

## US Foreign Policy in the Post-Bush Era: Implications for Europe and the OSCE

### *Introduction*

Americans have a new president in Barack Obama, and they have been eagerly awaiting what his mantra, “*Change we can believe in*”, will mean for them. This was no “ordinary” US presidential election; indeed, one almost had the sense that Obama was elected by a *global* and not merely a national constituency, suggesting a new significance for the term “America, the world’s ‘indispensable’ nation” as well as a new meaning for “globalization”.

At the time of writing, Obama has been in office for some nine months, providing an opportunity to assess what the implications of his presidency promised to be and have been; in effect, to compare his campaign promises with his actual behaviour as president. Since the US does impact the rest of the planet in so many ways – global emissions of greenhouse gases, economic activity, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), conflict, and cultural diffusion in general – this can be a useful exercise for Americans and others to track the impact of the Obama presidency on multiple fronts and, in the process, explore where a better fit between rhetoric and reality can be attempted.

### *The Pre-Obama World*

Barack Obama’s election as 44th president of the United States was a truly revolutionary development. For one thing, he is not only an African American but the *first* African American to be elected to this office, something that promises to have a global impact. Considering the violent nature of race relations in American history up to the present time,<sup>1</sup> including the virulently racist nature of many Americans’ reactions to Obama, both before and after his election, his election is remarkable.

### *Bush Is from Mars, Obama Is from Venus*

Obama’s election also represents a revolution in US foreign policy. Shortly before the US-led invasion of Iraq in late March 2003, Robert Kagan pro-

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1 Cf. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, Volumes I and II, New York 1962.

duced a compelling account of the paradigmatic differences in foreign affairs between the two primary guarantors of global peace and stability, Europe and the United States.<sup>2</sup> Being *Hobbesian* and “from Mars”, the US under George W. Bush was quick to countenance the use of force to achieve its goals, in contrast to the Europeans who, being *Kantian* and “from Venus”, were and remain more likely to seek diplomatic solutions to complex global problems. To put it simply, *the Europeans were far more “OSCE-friendly” than the Americans during the Bush years.*

For Kagan, the reasons for this stark contrast had nothing to do with national character, but were a function of America’s unique standing in the world as the sole superpower. By virtue of its power status, the US can do basically anything it wants, and, with the invasion and continued occupation of Iraq, it clearly has.

In view of America’s staggering military might, therefore, the presidency of George W. Bush was characterized by aggressive unilateralism following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, resulting in the “war of choice” in Iraq whose only beneficiaries seem to have been Halliburton, Blackwater USA/World, oil companies and, of course, Iran. The Iraq war, predicated on dubious premises, has killed over 4,000 Americans and wounded more than 30,000 others who have often returned home to sub-standard medical treatment. The war has also killed, wounded, and displaced tens of thousands of Iraqis. According to the CIA and other intelligence agencies, the war has become a PR coup for Al-Qaeda and a magnet for many Muslims worldwide, radicalizing them to participate in the Jihad against the “Crusader”. In the process, they have been “tested under fire”, learning how to kill Americans and other Westerners before returning home prepared to continue their “holy war”, whether in Peshawar, Mumbai, Amman, Cairo, Gaza, Mindanao, Pattani, Bali, London, Madrid, Amsterdam, Brussels, Brooklyn, or Jersey City. Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, “extraordinary rendition”, violations of Americans’ and others’ civil rights, incompetence, and total failure on multiple domestic (e.g. Hurricane Katrina) as well as international fronts (e.g. the war in Afghanistan), also characterized the Bush administration. In addition, Bush’s “Hobbesian state-of-nature” political/economic philosophy was disturbingly compatible with the current global financial crisis – the most catastrophic since the Crash of 1929.<sup>3</sup>

Against this highly challenging background, Americans elected Senator Barack Obama as their first post-Bush president. He is a black man whose middle name is Hussein. His mother was a white Christian from Kansas,

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2 Cf. Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York 2003.

3 Cf. Dennis Sandole, The Western-Islamic “Clash of Civilizations”: The Inadvertent Contribution of the Bush Presidency, in: *Peace and Conflict Studies* 2/2005, pp. 54-68; idem, The “Fog of War” on Terrorism: US Policy, Deception, and the Continuing Slide into the “Clash of Civilizations”, in: *ILSA Journal of International And Comparative Law* 1/2006, pp. 149-170.

while his father was a Kenyan Muslim. He lived as a child in Indonesia and Hawaii. For these and other reasons, e.g. his community organizing work in Chicago,<sup>4</sup> Obama offers hope to millions domestically and worldwide – hope of bringing together people from a wide variety of backgrounds to work on constructive change towards open and accountable government, enhanced human and civil rights, a return of America to its historical and cherished role as a founding architect of liberal democracy, plus a renewal of America’s mission in assuming a leadership role in galvanizing others to help solve complex global problems. It is this promise which resulted in Obama being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2009.

### *The Promise of Obama*

President Obama’s overall promise to “change America and the world” derives from his multiracial, multicultural, and multireligious background; his ascent from an economically stressed (but loving) childhood to the heights of Harvard Law School and editorship of the *Harvard Law Review*; and his experience as a community organizer on the South Side of Chicago, assisting the survival of some of America’s “Wretched of the Earth”.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, he possesses an uncanny capability to see the world in terms of multiple perspectives, including those indexed by Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations”.<sup>6</sup>

Being able to see the world *empathically* as others do, including those against whom Bush had been perceived to be at war, enables Obama to be the “*global community organizer*”, bringing people together from a wide variety of perspectives and, through *dialogue*, arriving at consensus on how things can and should be done.

### *Obama’s Global Problem-Solving Agenda*

In this regard, President Obama is in agreement with, among others, the Brookings Institution’s *Managing Global Insecurity* (MGI) project.<sup>7</sup> The

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4 Cf. Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, New York 2004 (first published in 1995).

5 Cf. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York 1968.

6 Cf. Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations? In: *Foreign Affairs* 3/1993, pp. 22-49; idem, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York 1996.

7 Cf. Managing Global Security/MGI, *A Plan for Action. A New Era of International Cooperation for a Changed World: 2009, 2010, and Beyond*, September 2008, at: [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/11\\_action\\_plan\\_mgi/11\\_action\\_plan\\_mgi.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/11_action_plan_mgi/11_action_plan_mgi.pdf); The Brookings Institution, *A Plan for Action: Renewed American leadership and International Cooperation for the 21st Century*, Washington, DC, 20 November 2008, at: [http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/~media/Files/events/2008/1120\\_mgi/20081120\\_mgi.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/~media/Files/events/2008/1120_mgi/20081120_mgi.pdf).

MGI project stresses that “global problems require global solutions”. Subsumed under this radical shift from the policies of President George W. Bush is the belief that “national interest has become global interest”. Conversely, “global interest is national interest”. As Obama has said, “we are *all* in this together”. This implies inclusivity of voices, especially the voices of those who have never been heard, who tend to be marginalized, disrespected, oppressed, and even killed – a major component of the genesis of terrorism. The efforts of the G20 – recently expanded from the G7/8 and now including the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) and several others and accounting for some 85 per cent of global economic activity – in mobilizing global efforts to counter the current financial crisis reflects this recognition of a “*new realism*”.

Implied here is a need for *global governance* (not “government”), where representatives of states, international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, religion, the business world, media, and others come together to listen to each other *respectfully* as they brainstorm solutions to complex global problems (e.g. the abject poverty of “The Bottom Billion”).<sup>8</sup>

Implicit here is also the necessity to change traditional mindsets, to undergo a “paradigm shift”, or develop a capacity to “think outside the box”.<sup>9</sup> One of President Obama’s distinguishing characteristics is a capacity to motivate people to make the sometimes painful journey from zero-sum *Realpolitik* and its accompanying “security dilemmas”<sup>10</sup> to a more positive-sum, global problem-solving worldview and plan of action.

Obama also believes that there is still a need for American leadership in the world, not as the hegemon – the “new Rome” – characteristic of President George W. Bush’s neoconservative, muscularly unilateralist America, but as a leader “*by example*” and source of resources in joint efforts to tackle pressing global issues (e.g. by providing airlift capacity to an EU peace operation in Africa).

### *Obama’s Foreign Policy Goals*

In July 2008, then presidential candidate Obama delivered his first foreign policy speech at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC, indicating that, as president of the United States, he would focus on five primary issues:<sup>11</sup>

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8 Cf. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About it*, Oxford 2007.

9 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago 1972.

10 Cf. John H. Herz, Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma, in: *World Politics* 2/1950, pp. 157-180.

11 Cf. Obama’s Remarks on Iraq and Afghanistan, in: *New York Times*, 15 July 2008, at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/15/us/politics/15text-obama.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/15/us/politics/15text-obama.html?_r=1).

1. Ending, responsibly, the war in Iraq.
2. Dealing more effectively with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
3. Preventing WMD from falling into the hands of terrorists.
4. Breaking America's dependence on foreign (e.g. Middle Eastern) oil and, in the process, undermine the escalating trajectory towards global warming.
5. Forging regional and global partnerships to deal with other pressing issues (e.g. the Israeli-Palestinian conflict).

Each of these goals has a bearing on security elsewhere in the world. For instance, in Asia, where the rising BRIC powers of India and China are located,<sup>12</sup> ending the war in Iraq would deprive that theatre of operations of its allure to global Jihadists as a basis for further recruitment, training, experience, and expansion of the "civilizational clash". By dealing effectively with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, President Obama would be closing down further sources of inspiration, recruitment, and training for Jihadists, including those who might be drawn from, and return to countries in Asia.

By preventing WMD from falling into the hands of terrorists through underground networks such as those established by the "Father of the Islamic Bomb", Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan of Pakistan, Obama would be reducing the likelihood that, for example, a nuclear device might be used against an American city – an operation a Saudi Wahhabist cleric has given permission to Osama bin Laden to conduct<sup>13</sup> – or any other city (e.g. London, Madrid, Paris, Manila, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore).

Breaking America's dependence on Middle Eastern (especially Saudi) oil would reduce the level of indirect support for Saudi Jihadists such as Osama bin Laden and, earlier, the fifteen Saudis among the nineteen young men who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks, as well as support for operations in, among other regions, Asia (e.g. Mumbai). Further, by dealing effectively (and finally!) with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – *the primary driver of global terrorism* – there should be a reduction in the worldwide frequency and intensity of terrorism.

In his article on "Renewing American Leadership" in the July/August 2007 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, then presidential candidate Obama said:

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12 Cf. Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*, New York 2008; Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, New York 2008.

13 Cf. Douglas Frantz/Catherine Collins, *The Nuclear Jihadist: The True Story of the Man Who Sold the World's Most Dangerous Secrets and How We Could Have Stopped Him*, New York 2007, pp. xi-xii, 263-265; Dafna Linzer. The World After 9/11. The Nuclear Threat: Nuclear Capabilities May Elude Terrorists, Experts Say, in: *Washington Post*, 29 December 2004, pp. A1 and A6.

As we strengthen NATO, we must build new alliances and partnerships in other vital regions. As China rises and Japan and South Korea assert themselves, I will work to forge a *more effective framework in Asia* that goes beyond bilateral agreements, occasional summits, and ad hoc agreements, such as the six-party talks on North Korea. We need *an inclusive infrastructure with the countries of East Asia* that can promote stability and prosperity and help confront transnational threats from terrorist cells in the Philippines to Avian flu in Indonesia. I will encourage China to play a responsible role as a growing power – to help lead in addressing the *common problems of the twenty-first century*. We will compete with China in some areas and cooperate in others. *Our essential challenge is to build a relationship that broadens cooperation while strengthening our ability to compete.*<sup>14</sup>

Exactly one year later in 2008, when Obama articulated his five foreign policy objectives, he said:

It's time to strengthen *our partnerships* with Japan, South Korea, Australia and the world's largest democracy – India – to create a stable and prosperous Asia. It's time to engage China on *common interests like climate change*, even as we continue to encourage their shift to a more open and market-based society.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly, President Obama – who, by background, philosophy, and temperament may be America's "first Asian President" – intends to work with the countries of East Asia to develop new infrastructure to deal with the problems of the region. Such infrastructure could be based upon existing institutions and mechanisms such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN+3 (China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and/or the six party talks on North Korea.<sup>16</sup>

Whatever else he does, Obama will take into account voices from the region. Among those is Kishore Mahbubani, former Ambassador of Singapore to the United Nations and Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. Ambassador Mahbubani is also a member of the International Advisory Group for the Brookings Institution's MGI project. His reaction to Obama's electoral victory includes the sentiment:

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14 Barack Obama, *Renewing American Leadership*, in: *Foreign Affairs* 4/2007, pp. 2-16, here: p. 12 (emphasis added).

15 Obama's Remarks on Iraq and Afghanistan, cited above (Note 11; emphasis added).

16 This last is Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's preference, cf. *Australia Calls for North East Security Structure*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Online, 1 April 2008, at: [www.abc.net.au/ra/programguide/stories/200804/s2205306.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/ra/programguide/stories/200804/s2205306.htm).

In the coming Asian century, America will have to give priority to the Pacific *over* the Atlantic. The G-8, NATO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and development are organizations of the past. *The future lies in Asia*. Would Obama travel more across the Pacific *or* the Atlantic?<sup>17</sup>

Given all that we know about Obama, the simple answer is that his policies will embrace Asia *and*, according to Fareed Zakaria, “The Rest” as well.<sup>18</sup> This clearly includes Europe, the space within which the European Union, Council of Europe, and NATO as well as the OSCE operate. All of them are potential models for helping to develop infrastructure for complex problem-solving in Asia. Indeed, the OSCE has already been viewed in this light by OSCE Partners for Co-operation Japan and the Republic of Korea.<sup>19</sup>

### *The European Union as a Model of Global Governance*

As implied in the Brookings Institution’s MGI project, the European Union could provide a model of global governance that can be used to help upgrade existing institutions and mechanisms in Asia and elsewhere. The EU’s thirty year formal relationship with ASEAN may make this more rather than less of a probability. For example, at the conference at which the MGI’s *Plan for Action* was presented, Brookings’ president Strobe Talbott said:

The European Union is the most impressive, accomplished, and promising experiment in transnational governance on the planet today, and that has been immensely good for the half billion or so people of Europe. It has taken a huge swath of real estate, which is as bloodied as any on the planet historically, a region of the world where there was a major war every generation from the 17th century on up to the E-day, and turned it into a zone of peace. No mean accomplishment.<sup>20</sup>

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17 Kishore Mahbubani, cited above (Note 12; emphasis added).

18 Fareed Zakaria, cited above (Note 12).

19 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security/Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, OSCE-IFANS/MOFAT Workshop, *Applicability of OSCE CSBMs in Northeast Asia Revisited*, Seoul, 22-23 September 2003, Consolidated Summary, PC.DEL/1321/03, 6 November 2003; OSCE, Office of the Secretary General, Section for External Co-operation, *2005 OSCE-Korea Conference on new security threats and a new security paradigm, Seoul, 25 and 26 April 2005, Consolidated Summary*, SEC.GAL/106/05, 13 May 2005, at: [http://www.osce.org/secretariat/item\\_6\\_9758.html](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/item_6_9758.html).

20 The Brookings Institution, *A Plan for Action*, cited above (Note 7), p. 63.

Following Talbott's remarks, Javier Solana commented:

I think the European Union is the best example today of how [we] can begin to resolve [the] contradiction [between the global and the local]. [...] Therefore, the [EU] is a model which is good for us, and I think it will be good for others, and that's why other parts of the world are beginning to [understand] the European Union as a model [e.g. ASEAN].<sup>21</sup>

However, at a time when the European Union, like states and other actors in the global system, is under assault by the worst economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression, framing the EU in this positive light may be, at best, idealistic and at worst, disingenuous, especially since the EU, like others, is tilting, more and more, towards dangerous, lose-lose protectionism:

José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, says this resurgence of economic nationalism is not a "specifically European" problem. He is right. Protectionism is on the rise everywhere from Washington to Delhi.

Yet if Europe, with its deep experience of shared interests, cannot resist the pressures, how can it expect others to uphold open markets?<sup>22</sup>

The stress on the EU is certainly real:

The risk now is that, as the recession deepens, popular disturbances become self-sustaining: that a defensive move here fans the embers of nationalism there; that the single market unravels. The newer democracies of the Union in eastern and central Europe are particularly vulnerable.<sup>23</sup>

Germany's former foreign minister Joschka Fischer has gone further, arguing that not only is Europe "at the beginning of a huge world crisis that will put [it] under extreme pressure and strain", but:

that the fallout from the economic crisis will undermine if not destroy, the extraordinary achievement of EU enlargement that brought eastern and western Europe together. [The crisis] could also threaten the single market.<sup>24</sup>

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21 Ibid., p. 68.

22 Philip Stephens, Wanted: Leaders to Confront the Demons of Europe's Past, in: *Financial Times*, 20 February 2009, p. 9.

23 Ibid.

24 Joschka Fischer, cited in: Quentin Peel, EU champion takes fright in flight to protectionism, in: *Financial Times*, 27 February 2009, p. 4.

Despite these risks in the short to middle-term, however – which are remarkably similar to the failure of the Socialist Second International to prevent World War I<sup>25</sup> – the EU remains a viable model for regional governance elsewhere and ultimately, global governance as well, because of its impressive status as the only viable candidate for Immanuel Kant’s “perpetual peace” system anywhere on the planet.<sup>26</sup> This singular uniqueness of the EU explains its relationship to the MGI project, which has Javier Solana, the EU’s High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, as an Advisory Group Member. According to Solana:

The aim of the MGI project is ambitious and urgent: to launch a new reform effort for the global security system in 2009 [...] for the global system is in serious trouble. *It is simply not capable of solving the challenges of today.* You all know the list: terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, pandemics, failing states [...] *None can be solved by a single government alone.*<sup>27</sup>

This is also the view of US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who represents the official foreign policy voice of President Barack Obama’s approach to global problem-solving. During her first trip abroad as Secretary of State, which – in recognition of recent shifts in economic power from West to East – was to Asia, Secretary Clinton remarked that the purpose of her trip was “to create networks of partners in order to deal with the problems that no nation, even ours, can deal with alone”.<sup>28</sup>

The European Commission’s John McClintock attributes this global problem-solving deficit and incapacity to the absence of appropriate global governance based on the “*shared sovereignty*” principle exemplified by the European Union.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, the MGI project talks about “*responsible sovereignty*” which appears to be on a continuum leading eventually to shared responsibility:

The MGI Project’s consultations have informed and validated the view that a new era of international cooperation should be built on the principle of *responsible sovereignty*: the idea that states must take responsi-

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25 Cf. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, New York 1959, Ch. 5.

26 Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), in: Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace, and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*, Cambridge, MA, 1983.

27 MGI, *A Plan for Action*, cited above (Note 7), p. 7 (emphasis added).

28 US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, cited in: Glenn Kessler/Blaine Harden, Clinton, in Asia, Seeks to Build “Networks of Partners”, in: *Washington Post*, 17 February 2009, p. A8.

29 Cf. John McClintock, *The Uniting of Nations: An Essay on Global Governance*, Brussels 2008; Mark Corner *Towards a Global Sharing of Sovereignty*, European Essay No. 44. The Federal Trust for Education and Research, London 2008.

bility for the external effects of their domestic actions – that sovereignty entails obligations and duties towards other sovereign states as well as to one’s own citizens. To protect national security, even to protect sovereignty, states must negotiate rules and norms to guide actions that reverberate beyond national boundaries. Responsible sovereignty also implies a positive interest on the part of powerful states to provide weaker states with the capacity to exercise their sovereignty responsibly – a *responsibility to build*.<sup>30</sup>

Among the current contenders for global governance, in addition to a radically reformed United Nations, are the “*League of Democracies*”,<sup>31</sup> “*Concert of Democracies*”,<sup>32</sup> “*Union of Unions*”,<sup>33</sup> and “*Global Union of Democracies*”.<sup>34</sup>

The MGI project found few supporters for either the “League of Democracies” championed by Senator John McCain during the 2008 presidential campaign or the “Concert of Democracies” in its consultations with concerned, relevant individuals in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East. Among other problems, the League or Concert

would alienate China, whose cooperation is essential for progress across other areas of shared interest, such as climate change, terrorism and nonproliferation. Instead of building on international convergence, MGI interlocutors in China said such a concept could form the basis for a second Cold War. Policymakers in India argued that such a club would heighten, not reduce, international insecurity by creating divisions rather than unifying nations, while officials from other key states allied with the [US] privately underscored that such an institution would be counter-productive, especially by isolating China.<sup>35</sup>

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30 MGI, *A Plan for Action*, cited above (Note 7), p. 11 (emphasis in original).

31 Cf. Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, New York 2008.

32 Cf. Anne-Marie Slaughter/John Ikenberry, *Democracies Must Work in Concert*, in: *Financial Times*, 10 July 2008, at: [www.ft.com/cms/s/0/fd9e2fdc-4e7f-11dd-ba7c-000077b07658.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/fd9e2fdc-4e7f-11dd-ba7c-000077b07658.html).

33 Cf. Mark Leonard, *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century*, New York 2005.

34 Cf. John McClintock, cited above (Note 29); Mark Corner, cited above (Note 29).

35 MGI, *A Plan for Action*, cited above (Note 7), here: p. 22. The isolation of China is less likely for the Concert than for the League. According to the Concert’s architects, Anne-Marie Slaughter and John Ikenberry, “a Concert of Democracies that included southern as well as northern democracies would insist on including China in any expansion of the G8. That fact highlights the contrast between our Concert and Senator McCain’s proposal of a League of Democracies, together with the expulsion of Russia from the G8. Democracies understand the need to have effective global institutions that include *all* important powers.” Anne-Marie Slaughter/John Ikenberry, cited above (Note 32). Although Kagan (cited above [Note 31], pp. 97-105) refers both to “Concert” and “League”, and his formulation is similar in many respects to that of Slaughter and Ikenberry, he is nevertheless much closer to Senator John McCain’s vision of a League which envisages a “balance of power” between democratic and autocratic countries, with China and Russia remaining in the latter category for some time to come.

Indeed, as then Senator Obama indicated earlier, one of his major foreign policy objectives would be to forge a constructive partnership with China to deal with complex global problems such as global warming and, more recently, the global economic recession. This “strategic dialogue”, which was on the agenda for further articulation by President Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao at the G20 Summit that met in London in April 2009, was launched during Secretary of State Clinton’s trip to China in late February 2009. Although upsetting human rights activists for not emphasizing the need for China to significantly upgrade its compliance with international human rights norms, as she had when she was first lady during the presidency of her husband, Bill Clinton, Secretary Clinton said that “human rights concerns ‘can’t interfere’ with pressing China for greater cooperation on the economic front, the environment and the impasse over North Korea’s nuclear program”.<sup>36</sup>

Since China has recently eclipsed the US “as the world’s biggest emitter of harmful gases”,<sup>37</sup> Secretary Clinton is reflecting not only the foreign policy positions that President Obama stated prior to his inauguration, but his pragmatism as well. Clearly, given that policymakers around the globe have less than ten years to reverse the problem of global warming, lest “species extinction” become a viable outcome, working with China on this problem now rather than alienating it because of its poor human rights record and other democracy deficits makes for a compelling argument. In the meantime, human rights concerns will not be forgotten, merely located appropriately within a comprehensive universe of pressing global concerns with shifting priorities. Responding to her human rights critics during a news conference with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, Secretary Clinton commented: “The promotion of human rights is an essential aspect of U.S. global policy.”<sup>38</sup> After the completion of Secretary Clinton’s Asia tour, Todd Stern, President Obama’s special envoy on climate change, summed up the shifting human rights-global warming relationship:

In our view, nothing is more important for dealing with [the global warming] threat than a U.S.-China partnership. There is no way to preserve a safe, livable planet unless China plays a very important role along with the [U.S.]. This is not a matter of politics or morality or right or wrong. It is simply the unforgiving math of accumulating emissions.<sup>39</sup>

So, if neither a League nor a Concert of Democracies is a viable approach to global governance in the post-9/11 world, what about the remaining two op-

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36 US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, cited in Kessler, cited above (Note 28).

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

tions: Mark Leonard's concept of a "Union of Unions" or John McClintock's "Global Union of Democracies"? The "Union of Unions" represents an *inductive* approach to global governance: Given that the EU has been proposed as a model of regional integration based on shared sovereignty, other regional actors (e.g. ASEAN, African Union/AU) would emulate the model and, at the end of the process, link up synergistically in an overarching "Union of Unions". By contrast, the "Global Union of Democracies" is more of a *deductive* approach: It would also employ the EU as a model, but to create the Global Union at the outset, comprising the EU and other actors, primarily states, and not very powerful ones initially. Once it became clear that the Global Union was effective in addressing complex global problems such as global warming and poverty, other nations would follow suit. Once more than two nations joined from the same region, they would start to comprise a regional actor eventually analogous to the EU. The Global Union would then grow into something tantamount to a "Union of Unions".<sup>40</sup>

My own preference is to combine the inductive with the deductive; i.e. to advance the Global Union of Democracies as the ultimate objective. As Charles Sanders Peirce reminds us, however, we have to start "from where we are"<sup>41</sup> and concentrate on regional integration as a basis for global governance. That way, we can "creatively engineer" responsible sovereignty into shared sovereignty. The Brookings Institution's MGI project, therefore, seems to be an excellent platform for advancing the global governance component of President Obama's foreign policy agenda.

### *The Fly in the Ointment*

The primary "outlier" in this otherwise "conflict resolution-friendly" portrait of President Obama is his approach to the war in Afghanistan. As he draws down US troops in Iraq, he will send them to Afghanistan to deal with the resurrected Taliban insurgency there. In addition, he is continuing Predator

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40 As to whether a Global Union of Democracies might also alienate China, given that members must be democracies, McClintock (cited above [Note 29], p. 206) indicates that China (as well as Russia) "would have to become less authoritarian and to be prepared to better accommodate the wishes of ordinary people in the decisions of the state". Despite its lingering human rights record, evident even during the Beijing Olympics, China has made great strides in achieving one component of an *eventual* democracy: economic growth. In this regard, World Values Survey and European Values Study researchers Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel point out that: "Beneath China's seemingly monolithic political structure, the social infrastructure of democratization is emerging, and it has progressed further than most observers realize. China is now approaching the level of mass emphasis on self-expression values at which Chile, Poland, South Korea, and Taiwan made their transitions to democracy." Ronald Inglehart/Christian Welzel, *How Development Leads to Democracy. What We Know About Modernization*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2008, pp. 33-48, here: p. 48.

41 Charles Sanders Peirce, cited in: Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science*, San Francisco 1964, p. 86.

drone attacks on suspected Taliban targets in Pakistan, including during his very first week in office, causing a number of casualties, perhaps including children.<sup>42</sup>

This concern is valid, but if we examine President Obama's Afghan policy in the larger framework within which it has been articulated, it may be put to rest. This larger framework is compatible with a conceptual device that I call the "three levels of conflict reality": (1) conflict as *symptoms*; (2) conflict as underlying fractured *relationships* that give rise to symptoms; and (3) conflict as underlying *deep-rooted causes* and conditions of the fractured relationships that give rise to symptoms.<sup>43</sup>

Obama's framework for Afghanistan, which corresponds to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's "three legs to the stool of American foreign policy" – *defence, diplomacy, and development* – includes (1) more troops (*defence*) to deal with conflict as symptoms; (2) more *diplomacy* to deal with fractured relationships which give rise to the symptoms; and (3) more *development* to deal with the underlying deep-rooted causes and conditions of the fractured relationships.<sup>44</sup>

This reorientation of US policy reflects the sentiments of General (Dr) David Petraeus, whose CENTCOM responsibilities include Afghanistan and Iraq and who co-wrote the US military's new guidelines on counterinsurgency, according to which "you can't kill or capture your way out of a complex, industrial-strength insurgency".<sup>45</sup>

What this means is that Obama's defence-based "surge" into Afghanistan (*symptoms*) must occur within a more comprehensive framework inclusive of diplomacy (*relationships*) and development (*deep-rooted causes*). The balance of the shifting investments and prioritization across these three inter-related components of his foreign policy "stool" will determine whether Obama's conflict resolution promise remains intact or comes under significant challenge.

### Conclusion

If the "goodness-of-fit" between the Obama presidency and the EU is powerful, then so, by extension, is that between Obama and the OSCE. Together

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42 Cf. Tim Reid, President Obama "orders Pakistan drone attacks", in: *TimesOnline*, 23 January 2009, at: [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us\\_and\\_americas/article5575883.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article5575883.ece).

43 Cf. Dennis J.D. Sandole, *Peace and Security in the Postmodern World: The OSCE and Conflict Resolution*, New York 2007; idem, *Peacebuilding: Preventing Violent Conflict in a Complex World*, Cambridge, UK (forthcoming).

44 Cf. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Arrival at the Department of State: Remarks to Department Employees at Welcome Event*, US Department of State: Diplomacy in Action, 22 January 2009, at: [www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/01/115262.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/01/115262.htm).

45 The General's Next War: The FP Interview with Gen. David H. Petraeus, in: *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2009, pp. 48-50.

with the EU and NATO, the OSCE comprises the security architecture of Europe. Indeed, all three, together with the Council of Europe, capture the three “baskets” of European security outlined in the Helsinki Final Act,<sup>46</sup> and subsequently reframed by the OSCE as the three interrelated components of *comprehensive security*:

Basket 1: Political and Military (NATO);

Basket 2: Economic and Environmental (EU); and

Basket 3: Human rights and humanitarian elements (Council of Europe) of comprehensive security.<sup>47</sup>

Obama is made to order for the OSCE, for the simple but compelling reason that both are concerned with the achievement of *common security* through *soft power* means.<sup>48</sup> This is why Obama has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2009.<sup>49</sup> The most powerful man in the world has made it acceptable to “unclench his fist”, reach out and talk to adversaries as well as allies about pressing global issues, in the process, creating a culture of conflict resolution and problem-solving. Although this has not yet led to breakthroughs in relations with Iran, North Korea, and between Israel and Palestine, it may have played a small role in OSCE members Turkey and Armenia’s use of “soccer diplomacy” to bring about their recent decision – in which Secretary of State Clinton played a role – to reopen their borders and establish a historical commission to finally lay to rest the 1915 genocide issue.<sup>50</sup> This historic development, still plagued by significant obstacles, may facilitate the resolution of a major “frozen conflict” which the OSCE’s Minsk Group, comprising France, Russia, and the US, has been responsible for mediating – the conflict between OSCE members Armenia and Azerbaijan over the status of the Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>51</sup>

In view of President Obama’s considerable promise on the foreign policy front, buttressed by the Nobel Peace Prize and Turkish-Armenian breakthrough in a conflict that is nearly a hundred years old, with the implications it has for the future work of the OSCE, it would be a tragedy of epic proportions if Obama were to fall as a casualty in the “Culture Wars” cur-

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46 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki, 1 August 1975, in: Arie Bloed (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 141-217, available online at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/1975/08/4044_en.pdf).

47 Cf. Sandole, *Peace and Security in the Postmodern World*, cited above (Note 43), Ch. 3.

48 Cf. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York 2004.

49 Cf. The Norwegian Nobel Committee, *The Nobel Peace Prize for 2009*, Oslo, 9 October 2009, at: [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/press.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/press.html)

50 Cf. Turkey, Armenia to Reopen Border, in: *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 October 2009, at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125518039736978131.html>.

51 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Minsk Process: Basic Documents*, Vienna 2009, at: <http://www.osce.org/item/21979.html>.

rently being waged in the United States over, among other issues, health care reform.

In the interests of common security, therefore, whatever “reasonable people” in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, and elsewhere can do to prevent this calamitous outcome and America’s return to the “Dark Ages” of the previous administration, they should do. There are ample opportunities for such global coalition building in the G20, EU, OSCE, NATO, UN, WTO, and other settings, including the business sector and civil society, where a culture of conflict resolution and problem solving is a necessary condition for the solution of interrelated complex global problems such as global warming, WMD proliferation, North-South inequities, poverty, economic breakdown, terrorism, and H1N1 and other pandemics.

Obama and the American voter have moved us in the right direction thus far, and now it is up to the rest of us to keep the train on the tracks.