

Implementing Restraint: Changes in U.S. Regional Security Policies to Operationalize a Realist Grand Strategy of Restraint

**Published by RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California
© Copyright 2021 RAND Corporation**

Prof. Peter Fong

1

Figure 1.2 Focus of The Report

Grand strategy

- Interests**
- Threats**
- Objectives**

I

Broad approaches

I

Specific policies

I

Detailed implementation plan

2

Figure 1.1 Alternative Grand Strategies

Restrained grand strategies

Hegemonic grand strategies

Isolationism- Minimal military- Reduced military- Selective/deep engagement Primacy- Dominion

| | | | |

None Total

Extent of military involvement

CHAPTER ONE

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Overview of the Debate About U.S. Grand Strategy</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Overview of a Realist Grand Strategy of Restraint</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Approach</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Outline of This Report</u>	<u>26</u>

CHAPTER TWO

<u>Europe</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>U.S. Policy Toward Russia</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Alliances and Partnerships</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>Posture</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>Security Cooperation and Assistance</u>	<u>45</u>
<u>Summary of Next Steps to Develop Prescriptions for U.S. Policy Toward Europe</u>	<u>46</u>

CHAPTER THREE

<u>The Asia-Pacific</u>	49
<u>U.S. Policy Toward China</u>	52
<u>U.S. Policy Toward North Korea</u>	63
<u>Alliances and Partnerships</u>	68
<u>Posture</u>	73
<u>Security Cooperation and Assistance</u>	78
Summary of Next Steps to Develop Prescriptions for U.S. Policy Toward the Asia-Pacific	81

5

CHAPTER FOUR

<u>The Middle East</u>	83
<u>U.S. Policy Toward Iran</u>	85
<u>U.S. Policy Toward Syria and Iraq</u>	90
<u>U.S. Policy Toward Terrorism and Intrastate Conflict</u>	95
<u>Partnerships</u>	98
<u>Posture</u>	102
<u>Security Cooperation and Assistance</u>	106
Summary of Next Steps to Develop Prescriptions for U.S. Policy Toward the Middle East	108

6

CHAPTER FIVE

<u>South Asia</u>	<u>111</u>
<u>Ongoing Operations in Afghanistan</u>	<u>112</u>
<u>U.S. Policy Toward Terrorism and State Collapse</u>	<u>114</u>
<u>Partnerships</u>	<u>117</u>
<u>Posture</u>	<u>121</u>
<u>Security Cooperation and Assistance</u>	<u>122</u>
Summary of Next Steps to Develop Prescriptions for U.S. Policy Toward South Asia	125

CHAPTER SIX

<u>Next Steps for Operationalizing a Grand Strategy of Restraint</u>	<u>127</u>
<u>Findings</u>	<u>127</u>
<u>Recommendations for Developing the Policy Implications of a Grand Strategy of Restraint</u>	<u>130</u>
<u>Final Thoughts</u>	<u>139</u> ⁷

Findings:

- 1. Advocates of restraint have threat assessments and assumptions that differ from those of policymakers who have shaped U.S. grand strategy since the end of the Cold War.
- 2. Generally, advocates of restraint would rely more on diplomacy to settle conflicts of interest, encourage other states to lead, and preserve military power to defend vital U.S. interests.
- 3. If a grand strategy of restraint were used, the United States would have a smaller military, fewer security commitments and forces based abroad, and a higher bar for the use of military force compared with current grand strategy.
- 4. The specific implications of this grand strategy vary by region depending on the level of U.S. interests and the risk that a single power could dominate the region.

- 5. Advocates of restraint seek a more cooperative approach with Current U.S. adversaries, such as Russia and Iran.
- 6. The primary area of disagreement among advocates of restraint is the U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific.
- 7. Advocates of restraint note that the rise of single powerful state in East Asia, Europe, or the Persian Gulf would imperil vital U.S. interests but have not yet offered policymakers guidance on how to know that such a threat is emerging.
- 8. To generate more-specific policy implications for each region, advocates of restraint need to expand on their logic and conduct additional analysis.

9

Recommendations to Analysts for Developing the Policy Implications of a Grand Strategy of Restraint:

- 1 • Evaluate the core claims underlying a grand strategy of restraint to validate and refine its policy prescriptions.**
- 2 • Develop risk-mitigation strategies to hedge against the possibility that one of the core assumptions of a grand strategy of restraint is fully or partially incorrect.**

10

- 3• Specify the conditions under which the United States would stop military retrenchment or even increase its military engagement within each region.
- 4• Clarify what changes in great-power capabilities and behavior would constitute a serious threat to vital U.S. interests.
- 5• Provide guidance on whether and how to respond to China's, Russia's, and Iran's gray zone activities.

11

- 6. Identify the maritime areas where the United States should retain superiority.
- 7. Offer prescriptions on how the United States should evaluate threats and operate in the space and cyber domains.
- 8. Identify scenarios to guide U.S. Department of Defense planning.

12

- 9. Provide priorities for U.S. military peacetime activities, such as exercises.
- 10. Develop policies toward Africa, the Americas, and the Arctic.
- 11. Develop proposals on trade and other international economic issues.
- 12. Assess the cost savings associated with core policy prescriptions.