



## **AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD**

Two Paths America is working to forge a bipartisan consensus on America's place in the world, and the future direction of U.S. national economic and security policy. Two Paths believes that, despite the current contentiousness of our national politics, there is a path forward that offers benefits to all sides in the debate over national security policy. Furthermore, Two Paths believes that crafting such an approach is essential to producing an effective, coherent policy that will hold up over time, through inevitable changes in philosophical direction on the part of future political leaders.

This is not new territory. Americans can look back with great pride on the international system that they created in collaboration with their allies after the end of World War II. Idealists can take pleasure in the enormous strides American-led efforts made to reduce poverty in the world, cure disease, and achieve technological progress, while realists similarly can celebrate the absence of global conflict, a ten-fold increase in the size of the world economy during the same period, and the resulting benefits to U.S. businesses and workers. And both can celebrate the fact that American national security policy during this period was relatively consistent.

The results benefited the entire world. The global economy has become dominated by free market democracies lifting more than a billion people from poverty in the last 70 years. Democratic rule has been adopted by 140 countries that share the fundamental, traditional values promulgated by America and its allies from the beginning of this period.

And the by-product of this economic growth and prosperity is a world now more interconnected than ever:

- The World Wide Web, which began as a dream, is now a fact. More than five billion people now have cellphones. By 2018, more than half of these are expected to be smart phones.
- Although there are increasing numbers of challengers, America remains the undisputed leader of the “Knowledge Economy.”
- Forty million American jobs (one in five) depend on trade.
- America remains amongst the largest two economies in the world, but rapid market development means that 95 per cent of all consumers and 80 per cent of global purchasing power now lie outside of the United States.

If we choose to engage, lead and shape the global economy, America has the opportunity to access export markets that can grow our economy exponentially. The products of our innovation and ingenuity can continue to be the focus of world demand. The potential for America to continue to dominate these high-value markets and thereby create jobs and prosperity at home is immeasurable. And, because trade is increasingly two-way, Americans can also enjoy a broader selection of higher-quality goods at prices that are more competitive than they would be otherwise thanks to global economic engagement.

There are certain policies that must be pursued in order for these benefits to be attained. We can ensure a vibrant underlying economy and the competitiveness needed to rule world markets only if we get our federal budget in order. We must adapt our education system to produce a qualified and flexible workforce, to position America as a world class competitor, and to ensure that everyone has a shot at success in the Knowledge Economy. And, as world leaders, it falls to us to work with our friends and allies in order to keep highways, seaways and national borders open to the flow of high-value, free and fair international trade, by assuring fair currency exchange rates and fair pricing.

Some may be pessimistic, given the polarization and breakdown of political compromise we are experiencing today both at home and abroad. But if we fo-

cus with appropriate strategies on what we need to do, we can surmount these serious challenges.

Americans are unique problem-solvers, able to adjust and adapt rapidly to the demands that are placed upon us. We surmounted the collapse of order in Europe and the Middle East after World War I, the brutal murder and despotic control of large segments of world population after World War II, and most recently, the deliberate murder and enslavement of millions by a Communist system that ultimately collapsed in the face of principled, collective, American-led opposition. We can take assurance from our past successes that we are up to the challenges that lie ahead.

Today's opportunities include:

- Positioning America so that all Americans can compete and benefit from limitless new international economic opportunities
- Adjusting to the emergence of countries that are changing the historic international balance of power
- Containing proliferation of nuclear weapons into the hands of bad actors
- Vanquishing non-state actors that operate without regard to national boundaries, wielding terror as their weapon

Some would argue for “go-it-alone” policies of primacy in which America employs power over persuasion and seeks to let the world know that what it says, goes. But Two Paths believes that this approach is untenable because it ignores the interconnectedness that we have seen rules the world today.

The world's recent use of sanctions against Iran points to a better approach in which America and its allies rallied broad international support for containing Iran's nuclear ambitions. This approach of pursuing “collective security” holds the best potential for achieving tangible results and for imposing the kind of real costs that force malefactors to change their behavior. As a practical matter, that

means that America must breathe new life into old alliances while also working to forge new ones.

America cannot, however, be expected to address all of the world's problems. America must lead and intervene where vital U.S. interests are at stake. In other cases, America must be a constructive partner, providing support to those with the most at stake. The last fifteen years have taught us to be extremely cautious about intervening in foreign civil and religious wars. Rarely do we fully understand the local situation. Frequently we have found ourselves ensnared in conflicts from which there is no easy exit. So, in addition to placing our faith in "collective security," America must look towards "selective engagement," resisting urges or entreaties to intervene where our stake is not so great or an exit is not in sight.

Where the United States does decide to intervene, it must do so decisively without half measures and with an eye to achieving speedy victory. This means that our first responders, diplomats, development assistance providers, intelligence agencies and military must have personnel, resources and clarity of rules of engagement that are needed to win. They must also be able to count on the stable, consistent domestic political support that is required for them to succeed.

American leadership in collaborating with allies is the strongest medicine we have to protect our international interests, stronger over time than any power we can project on our own. We are at our best when we work together with those who share a common purpose with us in defending Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights.

Only through international engagement we can ensure the access to foreign markets that will allow us to take full advantage of the new global interconnectedness and thereby achieve economic growth and job creation. We need to provide the U.S. national security establishment with the resources and manpower required to succeed in executing their missions. This is what it will take to create jobs, maximize our prosperity and guarantee our security.

By working together, idealists and realists can help America to shape its own national economic destiny, and to guarantee our country's safety and America will be stronger and more prosperous for it.