a member of a world community” but embrace it and govern accordingly.2 Decision makers, like great debaters, are best equipped to formulate comprehensive and applicable solutions or arguments to a dilemma when they evaluate the circumstances of a problem in its totality - when an assumption is made and then examined for weakness and for counter assumptions, not leaving out uncomfortable factors or ignoring the n\textsuperscript{th} order effects in the expectation it will become another generation’s or another administration’s burden. Full exploration of the implications of policy prior to its publication and implementation is essential. America’s subsequent decade of war in Iraq, and the global - and thus far unending - reverberations of it, lay in testament to such a need. An exceptional nation should not assume the luxury of policy formulation without a full measure of thought and consideration. When America does presume that luxury and acts as it wishes, not only when it should, the world notices. Distorted exceptionalism becomes indivisible from the decisions it guides.


2 Ibid.
Madeleine Albright’s fear of the unintended and disastrous consequences of American foreign policy in Iraq are realized and the ranks of America’s enemies and its detractors are distended by eager belligerents. This realization addresses directly the global Islamist adversary fostered for the past three decades by a culturally censured or narrow American foreign policy. U.S. actions post 9/11, as with foreign policies today, give those in the Arab or Muslim civilization who would do this nation harm what they want: an America further removed from the hearts and minds of the Middle East... an America depleted, further mistrusted, and held in lower regard.

This nation - the United States - became as it is through a Revolution. That Revolution began as a statement, as the inhabitants’ call to seek their own destiny, control their own homes, monies, and liberties, and seek their own alliances. America’s founders fought, despite the threat of poverty and death in many cases, to ensure they, their families, and their neighbors would live, and hopefully thrive, free from the control of a distant nation. Understanding that, foreign policy makers must reevaluate America’s well-worn path of exceptionalism in foreign policy decision making and find where they have become King George III, where they are now the leader forcing and determining the destiny of another nation. Through this self-evaluation they may avoid or contain the fallout from the Afghans, the Iraqis, and the Iranians of the global Arab and Muslim community.


CIRRICULUM VITAE

Commander Christa Almonte was commissioned into the United States Navy from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1999 as a Surface Warfare Officer.

Her operational tours include service in the Operations Department or as Operations Officer on board a Spruance Class Destroyer, and AEGIS Class Destroyer, and an AEGIS Class Cruiser homeported in Hawaii, and Yokosuka, Japan. She served as Security Assistance Officer at the American embassy in Bahrain, and subsequently lateral transferred to the Foreign Area Officer community with focus in the CENTCOM AOR. Her most recent assignment was Deputy Executive Assistant to OPNAV N3N5, Operations, Plans and Strategy.

Commander Almonte holds Masters Degrees from George Washington University and the Naval War College, as well as an Associates of Arts in Arabic from the Defense Language Institute.