National Security Strategy: A Case Favoring the Current Global Threat Environment

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SAM LING GIBSON, JAN 30 2016

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"The President needs a strategy to design and execute foreign policy. I do mean the translation of the President's vision into policies, policies that are coherent …policies are unified by a strategy …in a document called the National Security Strategy." (Powell, 2003)

"[E]merging critical and urgent issues…cannot be dealt with by a single country." (Japan National Security Council (NSC) 2013, 9-10)

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell gives a compelling case for the use of a National Security Strategy (NSS) as a workable means to pursuing national objectives. Notwithstanding the U.S.' more longstanding use of such a document[1], it has only been within the last decade or so that most countries in the world have produced something approximating a NSS. However, paralleling this trend, the impacts of globalisation on national security become ever more apparent. The powerful interconnections and interdependencies that permit economic prosperity simultaneously allow for greater vulnerabilities and risks; conflict, financial shock, disease and crime in one country can easily spillover into regional and even global issues (for instance Beijing, 2015). Therefore, the post-Cold War strategic-threat agenda is less about a conventional or nuclear exchange between states, and more about the threat of asymmetric Non State Actors and issues that are non-military and universal in nature – such as climate change and drug-trafficking.

This raises some fundamental questions about what seems to be a broad, global trend of producing NSSs, highlighted by the juxtaposing quotes opening this essay. In a world moving towards multipolarity, will the NSS become a thing of the past as levels of absolute state power decrease – or at the very least, will strategy become less coherent as a result of increasingly complex security threats, as contended by Freedman (2013, 390)? Or, is this trend towards NSSs justified in an increasingly unpredictable future of transnational threats and shifting power distribution? This essay will address these questions; building on human security perspectives, it recognises an expanded conception of contemporary threats, which are global both in reach and in the sense of the multi-national response they require. As stated above in the 2013 Japanese NSS, security and prosperity are, and will increasingly be, mutually dependent. Although seemingly contradictory, this essay couples this recognition with the realist notion that the state is primarily in pursuance of its national interests and remains the most important actor in dealing with these issues.

To this end, this essay will have three main parts: firstly a conceptual location of strategy and the NSS, secondly an examination of the modern security landscape and the response of such strategies, and finally a consideration of a more globalised, multipolar world and the implications on the utility and relevance of NSSs in the future. In conclusion, as the linchpin between strategy and policy, NSSs have a vital role in locating and coordinating responses to the diffuse and complex nature of today's security threats, as well as in adjusting to the multipolar world of tomorrow.

Considering the dearth of academic material which directly addresses the question, this article will adopt an analytical framework in order to locate, analyse and refine the broad range of issues involved. It will also extensively use primary material – notably the NSSs and other strategic documents themselves. Consequently, this has resulted in the unavoidable use of unofficial translations for some of the Chinese and Russian documents, as noted in the bibliography. Moreover, the analysis is limited, for the sake of time restraints, to the important ´big three´ (US, Russia and China), plus two ´second-tier´ states (UK and Japan) to be sufficiently representative. The inclusion of non-western NSS will attempt to avoid a western-bias – especially crucial for a robust analysis of a future multipolar world.

What is Strategy? From Military, to 'Grand', to National

The Clausewitzian central premise of strategy as being "the use of engagements for the object of the war" (Clausewitz 2007, 74) continues to be pervasive in contemporary strategy. However, strategy today – whether the subject of study or policy – has undergone significant conceptual expansion and refinement beyond this purely military construction. Therefore, in order to conceptually locate and explain the NSS, this essay will first examine two post-Clausewitzian historical junctures that are notable for their effect on strategy – specifically their influence on the formation of 'grand strategy' and subsequently, the NSS.

Gray (2014, 61-67) cites the French Revolution – with its consequence of the abdication of Monarchies (and their absolute power) across Europe – as affecting a broad major shift in strategic thinking. This is due to the subsequential development of the modern state with separate military and political control, which allowed for the purely military conception of strategy to begin to both diverge from, and become subsumed under, the objectives of the overall higher or 'grand' strategy. This construction of grand strategy was further developed during the 20th Century, as the means and ways of fighting wars changed dramatically. Following his experience in the wartime British Government, Liddell Hart advanced the conception of grand strategy to include several fundaments that remain at the heart of strategy-making today. The first is ostensibly Clausewitzian in that the role of strategy was to "direct all the resources of a nation towards the attainment of the political object of the war…a goal defined by national policy" (Hart 1929, 187-188). This definition not only alludes to the concurrent 'total' nature of wars, but also the broader strategic response that they entailed; namely, that 'all the resources of a nation' should be used in waging war – financial, economic, informational, diplomatic *as well as* military means (ibid, 188). Secondly, Hart contended that regulation and coordination was required between these diverse instruments to best achieve policies (of war winning), i.e. appropriate domestic policies (ibid). Finally, that the 'winning of the peace' was also significant; grand strategy should consider peacetime as well as wartime (ibid, 202).

Although the term 'grand strategy' seems to have fallen out of contemporary policymakers' parlance (thus this essay will use 'national strategy' or NSS), the roots of NSSs are very much still entrenched in these historical refinements. Despite being relatively new, conceptually the NSS documents of today are far from novel. Clausewitz´s construction (2007, 7; 28) of strategy as emanating from, and serving policy is as paramount today as it was then (Gray 2014, 284). Moreover, with the decline of large-scale conventional state-versus-state conflicts, contemporary NSSs can be seen as further refinements of Hart's more holistic approach of strategy that looks beyond war fighting to one that considers war avoidance: a national strategy should therefore be a coordinated balance between how the state will use available instruments of power – military and non-military – to defend and further national interests, as established by policy (for instance Kremlin 2009, Paragraph 1;19).

What does appear to have changed in the post-Napoleonic rebalancing in Civil-Military Relations is that strategy – in the narrow military sense – has been conceptually separated and itself subordinated to the overarching objectives of national strategy, alongside the other non-military instruments of power. What is notable with contemporary NSSs is their prominent role in coordinating these different levels of organisation and instruments of national power. Thus, we can see the present-day NSS as "a strategic touchstone" (Doyle 2007, 625), allowing governments to "do all we can, within the resources available, to predict, prevent and mitigate the risks to our security" (HM Government 2010, 1), and to communicate this strategy to other governments (Doyle 2007, 624). This expanded notion of strategy is crucial in responding to a more diffuse security agenda, as well as broader trends such as globalisation and multipolarity, which will be examined in order.

New Threats and New Wars

As established above, from the perspective of national policy making, strategy first and foremost aims to coordinate the various elements of power to defend against threats to national security. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the nature of what constitutes a threat – military or otherwise – as well as to ask if NSSs are identifying, and reacting to, a broader threat environment.

Towards the end of the Cold War, the realist-dominated conception of a threat as being strictly military in nature came under increasing criticism from nascent, more liberal, human security perspectives. As traditional 'high politics' issues of conventional warfare and nuclear Mutual Assured Destruction were deemed less of an existential threat to the state, non-traditional and often non-military security issues began to gain prominence within national security agendas. In objection Walt (1991) and Gray (2014, 4) warn that with an expanded agenda, the urgency of the threats themselves is diluted, therefore "make[ing] it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these important problems" (Walt 1991, 213). As human security adherents argue however, the narrow, Cold War construction of national security in fact obscured very real threats which could come from not only the traditional military sector, but also from economic, environmental, societal and political sources. Such issues could not only potentially threaten the state itself in the long-term – e.g. climate change, pollution and migration – but are already impacting individuals' lives (Buzan et al 1998; Buzan & Waever 2009). Moreover, according to this expanded human security perspective, many of these non-traditional issues such as economic inequality and environmental degradation are valid issues to national security as they can serve as drivers of conflicts (UNDP 1994), "exacerbating existing tensions around the world…[which] increases likelihood of conflict, instability and state failure" (HM Government 2010, 16-17). Furthermore, this argument appears to be beyond academic. Russia's definition of national security – typical across NSSs – is in almost identical human security language in terms of the sources and referent object of threats: "the direct or indirect possibility of damage to constitutional rights and freedoms, quality of life, sovereignty/territorial integrity, stable development" (Kremlin 2009, Paragraph 6). Furthermore, there is an appreciation that these "[n]on-traditional security concerns…are on the rise" (Beijing 2010, 5). As Hedborg (2012, 12) points out in a comparative study of several national and regional strategies:

"[I]t is clear that the strategies are relatively united on the perception of threats; terrorism, state failure, regional conflicts and organized crime as well as cyber security, energy security and climate change are key elements of all the mentioned strategies."

Thus, subjects that were once considered indirect threats such as 'global commons' and 'low politics' issues are now widely considered as strategic threats. This is not only due to their role in existing conflicts, but also because when viewed from a more long-term and holistic perspective, they are "contributing to increased natural disasters, refugee flows, and conflicts over basic resources like food and water" (Whitehouse 2015, 12). Therefore, indirect threats to one nation, such as a (different) failed state, can act as 'risk multipliers' to feed and transform the risk into a higher category and more proximate threat such as terrorism (HM Government 2010, 28). Moreover, the more diffuse nature of many of the threats, exacerbated by globalisation's enabling of "goods, capital, and information to instantaneously move across borders in large quantities" (Japan NSC 2013, 9), means that security problems in one country can quickly affect and destabilise regional and even global communities (Select *Committee 2010, 10).* This all contributes to a security agenda which is "increasingly integrated, complex and volatile" (Beijing 2010, 3), which, alongside shifting paradigms of conflict which will be discussed below, has great implications for national strategies, in both recognising and responding to such shifts.

The core strategies of waging the Clausewitzian construct of 'real war', that is the interstate, kinetic, modern-era of war between states (Clausewitz 2009, 223-226), have proven pervasive and continued to remain central to US policymakers – even after the fall of the Berlin Wall (for instance see Kaldor, 2005). Indeed, the US/Coalition victories in the 1991 Gulf War and initial success in the 2001 and 2003 respective invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq appeared to confirm the viability of such conventional strategies (so called '3rd' Generation Warfare- 3GW), bolstered by continued technological advancements. Many have noted, however, that these post-Cold War conflicts – as well as Vietnam – share distinct attributes, which merit not only a different form of categorisation, but a radically different strategy in dealing with them. These '4th' Generation Warfare (4GW), or 'New Wars[2]' are typified by the

involvement of a subversive, substate adversary inclined to employ asymmetric tactics which are in part ideational (for instance Kaldor, 2005; Gray, 2005). An adherence to the conventional strategic approaches in conflict against this 'new' enemy have been criticised as being inappropriate, even 'astrategic' long-term failures (Strachan 2006) – not least as the initial invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan turned into the 'long wars' of occupation against an asymmetric enemy. Beyond military tactical-level issues, salient criticisms were, "a need to improve the soft dimension" (General Carter, 2012), that is a cultural understanding to "counter the ideology and root causes of violent extremism" (Whitehouse 2015, Preface). However belatedly, national strategies – particularly of the US and UK –do appear to have improved their understanding towards counterinsurgency campaigns (Hoffman 2009, 38). Yet the very continuance of those conflicts today, coupled with predictions of further asymmetric conflict in the future, suggests a continued vulnerability and a need for further learning to be done in these areas (Gray 2005, 18; Whitehouse 2015, 8).

This shifting emphasis towards 4GW, however, is complicated, even contradicted – particularly for the West – by what has been termed '5th' GW. Although still ill-defined and under debate, there appears to be agreement that the next generation is a continuum of the 4th generation threat in that it exploits the weaknesses of a conventionally superior adversary. What distinguishes this next generation is that "instead of separate challengers with fundamentally different approaches" (Hoffman 2009, 39) adversaries could employ 'supracombinations' of the previous domains of war fighting to include "conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations; terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder" (ibid, 17).

Such blending has been termed as 'hybrid', or 'full spectrum' warfare; labels which Cornish & Dorman (2015, 357) criticise as being unhelpful, as they simply band together existing means and modes of war fighting. However, it is precisely this convergence that best typifies the evolving character of conflict. Indeed, possibly the only consensus with future warfare is that "there is going to be a blurring, perhaps we should say a further blurring, of warfare categories" (Gray 2005, 199), with evidence not only that this multimodal blurring is already taking place, but that it is effective. Hoffman for instance refers to Hezbollah's tactics during the Second Lebanon War in 2006, to emphasise that "[n]on-state actors may mostly employ irregular forms of warfare, but will clearly support, encourage, and participate in conventional conflict if it serves their ends" (Hoffman 2009, 5;38). Russia's stated strategic need in "developing high-precision, informational and other high-technology means of conducting armed warfare" (Kremlin 2009, Paragraph 30) suggests that nation-states, conversely, will use irregular as well as regular tactics to compensate for conventional weaknesses vis-à-vis other states. It has been noted that such 'informational' capabilities have been used with success in the ongoing Crimean conflict in the form of political subversion, offensive cyber-capabilities as well as greater intelligence operations (Cornish & Dorman 2015, 357).

Such changes to strategies clearly recognise significant shifts in the nature of objectives, adversaries, and force in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 landscape which are appreciative of aspects of the asymmetric nature of 4GW, and – particularly in the cases of UK and US strategies – multidimensional 5GW (Whitehouse 2015, 10; HM Government 2010, 17). Moreover, many of the criticisms and recommendations by strategists and serving military are set out in the various NSSs – notably more agile, flexible, specialised and adaptable forces against a multimodal hybrid-threat and greater emphasis on "interagency and multi-national integration" (General Carter, 2012; see also Japan NSC 2014, 14; HM government 2010, 15).

However, even though, at the time of publishing, policy recommendations of national strategies appear to be consistent with such strategic threats (RolandBerger 2014, 11), effective strategy-making appears to be undermined by certain flaws in the decision-making process. Although it is difficult to generalise for all strategies, there does appear to be some common and notable criticisms to how such strategies are made – the crux of which being its subservient relationship to policy. It is worth pointing out that Clausewitz also placed conditionality on this subordinance to policy goals, notably that the policies must be realistic *(*Clausewitz 2007, 29; see also Hart 1929, 231). This means that unrealistic policies will ultimately be translated as incoherent (Powell, 2003), and suggests a causative link between the US 2002 NSS – which mentions Iraq only once (Whitehouse 2002, 14), and has no mention of a long-term strategy for the concurrent Afghanistan conflict – and the subsequent 'strategic failures' in those countries (Strachan 2006). These criticisms do bolster the arguments for a more symbiotic relationship between policy and strategy, with a more frequent review process that goes beyond election-cycles and term limits

(Gray 2011, 7; Strachan 2006, 72). After all, as a UK Parliamentary Committee on strategic thinking (2010, 10) concluded, "a strategy is only useful if it guides choices."

These criticisms remain salient – indeed they are all the more critical considering the substantive shifts – not only in how threats are conceptualised, but in how they are dealt with. Even the militarily and technologically preponderant US now acknowledges not only that the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan cannot be done unilaterally, but also that they cannot be dealt with by a strictly military response (Whitehouse 2015, 10). As Japan expounds, many of the current security issues "cannot be dealt with by a single country" and therefore "it is increasingly important for countries that share common interests for stability and peace to actively respond together in close coordination" (Japan NSC 2014, 3). This all amounts to:

"[A] concept of national security in 2010 [that] is very different to what it was ten or twenty, let alone fifty or a hundred years ago…[with] a different and more complex range of threats from a myriad of sources…from states, but also from non state actors: terrorists, home-grown or overseas; insurgents; or criminals" (HM Government 2010, 3).

Indeed, in terms of threat, we have seen a shift from a state-based military threat and military response, to a threat that can potentially be from multiple sources and forms (including non-military) and a response which considers all instruments of national power (multi-agency), across more than one state (multilateral). We need look no further than the response to the rise of the so-called 'Islamic State' and the recent Ebola epidemic in West Africa for evidence which substantiates these strategic shifts. This likely continued convergence of the international security agenda does give a strong validation of the NSS. However, as the next section will show, simultaneous decreases in the relative power of any individual state (and its strategy) does appear contradict this, and has important consequences for the national strategies of tomorrow.

Strategy into the Future

As established above, the greater mutual interdependence and interconnections of globalisation have contributed to a more diffuse and more complex threat environment. Additionally, whilst most countries see a long-term rising Gross Domestic Product, this has been accompanied by growing intra and inter-state inequality which are both providing greater opportunities and incentives for weak states, intra-state conflict and terrorism (UNDP 1994; World Bank 2015; Kirshner 2006, 10). Considering all of these trends are likely to continue with – indeed be exacerbated by – further globalisation and a shift towards multipolarism (Kirshner, 2006; World Bank 2015), such phenomena and their strategic impacts merit further inspection.

Assuming continued aggregate economic gains to the international system, it has been predicted that "adversaries should become less hostile as a result of reforming in order to reap greater benefits from globalization" (Mueller 2006, 149) and thus the continued "gradual spread of modernity" (Kirshner 2006, 157). However, this almost 'End of History' (Fukuyama 1992) logic of perpetual liberal hegemony appears to be flawed on both short and long-term counts. In the short and medium-term, the interconnected nature of security threats means the growing inequalities will contribute to failing states and feed adversarial NSAs and regimes potentially hostile to the West – particularly the US as the country that gains most from globalisation (Kirshner 2006). Moreover, in the long-term such neoliberal institutionalist arguments overlook the current "definitive shift of economic power to the East and South" (National Intelligence Council 2012, v). The inevitable repercussions of this are widely recognised across national strategies, whether developed or not, as "evolving multipolar international relations" (Kremlin 2009, Paragraph 1), "China's rise" (Whitehouse 2015, 4) and a "power [being] distributed more widely" (HM Government 2010, 15). Considering that "some emerging powers are insufficiently tied into multilateral approaches…[t]hey may not be fully represented in international institutions despite their economic weight and regional influence" (ibid), which justifies complaints from many developing countries of, "contradictions continu[ing] to surface between developed and developing countries and between traditional and emerging powers" (Beijing 2010, 4) regarding "[t]he inadequacy of the current global and regional architecture" (Kremlin 2009, Paragraph 8).

As Gray (2014, 266) points out, "an international order is relatively stable when its rules, norms, and distribution of rights and duties are broadly in accord with the interests and values of the major state, and other essential players."

Considering the declining power – at least in economic terms – of the 'major state' and the reshuffling of 'other essential players', is it not reasonable to follow the cultural relativist expectation that rising powers "with very different cultures and histories" (Jacques 2009, 7) will increasingly seek to modify or replace the rules, values and norms of a post-1945 system – namely, "the adoption of free markets, the import of Western capital, privatization, the rule of law, human rights regimes and democratic norms" (ibid)? For instance, China and Russian paramountcy in non-interference in International Relations – substantiated implicitly in the respective strategies over issues of sovereignty/territorial claims in the South China Sea and Ukraine respectively (Beijing 2010; 2015; Kremlin 2009, Paragraph 29) – could be seen as sharply clashing with the more western assumption of universalism.

It therefore stands to reason that with no substantive reform to the current system, as power shifts, we can surely expect further resistance – whether through political or violent means. Even those that argue that globalisation is systemic would concede that this system rests on the actions of the current unipolar hegemon, and therefore is to some extent policy driven (Kirshner 2006, 322). However, if and how this current system responds to such criticisms and future power changes is unclear. Some, for example, warn of the limits to the engineering of existing institutions and envisage a multipolar system which will see multilateralism increasingly sidelined as the western-dominated multilateral arrangements of recent decades are used less (Gray 2014, 277), as seen with the rise of economic and political organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). On the other hand, others less convincingly point to the rising prominence of the G20 vis-à-vis the G7/8 in terms of international decision-making as evidence of the systems' capacity to absorb and integrate rising powers (for instance HM Government 2010, 15). However, a more nuanced outcome is more likely in which we see a combination of both a multipolar *and* multilateral global order where cooperation "is more dependent on agreement between the great powers" (Root et al 2015, 6) and "power will shift to networks and coalitions in a multipolar world" (National Intelligence Council 2012, ii). Not only is the cooperation of emerging powers crucial in combating many common security interests, neo-institutionalists expound that such co-option would help in changing rival powers into responsible partners. As Gary Hart (2012, 4) expounds, in the face of complex security threats "even established regional security institutions such as NATO…require new alliances beyond the capabilities that NATO represents." Of course, it would be naïve to suggest that powers such as Russia can and would be willing to simply put aside their differences and enter into alliance with NATO. It does show, however, that rising powers – particularly BRICS (Brazil Russia India China South Africa) nations – not only can, but are already making policy decisions alongside existing powers; not only on trade but also on climate change and international security issues that are having global consequences. This is implicitly recognised by the 2013 commencement of US/China joint military operations and evident in China's major role in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (Mardell, 2013; Tiezzi 2015).

Present configurations of cooperation are unclear, complex, and even contradictory. Efforts towards tackling climate change, for instance, can be seen at all levels of the international system: unilateral measures (for instance Whitehouse, 2015); bilateralism, for example the 2014 US-China agreement; multilateralism, such as the recent UN Conference on Climate Change; and the 2015 G7 agreement. Will the future be one in which BRICS exploration of the issue (BRICS, 2014) is more important? It is clearly beyond the scope of this essay to predict these possible trends. What is apparent, however, is that amidst this complex web of foreign policy objectives we can see the evidence of the neorealist, institutionalist, and neoliberalist premises that nation-states ultimately seek to uphold national interests, whilst they will also cooperate with other states (and institutions) if it corresponds to such interests. Although in perpetual contention over the primacy of the state in the international system, these theories would at least agree that it is at this state level that perceived threats are made into genuine security issues – i.e. securitised (for instance see Buzan & Waever 2009[3]). Therefore, at least in terms of national security, the state is not completely hostage to the forces of globalisation, and remains paramount in both identifying and mobilising against these global threats. With this in mind, this essay will conclude with a renewed call for national strategies for two principal reasons.

Firstly, considering an increasingly convergent international security agenda; likely continued shifts in relative power, capacity and autonomy of the state; and the rise in prominence of NSAs; it is congruent that all examined NSSs – not least the US one – emphasise "mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination" (Beijing 2010, 3) to "mobilize collective action" in tackling "shared problems" (Whitehouse 2015, Preface). The G7 collective commitment on combating climate change and the multilateral Iranian nuclear deal of 2015 are clear cases in point, whilst the diverse

coalitions of states and NSAs combating Islamic State, provide a powerful argument for tighter coordination of disparate strategies. Even if NSSs only achieve what Doyle contends is their minimum function, of "tell[ing] the world what a government intends to do" (Doyle 2007, 624), this will still facilitate international relations in identifying and coordinating responses to threats. Walt's (2013) reasoning that a state's actions can often differ from the stated national strategy is of course completely valid; countries will always have parts of national strategy that are not public. However, there are salient examples of national strategies serving effectively in communicating a nation's intentions. Walt himself in the same article acknowledges the deliberative role of national strategy in de-escalating the Cold War nuclear standoff between the US and the USSR. Recent territorial disputes over the East and South China Seas involving China should similarly come as no surprise; a 2010 strategic document noted that "pressure builds up in preserving China's territorial integrity and maritime rights and interests" (Beijing 2010, 5), and it, alongside a 2015 white paper (Beijing 2015), stated the strategic goal of protecting such 'territorial integrity'. Similarly, strategic documents of the US (Whitehouse 2015) and Iran (see Porter 2012) not only communicated clearly their intentions regarding the erstwhile Iranian-nuclear talks, but it has been argued that they played a major part in guiding such policies (ibid).

Secondly, this strategic 'signposting' – alongside other functions of the NSS – are not only important with the current renewed prospect of inter-state conflict underscored in Crimea and Syria, but will also be increasingly vital in the future. We can be optimistic that the economic integration of the neoliberal-shaped globalisation have done much to disincentivise conflict between states (Freedman 2013, 387), and that there is a general consensus between states that prosperity and security are mutually dependent and that some sort of multilateral, globalised system is preferred to the associated risks of isolationism. However, considering the future demise of the hegemonic influence that helps to sustain this model of globalisation, there is no logical reason to expect that rising powers will accept it wholly in its current form. Indeed, all NSSs – developing or developed – reiterate the need for international institutional reform that is more representative. Writing in 2011 and in contemplation of a multipolar future, Gray pessimistically predicts "another bloody century" (7). It is worth noting, however, the author's alternative consideration of "a century of co-operation" (Gray 2011, 7). History tells us that when US unipolarity ends, there will be (more) transitional tensions, and whether these emanate from states or NSAs; and are violent, political, or otherwise in nature; will likely hinge on how the current players – not least the US and China – respond strategically. Until now, we can see evidence towards the latter, more positive of Gray's dichotomies; in the context of Sino-US relations, the current military choice of joint operations rather than confrontation suggests a relationship of "permanent consultation" (Mardell, 2013), and the various coalitions of states fighting against ISIS in Syria show that, at the very least, nations can ally together against a common threat.

Criticisms regarding national strategies—not least concerning its relationship with policy—remain salient. Additionally, as noted above, critics have variously contended that strategy is less vital in the face of nuclear weapons, military-technological advancements, and the globalisation of American unipolarity. However, conversely, in a world in which states have *less* absolute power, the NSS will in fact be *more* relevant as a means of making this transition to multipolarism smoother and coordinating disparate power(s) against the shared threats of tomorrow. Thankfully, the trend of national strategies is corresponding with this.

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Endnotes

[1] See the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act.

[2] Although developed from different perspectives, these categorisations broadly overlap and can be treated synonymously for the sake of this essay.

[3] In the same text the authors consider the possibility of future, meta-state level 'macrosecuritization'. However, following this essay's assumption that unipolarity cannot continue indefinitely, then in the long-term this concept is unlikely—as a hegemon is still necessary to create and perpetuate such regimes (Gray 2014, 235).

Written by: Sam Ling Gibson
Written at: SOAS
Written for: Ewan Lawson
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