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THE 2007 CARNEGIE JUNIOR FELLOWS CONFERENCE

IS U.S. PRIMACY FADING? SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS AT HOME AND ABROAD

9:45 – 10:30 A.M.
ASKING "WHAT WILL THE U.S. THINK?"

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MODERATED BY
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ANIRUDH SURI: Good morning everyone. I'm Anirudh Suri and I'm the junior fellow for the South Asia program here at the Carnegie Endowment. It is my pleasure to introduce the first of three panels that we have lined up for you today. Looking at the larger theme of whether U.S. primacy is fading and the first one is looking at the foreign policy angle and the other two that will follow will look at the question from the security and then the economic angles.

The title of this panel is "Asking 'What will the U.S. think?'" And today we are joined by Mr. Randall Schriver and Mr. James O'Brien. The panel will be moderated by Minxin Pei. Randy Schriver is one of five founding partners of Armitage International and a senior associate at CSIS, Center for Strategic and International Studies. He has previously served as deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs and prior to joining the Asian Bureau, he was chief of staff and senior policy advisor to deputy secretary of State, Richard Armitage. He has also worked in the office of secretary of Defense, having joined that office as the Presidential Management Fellow.

Mr. James O'Brien is a principal of the Albright Group. He was special presidential envoy for the Balkans in the Clinton Administration and was previously a principal deputy director of the State Department's Policy Planning Office. He participated in numerous high profile international negotiations and played leading roles in shaping the Dayton Agreement for Peace in Bosnia, in attempting to avoid war over Kosovo, and in agreements to control weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union.

So obviously, we have a lot of expertise here. Our moderator for this session will be Minxin Pei who is senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment and also director of the China program. His personal research has focused on U.S.-China relations, the development of democratic political systems, and Chinese politics and he's a prolific writer on all of these issues. Without further ado, I would like to thank each of our panelists again for being here with us and hope you enjoy the rest of the conference. Thank you.

MINXIN PEI: Thank you. Welcome. I'm not going to waste any more time introducing the speakers. Just wanted to say that it's a great privilege to have these two very experienced and talented former government officials joining us today. They will speak for 10 to 15 minutes and then we will have some time for Q&A. Randy will lead off and then Jim will follow. Randy?

RANDALL SCHRIVER: Well, thank you very much, and I am very honored by the invitation to address such a distinguished audience and I'm honored to be with such distinguished company here on the panel. And I'm a bit humbled by the topic,

particularly given the opening presentation asking where the next Zbigs and Henrys are. I am not the next Zbig or Henry –

MR. : (Off mike.) (Laughter.)

MR. SCHRIVER: Yeah, exactly, they expressed their own vote on that topic by leaving before our panel. (Laughter.) But I do welcome the chance to talk on this issue because it is important and it's a bit outside my normal lane; I'm an Asianist, a China specialist if I can claim anything, which I guess these days makes you sort of a de facto strategist because the so-called rise of China, the emergence of China, seems to be touching every part of the globe, every part of American policy. But I really wanted to try to give some thoughts that are a bit broader than just the challenge that China may present.

And I'll confess again, this is a bit of a difficult task. I mean, I think measuring primacy and comprehensive national power is relatively straightforward. You could develop a reasonable criteria -- list of criteria -- and sort of ascribe value to military power, economic power, et cetera. Identifying potential challenges I think is relatively easy, whether it's emerging and rising powers, proliferation, et cetera.

Measuring the trend lines of whether power is increasing, decreasing, remaining static I think is a lot trickier, and that's actually what we were asked to do. So we have the hardest challenge. And I think it's tricky because as you sort of scan the globe and look at different regions, variety of challenges, I think you find the data is actually mixed despite the presentation we've had this morning, which I think was a bit gloomy. I think that the data and the picture is a bit mixed. There are more positive points than I think was credited earlier. And there are, obviously, some challenges and some negative trends.

But the other thing that's very difficult, I think, is to measure the strength of trends and the reversibility of trends. I have no doubt that America has suffered in terms of reputation and in terms of some of the miscalculation. I do have some question about how difficult or easy it would be to reverse some of these things. I think in fact I have a lot of confidence in America and American leadership -- and probably more confidence in our political bodies than I think was also expressed earlier -- to reverse some of these trends -- maybe not all of them but some of them -- in terms of reputation, in terms of image. I think the permanent damage may be a little more impermanent than people speculate. So this is really the difficult thing is to look at trend lines where the data is mixed and where it's hard to sort of analyze the strength and reversibility of these trends. And I think that's something that I hope people get into throughout the day during your discussions.

But I want to address a related question. And it was raised in the opening remarks a bit, and it's this notion of how important is primacy. Is it something worth sustaining? And if so, what are we doing to sustain it? And if that's inadequate, what should we do to sustain it? I mean, I think the notion that our American advantages are impermanent is a

pretty easy concept for everyone to accept. But this other question about how jealously should we guard it and how aggressive should we be in protecting it I think maybe there is some debate. The previous speaker said primacy is not the most important factor. There are other modalities for securing interests -- working with others, working within multilateral organizations, et cetera -- that would be plenty sufficient without sustaining primacy.

I'll actually disagree with that. And I think sustaining American primacy is important. And I think it is important not only because it is the most likely way to secure American interests, but I also -- maybe here I probably don't sound like a Republican much anymore. I certainly don't sound like a Bush Republican much anymore. But here's where maybe I'll reveal some of that. I do think America, on balance, is a force for good in the world. And I do think in addition to sustaining our strength and primacy in order to promote our own interests, I think it's worthy to sustain and strengthen our position in the world, because I think we are a force for good and, on balance, contribute positively to global security, regional security and the interests of those countries that are either allied with us or friendly with us. So I think this is a worthy thing.

Which then leads to a next question about strategy. You know, maybe you're familiar with the scene in "Alice in Wonderland" or maybe you're not. I have young kids, so I'm re-familiarized with, you know, where she asks for directions, and she's asked well, where do you want to go. And she says well, I don't know. And he says well, any road will get you there. If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. If you haven't identified sustaining primacy as a primary goal or a very important goal, and thus don't have a strategy to achieve it, I think you're in a straight of drift and a complacent state of drift where you are sort of resting in the naive belief that our primacy can be sustained without strategy and without concerted effort. I do think there should be a strategy.

Interestingly, I was going to mention the Wolfowitz -- not the Wolfowitz doctrine but the efforts in the early '90s to actually lay out a strategy for sustaining primacy. And it wasn't directed at China actually. This is kind of an interesting point. When Wolfowitz and a guy name Zal Khalilzad and another guy named Scooter Libby -- all famous or infamous for other things now -- when they laid this all out, they actually had in mind Germany and Japan, if you can believe that, as the greatest threats to American primacy. But that's actually immaterial. I mean, a strategy should be set forth with the notion that there may be obvious challenges, but also other countries and other challenges could emerge to threaten our position.

But I think this was actually a worthy effort. But clearly, the implementation and what we've seen when these gentlemen and others returned to power, clearly, some problems with it. But I don't think you should throw out the whole notion of having a strategy and having associated implementation and policies -- throw that out completely. I think it is a worthy thing to do.

So, what are some of the elements? Well, actually, there would be quite a bit of overlap with what I heard this morning. I do think most of the work would be at home. And I won't speak to this much, because that's not the charge of our panel and certainly beyond my expertise. But I think for America to sustain primacy, sustain its position in the world, a great deal of work needs to be done on education, on our social welfare system and securing that for the future, on fiscal discipline so that we have the wherewithal to take on new challenges, et cetera. I think that is the number one challenge for America. To be strong abroad, you have to be strong at home. But let me stay in our lane here and talk more about foreign policy and international relations.

Number one, I think, you know, the first rule of when you're in a hole what you're supposed to do -- stop digging. I think we need to really stop the hemorrhaging and stop really the drain on our comprehensive national power which comes in a variety of forms but I think first and foremost comes from the experiences in Iraq. And I think I won't get into the discussion about withdrawal or timelines. I mean, I think that's, in a sense, a diversion. I mean, what's lost in all this debate about funding the troops and whether troops should leave this year, next year, the year after is what are our interests there and how do those interests sort of inform and direct decisions of these other sort of tactical issues that most people are talking about right now.

But this needs to be addressed, needs to be addressed directly, and the follow-on work to rebuilding the military needs to commence immediately. I think there's an under appreciated story. You see reference to it, and you see discussion about it but not to the extent I'd like to see. There's going to be serious rebuilding needed in our military and in our armed forces, probably for a decade or more, to recover from this experience. And whether you think it was a worthwhile endeavor or not, that's just a fact. So stop the hemorrhaging and give focus on rebuilding the military is the first rule for me.

Number two, I think investment in allies and friends is extremely important. And this has gotten a lot harder. You know, alliance-making -- there are a lot of things that were different -- not necessarily better, worse, easier or harder -- in the Cold War. But I think alliance-building was actually easier during the Cold War, because countries were compelled to ally with the United States, because they felt threatened or felt the need for that security in very direct ways. And now, you actually have to give a damn about their interests and every once in a while show that you have concerns beyond counterterrorism and beyond your own issues. And I think some good work is being done. I think the Bush administration doesn't get enough credit for the alliance-building in Japan. I think we've had some setbacks with Korea, but the FTA is an excellent development that could really help us right that situation. Australian alliance has never been better. So I think Asia is actually trending in the right direction in a lot of ways. But certainly, some work to be done in NATO and Europe and elsewhere. So I think allies and friends need a great deal of investment from the United States.

I think we do need a strategy for addressing rising powers. I think the early '90s and the '92 Wolfowitz plan, if we want to call it that, I think placed a little too much emphasis on preventing the rise of powers who could be peer competitors. I would, I

guess, phrase it a little differently about shaping the emergence and trying to be a little more deft in terms of the shaping and hedging. Now, countries aren't particularly good at deft maneuvering and subtleties in foreign policy, and the United States is particularly not good at it. But I think dealing with a country like China or dealing with a country like India does require this sort of more subtle shaping strategy where there are plenty of opportunities along with challenges that come with the emergence of these countries.

I think next on my list would be investment and concern for international and multilateral organizations. I mean, let's face it, the United States has -- and this goes well beyond the Bush administration and the so-called unilateralist approach. The United States has run roughshod over these organizations for decades, barely pretending that other people's opinions and concerns matter. I think if we don't leverage and make benefit of these organizations, others will. I think that was a point that was made earlier. So I think it's very important that we invest and take these organizations seriously and try to leverage benefit for ourselves in addition to keeping an eye on what others are doing within these organizations.

Next on my list would be nonproliferation, counterproliferation, because I think technologies that are present and are emerging represent a way to cut the distance and cut the gap between our leadership position, our position of strength and those of aspiring countries or non-governmental organizations. The time-distance problem is being deal with very effectively in a lot of ways by technology.

Next on my list would be American leadership generally. I differ a bit from the way it was characterized earlier. Yes, leadership, it is important that you do show concern and interest in the problems of others, and that it's rooted in a strong value base. But I think what people are most interested in from the United States is competence. And I'll relay a short -- I'll have to leave the characters out of it, but a head of state in the Middle East recently told a very senior former government official, you know, we're very used to the way Americans deal with us in this region. They come in, they pretend to consult, they tell us what's on their mind, they pretend to listen to what's on our mind. And then they go off and do whatever they want to do. And you know, we're fine with that, because we always assumed somewhere in the recess of our mind that there was a competent policy behind all this. So the same actually worked out quite well for all of us. But we don't feel that way anymore. That this game is actually quite damaging of pretending to consult and doing what you want to do anyway, because it sort of laughs at very fundamental competence. So I think that's what I would add in addition to values which I think are extremely important. I think the aberrations of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo and imprisoning people without a trial -- I mean, I think these are grotesque aberrations of American values. And I think to be great abroad, we do need to be great at home. And we need to show our character, even if we're imperfect, as we always are. Coming as near to that and as close to that is I think very key to our ability to lead.

Now, there's a few things that -- here's where I'll close and just raise a few issues for discussion possibly. There's a few things that aren't on my list. Now remember, I was trying to provide some elements for a strategy for sustaining American primacy. I

wasn't trying to give a list of all-important things to American foreign policy or American security. But this might raise some questions. Democracy promotion is not on my list. I think it's important to American security, but I don't think it's as key to sustaining American primacy. So where does that fit in your sense of prioritization? The war on terror or getting on the war on terror ride is not on my list. I agree completely that it's a misnomer. In fact, we just released a report on Asia -- my company and a few others -- where we said flat out the war on terror is a misnomer.

General Tony Zinni is the one who said, you know, in World War II we never declared a war on kamikaze. You don't declare a war on tactics, you declare a war on the actual threat and where that threat is emanating from. And homeland security, which is related to the war on terror, is not on my list. I think homeland security is very important, but I think actually we're pretty secure. And I think the steps we've taken since 9/11 -- I have some question about the necessity of some of those. But I think if you look historically, if you look in relative terms around the world, if you look even relative in U.S. history, this is a very secure country. And threats to our homeland are not the threats that are going to prevent or challenge American primacy in my view.

So with that, I'll close and look forward to discussion or any questions that you may have.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you, all, for patiently sitting through two panels back-to-back. I'm also honored to be here and have a chance to talk about these. I don't think you'll hear much disagreement between Randy and me on the premises. I think we both support robust American engagement and pursuit of U.S. interests, security, prosperity and some spread of U.S. values.

What I want to do is try to talk in a little bit more programmatic way about a few of the issues I think matter. And I'd just start with a story. We'll be kind of the -- you know, the young-parent panel here for you today, because one of the great American novels is "Tom Sawyer." And inside that story, if you remember, Tom's asked to go out and paint a fence, and he hates it, he grumbles, he doesn't want to go do it. This is much like America, especially after the last few years. We don't want to play this global superpower role, right? There's a real resistance within the United States to more international engagement. But you know, so he goes out, he starts to do it. And he realizes the thing to do is to get other people to paint the fence for him. So he says this is fun, let's paint the fence! And that, in essence, is what diplomacy is. You're trying to persuade other people to paint the fence for you.

Now, first off, does that mean that -- as the panel, we're asked to address -- does that mean issues will be resolved without active American engagement? My answer is I hope so! You know, certainly throughout the '90s when I was directly involved, we had

an active strategy of building regional frameworks, institutions, practices and norms that encouraged states to engage with one another and to begin to resolve conflicts without seeking some sort of global intervention. So you began to see the Organization of American states begin to take on issues of governance within states.

The African Union emerged from what had been a loose collection of states to try to create a functioning secretariat. Similar efforts were taken in Asia at a much earlier stage. And I think in Asia, through the last few years -- especially, you know, Deputy Secretary Armitage's personal relationships through Asia -- Asia has sustained that momentum, even in a period when the institutions weren't changing materially. And so I think you'll start to see more and more of that kind of work to build up frameworks where the U.S. may play a role but not necessarily the dominant role in the room as a way of trying to forestall problems before they reach the global stage.

Now, does that mean that U.S. primacy is threatened? Well, I really don't understand the question in a way. It's like asking, are Beethoven's piano sonatas still beautiful, right? Well, no. When there's a hack at the keyboard, you know, they're not. (Laughter.) And so when you have incompetent leadership, American primacy is threatened. But what is true -- the better question is, are the materials that the leadership has to use changing? And of course they are, because we no longer sit in the same position of military and economic dominance -- you know, clearly un-threatened superiority. We face challenges that are different. Our supremacy's not relevant to many of the challenges we face today. We're not able to sweep away the problems. And the times are different. The changes -- I see all these concerned looks and I --

(Off mike commentary.)

Okay. I'm not sure it's worth saving but it's all right. (Laughter.) So all of those things are different. And the question before us now is, how can America lead in the situation we're likely to face over the next few years?

So one brief political point -- there will be a fight between a domestic focus and an international focus. There will be limited attention within the American electorate in the next presidency for more adventurous foreign policy. We saw this in 1992 when you saw about one-third of the Republican electorate side with somebody who was openly isolationist, and you see it in the Democratic electorate today. And so a new president is going to come in reluctant to embark on ambitious overtures abroad.

So what I think then has to happen is that we need to have an agenda that's sufficiently focused and that has enough resonance at home that America will be able to lead. By leading, it's not always asserting in an American accent that this is the way things have to be. It means setting an agenda, raising certain issues up, suppressing certain other issues. It means encouraging the internalization of norms so that as people act without direct American intervention, they're acting in a way that is compatible with American interests and we hope most often even supporting American interests.

So what kind of agenda do I think we ought to consider having? And I'll just sketch out a few things. I'm sure I'm going to forget something, but I really do think it needs to be a narrow agenda, so I'm deliberately excluding a few issues and fudging around the edges.

The first thing is you need to return to American traditions. There is no way we can repair our standing in the world if the new administration walks in and continues many of the same policies that we see in place today. And I think there are two, in particular -- two attitude changes. The first is on the issue of human rights, the way that we treat detainees -- both U.S. citizens and foreign citizens -- and the way that we treat people when we hold them overseas, because there will be U.S. troops engaged overseas. The way that we treat them costs us. Each photograph from Abu Ghraib we will hear about until our kids are sitting up in panels like this. And that's going to set us back for decades. So there needs to be an overt break with the policies of this administration on the way they choose to treat detainees. I'm trained as a lawyer and I'm appalled, frankly, that the lawyers in this administration seem to argue for every inch of ground they can get. The smart lawyer tells his client well, I could keep you out of jail if you do this, but it's stupid. You should rein yourself back in here. And I realize the State Department fought and lost that fight during the first Bush term. But there needs to be a clear break by a new administration.

A second issue is in attitude. The new administration, Democratic or Republican, needs to think about its policies as being sustainable. This administration had a view that if they broke enough china, if they changed things fundamentally, then the next people would have no choice but to go along with it. Well, you know, the only rule maybe about U.S. foreign policy is that if you are there to start something big, you will not be there to finish it. You need to put in place a program so that the people who come after you will move along the same track. That means you need to have friends, at the time you launch it, within your own party, across party lines, not happiness and glee across party lines. But you need to be able to see it sustained if the other party takes a position of power. And most importantly, you need international partners. If you try to do it yourself, it's going to go out the door when you leave on January 20th.

Now, so that's a difference in attitude that ought to permeate all the way through. And I think Randy did a nice job of walking through all the ways that that change in attitude can be evident when you go through each of the areas where we need to make repair, from our own military to the multilateral organizations. So I'm not going to go through much of those.

What I want to talk about now is what's the substantive agenda. What can a new U.S. administration actually do with its constrained domestic politics and in a way that repairs our global standing? And here, I've suggested there are four issues.

One, energy security -- and I think by this, you start always in measures that are going to provide some solution to the problem of climate change. Now, this is vital. Let's leave aside the science of climate change. But any step we take to reduce our

dependence on volatile areas around the world for our energy is a step toward allowing the U.S. to decide our foreign policy based on interests other than the pursuit of energy. And my hope is that when people in the future look back on this period of American foreign policy, it will seem in some ways as quaint as some of the foreign policy of the McKinley-Teddy Roosevelt era, right? Which was this grand ideological crusade, whether it was the Kiplingesque language of "The White Man's Burden" or civilizing across, you know, these guys' region -- across Asia. But what it really was was the pursuit of, you know, bases for coal-fired ships that needed to have bases every few hundred miles. And if we start to see our foreign policies driven by this demand for energy, you start to rein that in, you begin to create new opportunities in your foreign policy.

Now, the question was asked in the last panel, what can we do on climate change? Well, I would start more broadly on a few things that do begin to change the way that the U.S. addresses the globe. So three quick points -- one is you need a big domestic kind of reorganization. You need somebody who is in charge. And whether that's a czar or somebody else or you just pick a Cabinet person you trust to be able to break down the borders, you need boundaries between agencies, you need to do something like that.

But the next two things are on the international front. This a great opportunity for engagement with China and with India. I agree that the theme that will run through the next 10 years of U.S. foreign policy is how do we address the rise of very strong regional powers, some of which will be global powers. And here is an issue on which we share some interests with these countries. There's competing interests in terms of an immediate restriction on energy output. But there's a shared interest in long-term access to resources and in long-term management of the threat posed by environmental challenges. And the more we engage with those countries, the more we will have a sustainable regime for climate change. What might that regime look like? This is the other thing I'd suggest. We need to start a global cap and trading system right away. And I think that's going to change in any next administration in part because U.S. businesses are starting to demand it. They see real opportunities for themselves as a global business to cap and trade. They also now see themselves being faced by regulations by individual states. And this is the pattern of American politics, right? Individual states start to put onerous regulations on businesses. Businesses say we don't want this patchwork; we want one rule. So they come to the federal government and say give us one rule. And I think the only way to have a sustainable rule in this cap and trade system is then the federal government has to work it out as a global system. And again, that brings people together around the problem that's shared.

Second issue I think is nuclear nonproliferation. There are, of course, broader issues as well. But I think within nuclear nonproliferation, that's a set of issues where I think, again, we've taken a wrong step. Our own doctrine in the development of new weaponry is very problematic. I think for a few years, we lost time also in the effort to try to restrict access to potentially damaging materials. Now, in this area, again, you have room for international coordination. You see it, I think, effectively with North Korea today. I think in Iran we're sort of teetering a little bit, but we're sort of moving

that dialogue along the right way. Those are regions where you can effective international cooperation.

Next, terrorism or security -- here, I do want to join the chorus. Our framework makes no sense. And I would say that I think what we're facing really is a single enemy, but we have multiple possible friends. And the question I'd want us to be asking is not the question we keep posing. We keep asking, how can we persuade Muslims that Islam is compatible with the West? I think the question is, how can many moderate Muslims -- because there are hundreds of forms of Islam -- how can they realize that their belief in Islam is incompatible with the extremism of this small group that seeks a global caliphate? Now, that's not a question that can be answered in my flat, Midwestern tones, right? There's in Indonesia a tradition of taking this Wahabi help but also then moderating and twisting it to suit domestic purposes. Malaysia has its own approach. In Turkey, the theorists of the AK Party have completely inverted their ideology. They used to say Islam was anti-Western. Today, they openly say that Islam depends upon what we regard as traditionally Western values -- freedom of religion, freedom of expression and a belief in private property, which helps secure them to their growing middle class. So all those voices are much more important than our own. But within that, there's still going to be a need for U.S. strong leadership. There will be places that we need to be engaged militarily. These, I think, tend to be smaller, more focused, quicker in and out than what we chose to do in 2003. And also then diplomatically, you need to see some movement on the Middle East peace process. It's simply a cancer that anywhere you go, anyone you talk to raises it. I was just speaking with some Southeast Asians earlier this week. They said when they did some polling in Indonesia they said what's the number one problem facing the globe -- the Palestinian problem. You know, that's sort of crazy, you know, from any objective analysis of what the viewpoint should be. But it is in fact there, it needs to be addressed. Also, we need some resolution in Iraq.

The final point I'll raise here is that I do think it needs to be an American priority to help build effective states that are, we hope, democratic. And this means, I think, sort of a jumble of issues. It's one that's going to take some nuanced approaches to the individual issues. But we need to see that the states that are emerging are able to actually deliver to their citizens, to see their citizens participate in an economic system that rewards individual effort. And that means all of the sort of themes of corruption. I means having an open global trading system but also addressing some of the inequalities that result from them.

Now, throughout all this, the theme will be how do you deal with emerging powers. And I endorse what Randy had to say here. It's really about building the practices of cooperation and shared values with them so that then, as they rise and we continue, we're able to work with one another and find areas where we can cooperate.

And I'll just close with a note on history. You know, it's too soon to evaluate the Bush administration. Clearly, President Bush is betting that history's going to be on his side. What he's betting on is that some event will happen after he leaves office that will, in some way, ratify the assumptions so that Iraq will magically turn to democracy or that

there'll be some further terrorist act -- something that will validate those assumptions. And I think that poses a challenge then to the administration that comes afterward. And you'll notice in the four areas that I selected, each one of them is, in some way, a rebuttal of the assumptions that have driven, I'll say, the White House and this administration. And an administration that builds a U.S. foreign policy around those four priorities will, I think, succeed and by succeeding will establish that this period if an aberration, a deviation from the main American values of the bipartisan foreign policy we've had since World War II and seal it off so that it doesn't become something that infects the foreign policy of administrations for years to come. An administration that bumbles along, like Alice looking for someplace to go, is going to leave open the possibility that at home we will keep hearing, again and again, how the approach taken in recent years was in fact the right one only not done enough. But much worse, our partners overseas will continue to believe that in some way we're acting on those same assumptions, and that's going to undermine every effort we've made to try to rebuild confidence in American leadership.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. PEI: We have time for about three questions. So please, the lady over there.

Q: Jennifer Bovair from CSIS. You mentioned energy security and removing ourselves from dependence on volatile regions. We receive about 17 percent of our imports from the Middle East. If we do remove ourselves from there, what kind of leverage do we have in talking with the Middle East, considering the substantial economic leverage we currently have with them? And also, doesn't that make us more vulnerable, in some cases? After the hurricanes in 2005 wiped out most of our refining capabilities, the Saudis did really come to our rescue in terms of supplying us with product. So what do you see as a replacement for our leverage? And aren't you afraid that if we do remove ourselves that someone else would step in in our place -- China?

MR. : Do you want to take a few questions and then --

MR. PEI: The gentleman over there -- yeah.

Q: Hi. My name is Wayne Chen, and I'm a future junior fellow for Carnegie Endowment. My question is for Mr. Schriver. Earlier like Ambassador Hunter talked about the importance of using military means as a last resort in forming policy, and (you are a ?) supporter of supremacy. So my question is, do you consider the rapid militarization of U.S. foreign policy, in particular the unilateral military action against Iraq, as an inevitable product of U.S. unchallenged supremacy since the collapse of Soviet Union? And if so, how do you like persuade the rest of the international community the importance of sustained U.S. supremacy? Thank you.

Q: Mike Cho, U.S. Department of Commerce. One of the things I notice -- Song Min-soon, the current foreign minister of South Korea, before he came into office, made

a public testimony to the national assembly that the U.S. has been in the most number of wars out of any country in the world. And rightly so, most interpreted that as a very provocative statement singling some disdain towards the United States. So to me, that reveals a relationship whereas that has been more based on a recognition of the sacrifice of Korean War veterans to more of a utilitarian relationship regarding trade or regarding North Korea. And it seems like to be a trend in Asia. So first of all, I'm wondering should we pursue such a relationship with Asian powers? And also, ASEAN as well is a multilateral forum or ASEAN, ASEAN Plus Three, ASEAN Plus Six but notably missing is the United States. So it seems like there's a trend in Asia, and I'm wondering if you agree whether or not there's a trend in Asia to try to counter or try to compete with the United States. Thank you.

MR. PEI: we have time for one more on this side. Anybody -- yes.

Q: Mr. O'Brien, at the beginning of your -- oh, sorry. Christina Jeffers (ph), National Democratic Institute. At the beginning of your talk, you hearkened back to this time of multilateralism, the thought after "Agenda for Peace" and "Supplement to Agenda for Peace" that we could hand over the peacekeeping baton to regional actors -- ECOWAS, CIS both picked up the peacekeeping baton. But over time, it became clear that ECOWAS was really a vehicle for Nigeria and the CIS for, of course, the Russian Federation. So now, you know, from the viewpoint of 2007, can the U.S. look to regional actors really to pick up these peacekeeping-conflict mitigation tasks? Or can we only look to split the world into fiefdoms for regional hegemons?

MR. PEI: Okay. Each of you have three minutes. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHRIVER: The first question about -- I wrote -- let's see if I can recreate it here. Was Iraq an inevitable outcome of our primacy and unilateral position of strength after the Cold War? No. Iraq was a deliberate decision by a group of people who felt that they knew what was best for American interests. And it was, in my view, a war of choice. And I think if you agree or disagree with that original decision, I think the conduct of the war also involved some choice and some deliberate decision-making that had disastrous consequences. And I, you know, a lot of people say Iraq is different than Afghanistan. Pardon me, Iraq is different than Vietnam in that we won't be able to withdraw gracefully and recover as quickly. I think we can recover from the mistakes we've made in Iraq. It might involve a different set of challenges than Vietnam, but I don't think this is permanent damage to America and our strength if we stop digging, as I said earlier about being in the hole and stop the hemorrhaging, and that's very important.

I think the second question was sort of two questions. The South Korean foreign minister saying that the United States had been in more wars than any other country. Did the South Korean foreign minister also provide a list of wars that we shouldn't have been involved in -- World War I, World War II, Afghanistan, Korea? I mean, I think our primacy does have its burdens, and occasionally, there are missteps. And if this Iraq thing turns out to be an aberration, you know, I think America, on balance, will still be looked at as a responsible citizen in the global community and that most of our military

engagement has been for not only our own interests but the common good. I mean, it's sort of a difficult thing to measure, but I feel confident that we can project that image and have that accepted as a matter of objective, historical review.

ASEAN, I think I'm a big proponent of increasing our engagement. I think we have seeded the field. I think we've gotten tripped-up on a couple of difficult issues. We have a Burma policy that really constrains an ASEAN policy. And as difficult as it is to see Aung San Suu Kyi treated the way she is and as difficult as it is to see those thugs in Burma running that country into the ground, I think we need to address our Burma problem in order to enhance our engagement with ASEAN and signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. You know, the Southeast Asian countries have come to us and said look, just sign it. It doesn't mean anything. We don't expect you to do anything. And look what the Australians did. They signed it, and the prime minister immediately went to parliament and said we don't mean it. Well, we don't really do that with treaties, but the fact that this is the environment that they're giving us, there probably is a way we can endorse the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in a way that is satisfactory so that we can have more enhanced engagement with ASEAN. I think it's critical.

MR. O'BRIEN: The questions give me a chance, it appears, to try to dig my way out of some holes. So I hope I don't violate Randy's view. I think the first one energy -- you know, talk about energy security not energy independence, and that's because energy independence is impossible. We will always be dependent on foreign oil as long as we use oil. Now, what I do think is we need to build some capacity into our systems, and we need to build diversity so that when one region has a problem, we're able to see supplies shipped. It's a global energy market. This whole idea of someone else moving in is important only for the investment and returns of individual companies I think much less so for the availability of the resource on a global basis. But I think until we begin to make the idea of security a central part of our policy and a priority, it's almost always going to take a back seat to other, more immediate priorities in terms of, say, how do we engage with Central Asian countries where there's always, you know, three competing items on the agenda. And if we say well, what we're trying to do is make sure we have a secure supply that will then help our European allies -- of gas, in particular, through a southern route -- that then establishes some primacy and some order to the way we're making our foreign policy decisions. And I think, in particular, we will continue to be engaged and dependent on Middle Eastern oil. So at least the word security was used advisedly and I think, you know, you need to take it in that sense.

I'll mention a brief comment about Asia. One of the things I've been struck by -- because I'm really more of a European and Middle East hand -- is the extent to which Asian countries are now coming and reaching out to people of my background and saying we really want you guys to understand that we want active American engagement, and we want to have regional structures that include the United States, as Randy mentioned those in particular, but even perhaps new subregional, informal groupings -- you know, like a long, kind of Northeast Asian arrangement. And that's important as a balance to some of the tensions that have existed in those places as well.

Now, the final question about the role of regional peacekeepers, I think it's important. What I was addressing wasn't simply peacekeeping. I'm in fact pretty skeptical about a lot of what was in "Agenda for Peace." What I was talking about is the capacity of regional states to come together and address common questions without having it elevated to a global level where other agendas take place. That works in many issues, and you can go through and see places where many issues are taken care of. It doesn't work all the time. And in particular, when you face a conflict, you have a post-conflict situation, I think you have to view it through a slightly different lens. One is often the regional players are the only ones who will commit. And that, at times, is enough to buy time for a peace to take root. But at times, it is not; very often, it's not. But we need to build the capacity of those institutions, like ECOWAS or others, so that they are more effective. But we see the limits of that. We saw it in West Africa. We're seeing it again in Darfur. And I think in that case, you do need some global intervention. My plea is that you see this as an opportunity for the states with somewhat divergent interests to work together. I for one am intrigued by the notion -- and this is their expertise, and it would be great to hear from them on this -- that the U.S. and China have grounds for great cooperation, especially in Africa. Because I believe we're the only two states with global reach, global interest and the resources to want to be involved in trying to promote some stability and solutions to problems there. We're both going to be there. We need to work with one another on some rules of the road so that we do it in a way that's good for the globe, for ourselves but also for the people who live in those places. And I think we can, and that's the message I think you hear from both of us.

We are -- at least I am -- upset about a lot of decisions made in the last years. But I do believe that the materials exist for competent leadership to bring America back to a position where we're respected and leading capably in the pursuit of American interests. And that's what I think you can see if the next administration, you know, takes up the challenge appropriately.

MR. PEI: I think the theme for this session is quite clear -- one word: competence. I hope the transcripts of this session will make their way to the various campaigns and the advice will be adopted. I hope all of you will join me in thanking the two speakers for taking time to do that.

(Applause.)

MS. REED: Good morning, everyone. My name is Amy Reed, and I'm the junior fellow for nonproliferation here. I'd like to thank, once again, our speakers Randall Schriver and James O'Brien for their insightful comments and also Minxin Pei for his wonderful moderating.

The conference will now begin its first of three breakout sessions for the afternoon. You all have a list of your breakout sheet assignments. It was in your packets. They're going to vary from room to room, so I'm going to read out where you'll be. And also, a junior fellow will be in each room at the same time as you all are. So if you want to kind of look for them, I'll let you know who they will be as well.

So those of you who have been assigned to Track One -- which countries other than the United States may influence policy decision-making globally -- and are in Group A, you can follow Oriana and meet in the Choate Room which is downstairs on the first floor. Oriana has long, brown hair. (Laughter.)

Those who are in Track One, Group B, it's going to be in the Butler Room on the first floor with -- (inaudible) -- right here.

Those of you who are assigned to Track Two -- what might or will keep the U.S. at the top of policy agendas everywhere -- and are in Group A, you're going to meet in this room at the circular table at the back of the room with Nathaniel, who's got his hand in the air. That's in this room, so you shouldn't get lost.

And finally, those who are in Track Two, Group B, you can meet in Shotwell which is in a room downstairs, and that's going to be with Michael Grosack (ph), who I don't see right now, but he has lighter hair -- he opened.

So that is pretty much it for right now. And I hope you all enjoy the rest of the afternoon.

(End of session.)