



President Eisenhower talks with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles after a 1958 press conference about Formosa (Taiwan). Congress had authorized the use of force to defend the island three years earlier.

are blinded by “misguided sentimentality.” Realists in the mode of Eisenhower are rare. (Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter’s national security adviser, is their “éminence grise.”) They value both strength and diplomacy, but “believe that peace ultimately comes from something else: equilibrium.”

In the 1950s, Eisenhower accepted stalemate to end the Korean War, “double-crossing Republican hawks who demanded the ‘rollback’ of Communism and to whom his campaign had pandered.” From then on, Rauch writes, his “unsentimental realism rarely wavered,” although it led to questionable covert operations, as in Guatemala and Iran. Eisenhower rejected calls to make a preemptive nuclear strike against the saber-rattling Chinese, saying that “a preventive war, to my mind, is an impossibility today. . . . I don’t believe there is such a thing, and, frankly, I wouldn’t even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing.”

How would Eisenhower have approached Iraq? Rauch believes that rather than view the conflict as a test of wills or simply end U.S. involvement, Ike probably would have favored the approach championed by Edward N. Luttwak, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies: stop trying to suppress Sunni-Shia conflict, and use U.S. military and diplomatic power only to contain the conflict. “Play Sunnis and Shiites against each other,” Rauch says, “both within Iraq and around the region, to foster and exploit a sustainable balance.”

The chief flaw of Eisenhower-style realism, Rauch says, is “that in a pious, warm-blooded world, it is as unpalatable as atheism.” When confronted by the kind of genocide witnessed in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s and in Darfur today, realists are “inclined to hide behind the United Nations and buck the problem to regional powers.”

Realism is “a lens, not a road map,” Rauch says. Its advocates differ among

themselves over complex, unpredictable situations such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some regard “America’s attachment to Israel as sentimental,” while others believe that the United States must stand firm with Israel “until Palestinian militants understand that they can never win.” A third camp, Luttwak among them, believes that the only choice is “but to muddle on with diplomatic efforts to calm the situation.”

Can a realist win the presidency in 2008? “One recently did—in 2000,” Rauch notes. A pre-9/11 George W. Bush said, “I just don’t think it’s the role of the United States to walk into a country and say ‘We’ll do it this way; so should you.’” But just as the cool-headed Eisenhower ended the Korean War even as he “embraced the principle of containment”—and in the process salvaged many of his predecessor Harry S. Truman’s policies—so Bush may need to hope for a realist successor to save his historical reputation.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Five Percent Problem

THE SOURCE: “The Irrelevance of the Middle East” by Philip E. Auerswald, in *The American Interest*, Summer 2007.

SINCE THE END OF THE COLD War, America has boosted its military presence in only a single region, the Middle East. The area holds half the world’s oil reserves, sits astride crucial international shipping lanes, and makes up the heartland of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. It’s almost universally assumed to be central to American

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foreign policy. But that assumption is wrong, and getting less true with each passing year, argues Philip E. Auerswald, an economist at George Mason University and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Petro-alarmism is exaggerated, he says. When oil prices more than doubled between 2002 and 2006, the crippling effects on the U.S. economy were precisely none. While rising prices hurt particular groups, such as low-income residents of rural areas, the impact on most consumers has been minimal. Oil is an "inherently feeble strategic weapon" because the "economies of the oil-producing [states] are even more dependent on oil revenues than the economies of consuming countries are on the crude they import," he says. The higher the price soars, the more the oil-importing nations are likely to come up with substitutes. As prices rise, new sources of energy, such as ethanol and oil from Canada's tar sands, become more viable. Smart producers will keep prices from rising so high that investors pour money into developing alternatives that threaten the economic foundation of their nations.

Catastrophic scenarios of a sudden cutoff of oil from Saudi Arabia because of an abrupt regime change ignore history, according to

Auerswald. When the Ayatollah Khomeini took over Iran, its oil production decreased for a year but has grown ever since. Since 1980, Islamic Iran's decisions on how much oil to pump have been "no more menacing or unpredictable than Canada's or Norway's."

Threats to international shipping lanes in the Middle East such as the Suez Canal are real, but no more serious than threats to the Cape of Good Hope or the Strait of Malacca. Middle East nuclear terrorism is a legitimate concern, but no more so than a nuclear-armed North Korea. America can maintain its irrevocable commitment to Israel's right to exist and its support for a viable Palestinian state even as it reframes its priorities in the Middle East as a whole. "The long-term importance of the Middle East is roughly proportional to the share of the world population for which the region accounts—less than five percent," Auerswald contends. "Sometimes, simply paying less attention leads to better outcomes."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

A New Race in Space

A SURVEY OF RECENT ARTICLES

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH'S new National Space Policy, released unobtrusively late on a Friday afternoon before a long holiday weekend last October, took some time to percolate through the foreign-policy establishment. But its forceful assertion of U.S. rights in space has sparked a passionate argument that mirrors the ongoing debate over

America's international strategy: Bold or belligerent? Essential in a world of instability or dangerously unilateral?

Freedom of action in space is now as important to the United States as air and sea power, the space policy states. As recently as the end of the Cold War, the chief military function of space was reconnaissance. Now, satellites guide precision strikes from a distance to put fewer soldiers in harm's way, reduce confusion on the ground, make the U.S. military more effective and lethal, and reduce casualties among troops, writes Jeff Kueter, president of the George C. Marshall Institute, in *The New Atlantis* (Spring 2007). Just about all phases of military operations, from planning to execution, involve space, says Marc J. Berkowitz, former assistant deputy undersecretary of defense for space policy, in *High Frontier* (March 2007), a journal of the U.S. Air Force Space Command.

The new National Space Policy has raised alarms both in the United States and among its allies because of "undiplomatic and unilateral" language, according to Theresa Hitchens, director of the Center for Defense Information, writing in the same issue of *High Frontier*. The policy states that the United States will "deny, if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to U.S. national interests." And it opposes arms control agreements that might impair American ability to "conduct research, development, testing, and operations, or other activities in space."

The blunt words of the policy cemented concerns that the United States "intends to use force both in space and from space," Hitchens says, and they were met with dead silence