Rethinking the Future International Security Environment
Seminar Series
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The Future Security Environment

Notes:
Below are informal notes taken by a JHU/APL staff member at the Seminar.

General Hayden noted that since leaving government service he has often taken the opportunity to talk to public groups. The question that always comes up is: “What keeps you up at night?” His reply since leaving government is: “Not much.” In tonight’s talk he will talk about his standard list of about five areas of concern. These have not changed much over the last few months. Recently, another topic has broken his threshold of concern. His metric for determining what keeps him awake involves using the metaphor:

- How big is the stack of dynamite?
- How short is the fuse?

That is, what is the potential impact of a threat and how imminent is it?

In discussing tonight’s list of six topics of concern, General Hayden chose to look at what has the potential for becoming a major problem in the immediate future and what situations are likely to have the greatest impact. The six topics discussed below deserve about the same level of concern. They are not in priority order in terms of level of concern.

Topic 1: Proliferation

Proliferation is not just a problem with Iran and North Korea
- Need to worry about it all over the world, all the time
- Second most discussed topic in the Oval Office during the Bush Administration
  - *Terrorism was always first*

Concerns about nuclear weapons in Iran revolve around:
- How close are the Iranians to a technically viable weapon?
- How does the Iranian government make its decisions about nuclear weapons?
  - Really the more complex part
  - It is surprising that we know so little about the Iranian government
    - Iran is not a closed society – plenty of travel among ex-patriots, etc.
    - Iran is not hermetically sealed as is North Korea
  - Yet, it is very hard to discern how Iran does its decision making
It is not even clear that Iran knows how it makes it decisions

- Example: the three hikers who were caught in Iran
  - Iranian government waffled back and forth about releasing the female hiker
  - And then, all of a sudden, she was in Oman
- If the Iranian government can’t handle such a softball issue, how can they make more complex decisions relating to nuclear weapons?
- How can the US hope to have an impact on the decision-making of a dysfunctional government?

Many ways to have some impact on the Iranians have been tried over the last few years. Possible options include:

- **Hug ‘em** – we have been nice to them but the centrifuges to make highly enriched uranium keep spinning
- **Stiff ‘em** – we have added more and more sanctions but the centrifuges keep spinning
- **Dissuade or deter ‘em** – hard to do since we don’t understand what the doctrine might be
  - It is possible that the Iranians don’t know either
  - It is really not about deterring them, but rather about their deterring the US
    - Even without nuclear weapons, Iran:
      - Had a policy of supporting the killing coalition soldiers in Iraq
      - And a similar policy in Afghanistan
    - Iran may not want to actually use its nuclear weapons, but only have them to deter the US
  - CIA Director Panetta gave a list of options for handling Iran
    - He was then asked whether of any of them would likely work
    - His answer: “Probably not”
  - It is possible that Iran is so ideologically committed to having nuclear weapons that they cannot be persuaded to change their minds
- **Regime change** – would be very complex, hard to do, and probably not wise
- **Kinetic option** – would likely guarantee what we are trying to prevent

Over the last few years the US has largely gone through nearly all of the options listed above.

- US may be approaching a fork in the road where we will need to do something or nothing
- Getting there soon – maybe 2012 or so, which would mean under another presidential administration – even if it is Obama’s second
- Masad’s estimate on Iranian nuclear weapons
  - Generally have the same date estimates as the US – except they usually focus on a worst case scenario
    - If the US says something will happen in 2011, Masad says next Tuesday
  - However, in a recent farewell interview, the retiring head of Masad said that because of recent actions, Iran could not have nuclear weapons before 2015

President Bush rarely raised his voice in Oval Office discussions except on one occasion

- Insisted that he did not want to have only two options in dealing with Iran
- He did not want any president to face only two options
  - That would be the end game
Topic II: China
We must think about China in a different way that we think about Iran
- Both are big concerns but in different ways
- Three years ago US leaders were saying that China is not an enemy
- There are logical, non-heroic choices that can be made to make sure that US relations with China will be:
  - Competitive
  - Occasionally unfriendly
  - Never reaching the level of conflict

Not exactly happy with China’s behavior of late
- In awe of the breadth, depth, and sophistication of China’s espionage efforts
  - And this is coming from a culture that says, “Steal my secrets, shame on me.”
- Small issues seem to get the sledge hammer when it comes to Chinese solutions – examples:
  - Recent incident between a Chinese fishing boat and the Japanese Coast Guard
  - Irresponsible behavior about the North Korea nuclear situation
- If China expects to be a regional power, near super power level, it must act more responsibly
- Another example: China claims 1.2 million square miles of the South China Sea
  - Just because of a few ancient trips to the area and some fishing
  - Considers it a “core interest” – leveling the same category as Taiwan and Tibet
  - At a recent ASEAN conference, SecState Clinton noted China’s weak claim on the South China Sea
    - Others in the region also have claims
    - US considers the area open ocean
- Why does China act this way?
  - Triumphalism – considers this dangerous and overplaying their hand
  - Teenage behavior – similar to problems one sees with teenage boys where their physical strength outstrips their experience and judgment

What would happen if the 2001 EP-3 incident with the Chinese fighter jet occurred now?
- What sort of decisions would be made now?
- Decision process is of great concern any time but especially when a situation approaches a potential loss of life scenario

Must remember that history does not move in a straight line
- Neither should intelligence analysis
- China has serious structural challenges
  - Potential for environmental disasters
  - Uneven distribution of wealth – especially between coastal and interior regions
  - Upside down demographic pyramid caused by the one-child policy
    - Especially when get down to the 2nd or 3rd generation
    - China will likely get old before it gets rich
  - Legitimacy of the Communist Party to rule China is based on economic growth at 10%, which is unsustainable
Topic III: Cyber

Threats from the internet

- There are lots of real, not imagined, boogey men out there to worry about – anarchists, criminals, hostile state actors
- More important is the fact that the internet is inherently insecure
  - Basically unsafe at any speed
- Internet started as ARPA-Net
  - Designed to move large volumes of data among national labs
  - Began with a limited number of nodes – all were known and trusted
  - No longer the case

Helps to understand that cyber is a domain like the traditional military domains – sea/land/air/space

- At a Black Hat Convention (of “reformed hackers”) Hayden noted
  - God made all the other domains (sea/land/air/space)
  - You guys made this one (cyber)
  - God did a better job
- Need to think in analogies – cyber has a geography
  - Consider cyberspace like the northern German plain – so much like Poland – easy to invade with no defenses
  - Compare to the situation in Korea and determining how the North would invade the South
    - Most potential ways have physical barriers to stop an invasion
    - Going through Seoul would be really be like the world’s largest tank trap
    - Even the best option starts with a wide area in the North but becomes very narrow in the South
- In the cyber domain, the internet is all undefendable plain with all advantages going to the attacker

Can we make the web safer? NO!

- Need to start all over
- Keep Facebook and other similar activities on one type of system
- Then put all the activities we worry about on an entirely new, safe system
- We can only put up temporary defenses
- Need to totally restructure the internet for cyber security

Topic IV: Mexico

This concern often comes as a surprise to most people but need to consider President Calderon’s war on the drug cartels

- Has been very bloody – over 28,000 killed in just a few years
- A Juarez newspaper printed an article after the murders of many journalists asking what the cartels wanted them to do to stop the killing
- Problem popped up during the end of the Bush Administration
  - Calderon asked for US help causing some very intense Administration discussions
One side said we should use the same methods that eventually worked in Columbia
- Took 10 years to do it
- Different set of legal issues to contend with
  - Columbia’s situation had a traditional insurgency with drug overtones
  - Mexico is fighting drug gangs
    - They want to be left alone to do their business
    - Not really interested in overthrowing the government
- Two different situations bring in two different sets of 3-letter agencies
  - Columbia involved DIA / DoD / CIA
  - Mexico’s problems are more likely to involve FBI / DEA / ICE
- US can really only assist in law enforcement efforts with Mexico

Problems with perceptions
- Recent white paper on the Mexico situation noted that the definitions don’t really matter
  - Need to treat the situation like an insurgency
  - Have to worry about situations where drug cartels are using highly encrypted computers 100 miles inside the US border
- SecState Clinton recently mentioned Mexico and insurgency in the same sentence
  - The White House spokesman had to subsequently walk back her comments
- US has no control of the shot clock here
  - Could implode on us at any time

American intelligence officers rarely go to Latin America
- Hayden took the opportunity; found Mexican officers formal and correct – not friendly
  - They had a greater interest in talking about historic issues involving US invasions
- Calderon’s redefinition of the situation as a common problem gives the US a strategic opportunity to recalibrate the relationship

**Topic V: Terrorism**
Always the top priority to worry about
- Since about August 2008 US has not been doing badly against Al Qaida
  - Al Qaida has made some strategic errors – especially in Saudi Arabia
  - There now are moderate accepted Islamic voices out there questioning Al Qaida doctrines and activities
- One reason that things have stayed better is because of the continuity in policies between the 43rd and 44th Presidents
  - In his Inaugural speech Obama said US was at war
  - In a VFW convention speech Obama said the US was at war with Al Qaida
  - US courts have agreed on this
- Problem: not one of our traditional allies in Europe sees it the same way
  - May have agreed about war in Iraq or Afghanistan
  - None see terrorism / Al Qaida as a worldwide threat
    - No intelligence service in Europe would share information on a wanted Al Qaida senior leader if knew that the US would use it to attack that leader
• Important that there has been no difference in the views and actions of the two presidents

In Pakistan’s ungoverned areas a lot of Al Qaida leaders have recently died “suddenly and precisely”
  • Result: Al Qaida Main may no longer be able to conduct massive, complex, coordinated attacks
  • The odds of the US recognizing the planning of big attacks are now pretty high
    o Al Qaida still presents threats
    o Never say never about large attacks
  • Another sign is the growing number of small attacks

Secretary of DHS is trying to make it clear what the situation is
  • As a result of DoD/CIA successes can expect future Al Qaida attacks to be small
    o Eventually one will be successful
    o They will be more numerous
  • Big questions:
    o What do the people want the government to do in terms of security?
    o How much should it do?
    o Government can do more – but do you want it?
  • Need to have an adult conversation about this with the American people
    o Recognize that attacks will happen and some will succeed
    o Will we then destroy a security structure that has largely kept us safe?
    o Do we want to turn a minor Al Qaida victory into our strategic defeat?
  • Must find a way to reduce the production rate of those that want to kill us
    o Need to worry about the deep battle
    o Not just worrying about the close-in threat

The Cold War was part ideological, too
  • It grew out of communism, which was a Western philosophy (developed by a German in London)
    o We had the general background to say that communism is really dumb
  • We don’t have the background to say that about the discussions going on within Islam
    o All we can do is to try to help the discussions to go on

**Topic VI: Pakistan – South Asia**
Does not look good in Pakistan
Afghanistan – can be modestly optimistic
  • In a talk in Australia recently
    o 75% agreed that there was a plan that was working
    o 25% wanted only to refer back to Vietnam
  • Most observers believe that the US could start pulling out from about July 2011 to 2014

Pakistan is the dark place
  • Politically unstable
  • Economically unstable
Must start by understanding what makes Pakistan according to Pakistanis
- For the US being an American is certainly not based on blood
  - Mostly Americans agree on what the early patriots stated as core values
- For Pakistan the Pakistanis generally only agree that
  - It is not India
  - Islam is involved

The future of Pakistan:
- Must try to convince Pakistan not to worry about India
  - They need to worry about all those other guys instead
- Problems keep increasing – killing of a more open-minded governor shows things getting worse
- Elements of Islam gain more power because all the other forces in the country are so weak

Conclusion:
- There are many other things to worry about such as Chavez, the Kims, etc.
- But the six above are the big issues of concern

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Defense Budget
The economic situation is a threat to national security
- While we really cannot afford defense budget cuts, we may have to have them anyway
- At CIA Hayden had twice the funding that George Tenet did on September 10, 2001
- Must have a serious conversation with the nation over this
- Of course, intel’s budget shouldn’t be cut

Defense Issues
- Agree with SECDEF Gates: must fight the war we have now
  - Make changes as you need them
  - Retrained Airmen are driving convoys in Afghanistan
- Agree with Gates’ recommendations to invest in programs/systems that will assure access
  - For WestPac that may mean penetrating aircraft and maritime forces
  - Traditional military elements may come back to more prominence

China’s New Aircraft
- It may look like the stealth US F-22 but it is not claimed as a stealth fighter
- Only one of them has been seen
- Bigger concern with China: what happens if another EP-3 bumping incident occurs?
  - Who would get informed in Chinese hierarchy?
  - Would like to see the organization chart for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - Big worry – some PLA officer will make a decision that the government was unaware of and would have disagreed with
Mumbai Attack
- A horrible lesson that taught Al Qaida a great deal
  - Only 11 thugs with automatic weapons and cell phones
  - Managed to do tremendous damage to a very important city and business hub
- India will automatically assume that any follow-on attacks to be by the Pakistanis
  - India has shown some measure of restraint after Mumbai
  - Can’t be sure that this restraint will continue after another attack

US Policy in the Western Pacific
- There will be dual island chains of security around China – even if not all islands
  - First will be the traditional allies – Japan, Korea
  - Second will be the islands such as Guam and the Marianas Islands
  - Next will be India since they share many interests with the US
- However, the real zone of competition in the future will be the Indian Ocean
  - Now looks like India will have comfortable ties with the US

Climate Change
- Did not come up much in discussion during the Bush Administration
  - Mostly discussed counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, rest of world
  - Never briefed any climate change issues as Director, CIA
  - Did cover a lot of energy issues
- There is now a climate change center at CIA
  - Responds to the President’s interest
- CIA doesn’t “do” climate change – it does “do” effects of climate change
  - CIA accepts the predictive models done by others
  - Then use the approach of “If this, then that”
  - “Here’s what we think are predictable conditions”
    - “These could be the impacts of those conditions”

China’s Recognition of its Problems
- China in general does see all of its demographic and other problems
  - So it is surprised by US reactions to some of its behavior
  - Example: President Hu’s reaction yesterday at the joint press conference
- This recognition might also be contributing to their bravado and triumphalism stance
- Basic Chinese equation: Every time we Chinese do something:
  - You Americans multiply it by 1.5 billion
  - We Chinese divide it by 1.5 billion

Russia
- Has not been discussed in the list of 6 top concerns
  - Would be in the top ten list
- Must consider it a declining power
  - Running out of entrepreneurship and democracy
  - Running out of Russians
- Need to think about Russia as an exploited colony
  - Exploited by Russians
Any money that is made leaves the country

- The Russian Reset definitely belongs in the top ten worries
  - New START is a good idea
  - Russian power today is limited to saying “no”
  - We do need to be able to talk to them about their nuclear weapons

**Changes to the National Intelligence Community Structure**

- 2004 changes based on a misdiagnosis of what was wrong with the Intel Community
- Two basic virtues required
  - Unity of effort for the whole community
  - Autonomy of effort for the individual parts of the community
- George Tenet as Director, CIA was very powerful
  - Talked to Director, NSA (Hayden) ten times as often as the current Director does to the current Director, NSA
  - He met with the President six days a week
  - He was head of *central* intelligence
    - Not just talking about a management issue
- Today the Director of National Intelligence has certain weaknesses to overcome
  - Does not direct *central* intelligence
  - Not even allowed an office at CIA
  - Hayden and other former Directors testified against the establishment of DNI
    - Feared a feckless leadership position
  - It is possible that the arrangement could be made to work over time, with tweaks
    - Don’t simply pull it apart – would cause more problems
- Must have the right person in the DNI position
  - Someone with good relations with the Director, CIA
  - Need to be the President’s top intel guy
    - Too easy for Obama to just call in John Brennan from down the hall
    - Such informal arrangements upset the balance for DNI

**Predicting Internal Threats**

- The rise of internal threats is something of a measure of our success with handling external threats
- Different problems with homegrown terrorists than Europe has
  - US society different from European societies with internal threats
  - Better assimilation – income for Muslims is slightly above the national average
- The deep battle during the Cold War involved the whole country
  - 10 years after the Kennan article that essentially announced the Cold War there were Russian studies programs all over the country
  - Not the same situation now
- CIA works in the present tense
  - Where is Al Qaida in its life cycle?
  - Has it peaked?
- Al Qaida had had to change its recruiting for US attacks
  - Example: the Times Square bomber
• Need to consider whether this is all about the Koran or is it just another form of Crypts and Bloods warfare
• Is the motivation religion or is it alienation?
• Maybe we need to handle terrorists now as if we were handling gang fights

Problems with Pakistan
• Pakistanis need to have conversations that acknowledge that some of their co-religionists are the ones causing them problems
• As Director of CIA, Hayden visited 54 intelligence partner countries
  o They provided locally focused views of their own problems and issues
  o Views were never completely consistent throughout the discussions
  o US interests do not completely overlap those of its partners
• As a BrigGen Hayden visited with leaders in Bosnia
  o Had many deep conversations
  o One side would say how horrible it was for them because as Serbians they only had small families while the Muslims had large families
    ▪ Losses, therefore, meant more to them than to the Muslims
• Hayden continually saw national creation myths in these conversations
  o Would last 3-5 minutes then go back to substantial, reasonable discussions
  o Can’t always just nod as they are going through these myths if what they are saying goes against basic American values
  o Then Hayden began to wonder what his own 3-5 minute creation myth was
  o Good intelligence officers should be able to recognize these myths
    ▪ Must be able to explain to US policy-setters/decision-makers that the other side does not see certain things the same way we do
    ▪ Must be aware of the US creation myth
  o Had been asked previously about the Tunisian revolution
    ▪ Noted that it was a good one because it came from the middle class
    ▪ Realized that “all good comes from the middle class” is part of the American creation myth
• We must also learn to sometimes use words that we generally avoid – jihadists, etc.

What will bring on the next surprises?
• The effects of climate change do not need to be that great to cause problems in fragile places like Sub-Saharan Africa
• Growing separation between the US views of security and those of the traditional allies in Europe
  o May or may not be important
  o During the last Administration, Europeans did not like how things were being said
    ▪ Can’t say that now
  o When Obama was given the Nobel Prize, they were saying “Here is a person who thinks like we do” – but …
    ▪ Obama’s acceptance speech was a lecture on Just War theory
    ▪ He continued to sound very American to European ears
    ▪ Europeans expected something very different
• Chinese power growth needs to be managed to avoid problems
• Cyber security – surprised that there have not yet been any big cyber catastrophes

China’s Future
• Don’t assume that China’s progress will continue in a straight line
• Should avoid the word containment
  o Should be more about US presence in the region
  o There is still tremendous value in having US air and sea power in the region
    ▪ Would not have as much as in the past
  o Should be aligning selves with others in the region who have similar interests
    ▪ Not trying to build up military advantages for war
    ▪ Want strength of partners for diplomatic encounters
• China is not an enemy
  o The US does not need to take any heroic measures to keep it that way

WikiLeaks
• Horrible
• Intelligence porn – no redeeming social value for these releases
• Have an understanding of some of the other points of view about openness in general but that does not mean for everything
  o Tactical reports from Afghanistan only show that war is even dirtier than thought
• Everyone involved in writing these reports agreed to and expected secrecy
• Leaks will not make it easier to get countries or sources to come forward to the US with info
• Leaks were very destructive and will very likely cause continuing adverse effects

Solutions to Pakistan and Afghanistan
• Pakistan must have the capacity and the willingness to take the war to Warziristan
  o Not sure it is willing to do so
• Recommended: Pakistan: Between Mosque And Military by Husain Haqqani
  o Tells of the problems that Pakistan faces
  o No civil society – can only swing between the two sides leadership forces
• No recognized ideas of what really needs to be done to fix the problems