



Grand Strategy and Self-Determination

The Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University (LISD) convened a special seminar, “Grand Strategy and Self-Determination,” at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs on November 19-20, 2014. This Liechtenstein Colloquium (LCM) commemorated the twenty-year anniversary of the Liechtenstein Initiative on the study of self-determination at Princeton and also coincided with the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein. The first sessions of the conference were open to the public, with panel participants, invited experts, and audience members discussing the notion of grand strategy in today’s world of multiple international crises. Prince Hans-Adam II delivered a public address reflecting on his time as head of state and his political philosophy, especially the role of direct democracy, as well as his ideas on the future of the state. Discussions then focused on the fluid and often-contested topic of self-determination and its potential interaction with and challenges to notions of strategy and governance. The LCM drew together a unique mix of perspectives from the international academic, policy-making and diplomatic worlds, as conversations continued on Saturday in the traditional private, off-the-record LCM format. The seminar was chaired by Wolfgang Danspeckgruber, Director of LISD.¹

POWER AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Colloquium discussions focused on the traditional notions of the state as the locus of power and the nation as the locus of identity. Today’s geopolitical, economic, technological, and governance challenges imply, how-

ever, that something is amiss or is irrevocably changing within the traditional Westphalian order of nation-states. Despite the evolution (or possible breakdown) of this system, states still undeniably matter—but they are not the only actors in the global context. In the traditional (perhaps idealized) Weberian sense, the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. From this perspective, state power is about coercive—often military—force, the means by which it is generated and employed, and the legitimacy of its use. Yet many of today’s issues stem from the fact that the state no longer has a legitimate monopoly on all levers of power, while at the same time identity appears less and less confined to current nationalisms or national borders, expanding opportunities for and cases of the expression of multiple identities.

Power manifests itself in many ways, most obvious of which is traditional *hard power*. Armed force remains useful and important, but must be evaluated in the context of law, values, culture, technological means, and human and political costs. We have moved beyond the age in which traditional military hard power serves as the primary instrument with which to crush or overthrow an enemy. Power is emerging in confusing and complicated forms with unanticipated dangers, as military technology incorporates developments in robotics, cyber-based capabilities, manufacturing, and biotechnology, posing new challenges to both moral values and rule of law.

Participants found it harder to agree on a definition and role for *soft power*. Joseph Nye defines soft power as the ability of a state to attract or persuade others to its position rather than through the use of force or coercion. Debate grew over the validity of soft power as employed by a diverse group of actors or institutions. Despite these divergent views, there was agreement on the notion that access to the many levers and varieties of soft power has been clearly democratized—most notably through ad-

1. Julia M. Tréhu, LISD Research Specialist and Special Assistant to the Director, served as lead rapporteur for the seminar.

vances in technology and information sharing—and extended beyond realms previously monopolized by the state. Soft power has expanded—in both theory and practice, in terms of those capable of generating it, and in the means of employment or dissemination—with ramifications on the ability of both states and non-state groups to exert influence. Power should increasingly be seen as *hybrid*, combining financial and economic clout, “smart” power, psychological influence, and indirect, covert operations and impact.

Power—in all its iterations—has thus matured outside the traditional state-centered conception in several main ways. States have to account for the growing and often unpredictable role of non-state actors such as NGOs, global corporations, financial institutions, prominent individuals whose personal wealth allows them to leverage significant political, social and economic influence, and terror groups like ISIS (also known as ISIL, Daesh, and self-identified as the Islamic State). Furthermore, the vast majority of individuals worldwide who do not fall under these distinctions are still able to access information and audiences in an unprecedented way through social technologies. In addition, the rise of suprastate structures—notably the European Union (EU)—presents new opportunities with the potential to project power, create and influence norms, and shape interstate and regional relations. Such organizations also pose new challenges for traditional states due to the inherent difficulties of reconciling national identities and generating necessary internal consensus. Power is thus diverging in both directions away from the state-centric model: towards atomization and empowerment at the individual level and the

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eventual umbrella of a supra-state organization. In both cases, the tools and levers of power—whether exercised through social media, global corporations, or NGOs—increasingly fall outside the purview of the state.

Recognizing these changing notions of power, the challenge becomes how to approach unresolved or unpredictable local and global developments, allowing for systemic evolution while minimizing violent disruption and incorporating new realities. The capitalistic and democratic underpinnings of the Western system may come into question as we shift into a new era further influenced by non-Western powers, notably in the Pacific region. Recognizing that a considerable part of today’s world and its actors are largely Western-devised, it can be expected that some states may not accept this structure and the values that are conveyed. Which nations or groups are prepared to defend which aspects of this system and with what means would they do so? How can existing international institutions and norms adjust to a new set of players, some of whom act very much outside this existing order? If such a system is insufficient to accommodate new limitations on state power and these evolving sources of influence, how can or should it adapt? The problem from a state-centric perspective is to recognize the shifting concepts of power, work to effectively adapt specific or long-term interests to new realities, and take advantage of the still-critical role of the state to mitigate violent disruption. The state thus continues to occupy a critical space. It must necessarily act in this changing context while recognizing that whereas dimensions of soft power may have narrowed, a considerable gulf still exists regarding the role of military might—hard power—between state and non-state actors. The case of a coalition of *states* united against ISIS offers a telling example.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Discussions of the democratization and changing nature of power frequently returned to the role of technology, especially in conjunction with media and the role of so-

cial media, whose long-term effects on governance, society, and the individual—acting as an equalizer between gender, race, ethnicity, age, and income—remain undetermined. With the democratization and expansion of potential sources of influence comes a pressing dilemma. The technical capabilities opened by new technologies have outpaced the understanding of what constitutes responsible use of these technologies. This is especially true with the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft systems (RPAs or drones.) On one hand, why should they not be seen as just another aircraft? Yet one cannot discount the undeniable ethical perception and debate over a sense of wrongness. New technologies bring up critical issues of responsibility. Who will be culpable if something goes wrong? Automatization, robotics, independent operatives, and associated questions of ethics and rule of law will continue to pose significant challenges that should not be underestimated or ignored especially when accidents will inevitably occur. An unlimited technological free-for-all begs for new perspectives on thoughtfulness, self-discipline and limitation, but the moral reasoning behind these developments—especially regarding issues of censorship and free speech—perhaps lags behind. Can the consequences of these new means of influence be predicted or regulated? Should they be? What moral precepts should govern the use of these methods?

Today's 24-hour roaming news cycle and Twitter-verse were memorably compared at the colloquium to a "ravenous beast," constantly requiring sustenance and stimulating a perception of constant crisis and hyper-sensationalism. Major debates emerged over the true influence and usefulness of various new media forms. Despite lofty pronouncements that, for example, a social media presence has heralded a new age of information, education and citizen liaisons for government figures, politicians are still not truly relating with those they represent. A mere social media presence may not be sufficient to truly connect with voters. Organizations are making significant investments into these means when actual usage is much less certain and people still turn to traditional radio, TV, and print-media sources for reliable information. In contrast, others argued that social media serves a critical agenda-setting role, and that

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instead of fearing it, we should welcome it as an opportunity.

Yet media and the role of public opinion in shaping state decision-making are far from new phenomena. The key development of today lies in the decreasing likelihood that the victims of power will remain or be kept anonymous and out of the realm of public information. These distant individuals are no longer faceless, but people with lives, stories, names and futures, as new media forms bring awareness of inequalities—whether economic, political, or social—to the fore. Today's media brings situations or actions that would once have been considered foreign policy concerns directly into the realm of domestic policy. Contemporary information technologies thus occupy a key middle ground, providing potential for new momentum "from below" while creating a new set of pressures "from above" on political actors.

WHAT IS GRAND STRATEGY?

The notion of "grand strategy" emerged in Great Britain in the interwar period of the 1920s, most famously in the writings of Basil Liddel Hart, and grew out of a sense that previous notions of strategy were too narrow. Many blamed Clausewitzian concepts for the slaughter of World War I, arguing that his theories were overly focused on the military battlefield and wartime clashes, overlooking factors like industrial mobilization and technological developments. Emerging from this

thinking, strategy should now be expanded across three new dimensions: first across all *means* and *instruments*, encompassing diplomacy, finance, and media; second, with both inward and outward orientation, using various forms of power to create and influence such instruments; and third, taking into account all the functions of the state including taxation, conscription, industrial policy, and research and development. Strategy should no longer be confined to wartime, but must also look ahead and plan for times of peace. Across all these dimensions, grand strategy still implicitly lay in the realm of state actors.

Clausewitz's theories of strategy, however, still hold crucial lessons for today. He never discounted the importance of legitimacy—an underpinning set of rules, justice, and values—even if he overlooked the role of

rule of law. Clausewitz's *fog of war*, *friction*, and *geography* will always affect the tactics and mindsets of each moment or situation. We must also never discount his central trinity of *reason*, *chance* and *passion*, factors that continue to shape the mechanisms of war. But today's technological changes require incorporating a whole new set of global audiences (and their reactions) to this trinity.

When discussing the overall structure of any strategy, it is important to differentiate between *direct* and *indirect* approaches. States or actors face varied threats ranging from economic, physical, ideological, and medical, to electronic/cyber, geographic, violent, existential, and long term. An effective grand strategy should differentiate between types of threats and define the appropriate course of action. The nature of a potential threat or



collection thereof will shape the choice of strategy, which will then determine the structure of the ends and means. A stronger power will more often be inclined to employ direct strategies against a weaker actor's indirect strategies and asymmetrical threats. Such indirect strategies, however, may in fact augment the potential costs of the conflict and determine the terms by which those costs are experienced. Major actors in the international system will eventually contrive to employ all dimensions of strategy at their disposal.

“Grand strategy” thus represents the ability to effectively combine all the elements of power in order to achieve long-term ends in the interest of the actor. There is a general consensus that these ends should entail *security* and *prosperity*. Yet consensus over the very meaning of these terms and the means by which they should be achieved is less widely shared and leads to debate and gridlock, ultimately stymieing long-term objectives. Furthermore, if grand strategy is ultimately about ends, ways and means, then it is important to avoid over-emphasis on any one aspect. For example, examining the changing nature of state power through technological innovations risks focusing solely on *means*. The issue goes beyond even a disagreement on ends, ways, and means within a national strategy aiming for a common yet vague objective of “shared security and prosperity.” The crux lies in consensus building about how to get there and the need to facilitate collective action toward long-term goals, a progressively more difficult task in the midst of changes in state power and sources of influence. We also must take into account the fact that distinctive national perspectives on grand strategy and the status quo often depend on cultural differences built through history. A successful grand strategy thus implies the implementation of the optimal objective to the benefit of all and must include factors like time, costs, stakes, and relations with allies in a particular region as well as globally.

In today's world of multiple international challenges amidst a disconcerting evolution of state power and global influence, discussions of grand strategy often become bogged down in iterations of negative objectives,

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i.e., what the strategy is *against* or what it *should not be* instead of the appropriate toolkit to carry out what it *should* or *could* be. These discussions often end up prioritizing or focusing on issues like securing sovereignty, borders, and physical safety instead of a broader formation of the national interest. From a state perspective, security entails control of borders, enforcement of order, and physical protection against outside adversaries. From an initial concrete and perhaps more quantifiable perspective, strategy undeniably depends on these multiple conceptions of security. But while physical factors are highly important, the inherent complexity that emerges in the intersection between hard and soft power, short- and long-term ends, and multiple competing interests and factors means grand strategy could be better managed by including not just *national* but also *human* terms in the concept of security. Measuring individual well-being may offer another important basis for positive objectives of grand strategy and what it should be for. Emphasizing the role of the *individual*, the *local*, and the uniqueness of *communities* in security issues like personal safety, health, water, food, employment, and education can help draw these complex factors into the means and ends of national (state-level) security. Most importantly, there must be trust and confidence that these goals can actually be achieved and enforced.

Colloquium participants disagreed over the basic notion of whether the United States has indeed adopted and is currently pursuing a “grand strategy,” or whether it should have one at all. But beyond this unresolved debate, it was noted that fundamental issues of strategy also lie in whether allies perceive, expect, and hope that one exists and can be implemented. Allies of a great

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power may be more destabilized if they sense a lack of long-term vision and goal-setting. The ramifications of this uncertainty might then affect the system as a whole. For the most influential nations, therefore, strategy must encompass much more than just the more easily quantifiable “national interest.” A “grand strategy”—or even the perception that one exists—should play a crucial role in bolstering an impression of leadership. Projecting confidence and preparedness for unforeseen emergencies can thus render crucial alliances more resilient.

What’s more, and perhaps in contrast, a grand strategy of a major power based on a revision or even overthrow of the status quo can be inherently unpredictable and disruptive, causing gaps and contention in terms of public opinion and allied support. Strategy is about both the present and the future, so advocating for or conceptualizing values will play a key role in creating or maintaining the most conducive types of power structures. How much is the younger generation thinking about power? Does a state of *Politikverdrossenheit* mean they are more concerned with concrete issues like freedom of movement and communication, equality of education, opportunity and employment, the environment, and alternative ways of life? At the same time, however, as the West grapples with the idea of how policy should be defined, perhaps today’s crisis-ridden and increasingly interactive world offers a unique opportunity to reformulate the tricky issue of the status quo and reevaluate

and recreate consensus about the strategic role the West could or should play.

A SUSTAINABLE PEACE: MEASURING STRATEGIC SUCCESS

Once defined or carried out, how should a grand strategy be evaluated? What factors compose its objective? Who will be affected and, accounting for costs, when? Materially superior forces may be very good at achieving military objectives in the short term, while seemingly less capable of successfully establishing peace and tranquility. The asymmetry between those less well armed or organized who still manage to sow incoherence and chaos reveals the failure to “win the peace” and consequently challenges long-term strategic achievement. When measuring the success of any strategy, it is crucial to differentiate between merely *imposing will*, often through coercion and force, and *changing minds*. This is where hard and soft power interact—mutually enforcing, neutralizing and perhaps contradicting, especially when evaluating short-term outcomes and as-yet-unattained long-term goals. Peace consists of more than a lull in violence, requiring perceptions of justice, tranquility, psychological satisfaction, and a status quo in which the benefits outweigh the costs of change.

Merging national, communal, and individual security, along with the crucial difference between changing minds rather than imposing will, can be pursued in several important dimensions: first, by prioritizing engagement over direct confrontation; second, by crafting a narrative that has to be about “doing good;” third, by instilling an appreciation and respect for more abstract norms and values, which will necessarily be more complex in the case of direct conflict. We must not ignore the criticism of Western values by those expressing such grievances, as well as a certain number of what could be characterized as *spoilers* or *resenters*. At the same time, however, the conversation over what these Western values should truly look like in practice and what the notion of power in the 21st century should be gets lost among disparate ends and many parallel arguments.

Those seeking to drive a wedge from without capitalize on perceptions of internal inconsistency and insincerity to undermine shared values and challenges and to spoil the debate. Crafting and spreading narratives, values, and norms in the first place thus requires a coherent (grand) strategic vision accounting for ultimate material and psychological ends.

Consensus emerged in defining a successful grand strategy as effectively “playing the long game” while also taking into account underlying socio-cultural and religious values, ethics, rule of law, and general environment, all of which matter in the long term. Maintaining these external and internal efforts still begs the ultimate question—when can it be stated that in a certain case “the peace” really has been established? In the current context, and especially from the Western perspective, this requires further reflection and intellectual work on the effectiveness and sustainability of intervention, including exit strategies. We still have not defined the appropriate line between humanitarian assistance and military involvement, especially regarding new technologies and cultural and religious sensitivities. This will require a different approach to conflict analysis, demographics, and the technologies that could augment these inquiries. From a less tangible perspective, with the democratization of information and influence by gender and generation, power and success will be ever more determined by perceptions of *wrongdoing* or *rightdoing*. These perceptions of justice and social inclusion will ultimately make or break a venture.

Finally, it was repeatedly stressed that grand strategic success begins at home. Long-term prosperity requires managing one’s own expectations and capabilities. Likewise this requires realizing that there is no magic bullet to any situation, but that there might be long-term strategic consensus between major powers even though they may disagree over the crisis du jour. Reflection and readjusting the notion of what winning actually means may be more prudent than doing something just because the domestic political environment requires that something ought to be done. Recognizing that soft power and its applicability are limited in the world, one must still ask

about the best way to cultivate and wield this power. Attempts to put one’s own house in order offer perhaps the most meaningful and promising way to recoup this type of influence, not least of which comes through or by example. The question of successfully achieving *ends* cannot be answered before accounting for the state of our *means*, both hard and soft.

SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: CHANGING NOTIONS OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Expanding the debate over the top-down notion of state power and grand strategy, the bottom-up notion of self-determination resolves a mismatch between community, nation and state where identity and power have become unaligned, tying together the two major themes of this LCM and its observations on strategy. The challenge for those seeking to create grand strategies in a contemporary international system in flux is to anticipate and manage these moving targets without being merely reactive. Thinking about changing manifestations of self-determination will be crucial in predicting how evolving concepts of identity and identities may interact with traditional state-centered allegiances.

If grand strategy is considered a top-down notion, does it inherently clash with the bottom-up impetus of self-determination? Self-determination can be at once a source, objective, or, most notably, an instrument of grand strategy. Ideally, self-determination would be both *dual*—between the individual and the collective—and *mutual*—deriving from the collective self while accounting for the role of the other. Historically, the first strategic use of the notion of self-determination was by Vladimir Lenin in the early 20th century. Woodrow Wilson defined self-determination with both internal and external dimensions, but not explicitly in his 14 Points. Peace-building and reconciliation among communities, nations, or states could thus occur by also making self-determination the *source* of strategy, and

maximum self-governance its objective.

Self-determination can also be instrumentalized. Powerful state actors can use the rhetoric and appeal of self-determination for their own strategic ends. Adolf Hitler, for example, justified the annexation of the Sudetenland and the Anschluss of Austria by citing the right of self-determination for the German-speaking groups in these regions. What's more, the inherent adaptability of self-determination means that states and dominant actors today still shrewdly evoke the logic of self-determination to promote and rationalize specific national ambitions.

Self-determination can be used as a *tool* in many ways. Great powers can wield the notion of “determining one's destiny” as an instrument of influence by instigating, manipulating, enticing, or mobilizing individuals or communities from a bottom-up perspective to shape strategic interests. The logic of self-determination, some argue, is not always fair. “Why should I be a minority in your state when you could be a minority in mine?”

In today's evolving world of state and non-state actors, however, the instrumentalization of self-determination is no longer limited to the realm of traditional state-based powers. A parallel system seems to be emerging, in which groups outside the traditional realm also call upon self-determination in pursuit of their cause. Powerful actors can act as patrons, just as smaller groups may leverage the strategies of large powers for their own ends. For example, ISIS was able to tap into perceptions of marginalization in its many manifestations in order to help motivate its calls for self-determination and declare the right to separate and seize territory from the government of Iraq. While their claims are illegal and invalid, and their actions surpass all notions of horror, this still energizes their cause and in part accounts for their resilience. One should not dismiss too quickly the use of self-determination even by such radical groups. Self-determination can indeed result in inherently destabilizing outcomes, unraveling established boundaries and stimulating the perhaps dangerous logic of the

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“state-shattering effect,” a process whose end result we cannot fully predict.

In outlining self-determination today, one has to first acknowledge the massive proliferation of the *selves* that wish to be determined in the international system. Adding complexity, the lines between these selves are not always clear. The boundaries between them have become more fluid as the concept of *self* has gotten messier. These new articulations of self are also often reactive and, furthermore, may lack the traditional centuries of built-up arguments and architecture behind their claims, while the international community's tools for these emerging scenarios, challenges, and conflicts are limited. How do states or mediating institutions determine who speaks for these actors or peoples? How does the system communicate with groups attempting to launch a “state” while simultaneously defining themselves in opposition to and in defiance of this very system? Self-determination is ultimately the prerogative of individuals and people(s) in whose service the state exists. States should be a means to an end for these selves,² but with occurrences of destruction, bloodshed, instances of religious-ideological radicalization and real or perceived injustices, the search for self intensifies and the challenge remains of how to realize this in a peaceful way.

In addition to the complications of *self* or *selves*, the forms of *determination* and the issues to be determined have also proliferated. What is determination in prac-

2. This is argued by H.S.H. Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein in, *The State in the Third Millennium* (Triesen, Liechtenstein: van Eck Publishers, 2009).

tice—a referendum, parliamentary vote, or any other manifestation of the will of the people? While different social and political contexts allow (or not) for different forms of determination, there are some issues so difficult to negotiate that it is hard to imagine an acceptable solution. Negotiations occur not only among the selves, but also with third-party groups with a stake in the conflict or outcome, proof that many of the contemporary conflicts of self-determination are no longer as local as they once were but are increasingly international. Self-determination is about much more than just borders. Has strategy so far failed to account for these emerging issues and to allow self-determination the proper form to express itself and overcome gaps of trust, confidence, capabilities, resources, understanding, and implementation?

Participants agreed that self-determination is potentially a revolutionary principle, and can serve as a source of power for many different individuals, communities, or states. Self-determination is a historical source of mobilization, power, and change. One has to recognize this influence and channel anew this innovative source of power, recognizing that the moment one applies “self-determination” to a situation, one enters a revolutionary and potentially destabilizing environment. The question is *how* can this be effectively directed?

The employment of self-determination encompasses both *principles* and *pragmatism*. Colloquium participants developed three principles that govern self-determination: democracy, national or civic collective identity, and the principle of last resort, implying a threshold after the failure of democratic efforts to maximize self-governance within existing boundaries. There is, however, a difference between self-determination and secession, between internal and external self-determination, and between offensive and defensive self-determination. Self-determination is often used as a euphemism for ethno-nationalism, which can easily become a prelude to inter-community tension and racism, or eventually separatism and secession. Participants noted that we can easily fall into a certain prejudicial dichotomy of ethno-national “bad” and civic “good.” The analytical empha-

sis should instead be between *inclusionary* and *exclusionary* political processes.

One must guard furthermore against confusing self-determination and democracy. It may be true that a self can be determined through an act of democratic expression, but majority voting should not automatically conflate with an expression of what a community really wants. Democracy is always seen (in most Western discourse) as the primary or necessary outcome. That is not, however, necessarily always the primary intent of those concerned. People need to *survive* before achieving democracy. Thus self-determination should prioritize successive outcomes such as stability, security, peace, viability, justice, and democracy. Each of these elements has its rightful time, which may not always be immediately after the self has been determined.

Additionally, communities seeking self-determination, especially territorial independence, must also recognize the established responsibilities and duties of sovereignty. These include preventing one’s territory from being used as a base for any hostile action against other nations and guarding against creeping invasions. States that are selective about which rules they wish to adhere to cannot then preach the sanctity of sovereign boundaries.

A successful grand strategy based on the principle of self-determination would thus ideally account for three fundamental elements. First, the strategy should enable

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clearly *setting the objectives* and *defining the outcomes* of a striving for self-determination, including possible conflicts and ensuing negotiations. Second, the strategy should define how to secure the necessary *means, resources*, and *allies* to achieve such an outcome. Third, it should account for the necessary *staying power* in order to sustainably see the self-determination attempt, initiative, or strife through to a resolution. Self-determination conflicts are not unresolvable, but a lack of coherent strategy renders them more volatile.

AN INEVITABILITY OF CRISES?

A long-term strategic vision, especially one grounded in self-determination, must accommodate the inevitable possibility of shorter-term crises, of which today's world seems to offer no shortage. It is to be hoped that a robust strategy should be able to weather unexpected events. However, some crises may be significant enough to strain the expected flexibility of a grand strategy or require a reevaluation of the strategic design itself. The crux of the issue is being able to recognize the true nature of a crisis in a timely fashion and maintain long-term perspective in the midst of shorter-term upheaval and crisis management.

Even if strategy-making is facilitated by the existence of an adversarial "other," the complexity and potential interaction between the multiple crises of today make developing and implementing a single strategy even more difficult due to the multiplicity of state and non-state actors and networks. In this volatile environment, it often seems almost impossible to characterize a single crisis as the most important. Officials and public opinion create an expectation of constant preparedness and ability to manage and anticipate crises worldwide. Such a capability would require in-depth understanding of all potential adversarial or problematic areas or issues. At the same time, states, even great powers, seem indifferent, unwilling, or underequipped to take on the responsibilities and long-term investments needed to achieve and sustain these expected capabilities.

Crisis also encompasses much more than immediate front-page issues. Participants stressed the long-term ramifications of problems like income inequality, population demographics, environmental hazards, and a global governance system largely seen as forged and exclusively managed by the West. There is also a crisis within the international system itself. Leaders seem to be neither prepared nor motivated to carry out the necessary processes themselves. This leadership crisis appears to be most acute in many western states. Grand strategy, which implies benefits for the future with immediate costs, reveals the incentives and misalignments in democratic societies. This structural problem can lead to demagogic populism. How can we change the motivation structure in politics today to encourage long-term thinking and find the type of political leaders we often seem to so desperately lack? How do we shape professional, military, and diplomatic education to produce people to fill these roles in government? These are the issues of long-term grand strategy that are unfortunately overshadowed and pushed aside again and again by more immediate crises.

In attempting to define the interaction between strategic vision(s), immediate crises, and long-term challenges, key questions emerge. Is today's order robust enough to work out effective responses to these crises? What demonstrates that a strategy is sufficient to endure immediate trials and survive long term? Today's state-based system seems insufficient to deal with these challenges. But how do we incorporate new entities, decide who gets a seat at the table, and what kind of influence they should wield?

A TOOLKIT FOR STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY

Recognizing and incorporating the disparities, developments, and inconsistencies in the current international system, the key for states' success lies in expanding the toolkits with which they leverage their strategic capabilities or manage inevitable misalignments. Any such toolkit must be based on a clear conception of the un-

GLOBAL ACTORS FRAMEWORK



derlying moral structures and rule of law that provide justification and legitimacy. This is the crux of today's global actors framework, as many existing national, international, supranational, and even non-governmental actors, organizations, and methods appear insufficient for or incompatible with the realities and needs of influencers and decision-makers across disparate and conflicting global systems and networks.

States, especially democratic societies, already have the basic building blocks of an effective toolkit in their founding documents and constitutions as well as in ratified international treaties and frameworks. Diplomacy, especially as the multiplication of non-state actors and new means complicates traditional practices, requires this *meta-language*. This current language took a long time to elaborate, and today's developments pose a threat to the established language of diplomacy and its effectiveness. The problem, extending beyond that of establishing a set of shared norms, is that the new ac-

tors in such diplomacy have not or do not want to absorb the new norms nor do they employ that language. While recognizing that norms often remain undefined around the edges, they nevertheless have functional dimensions that make them important in engagement and negotiation. Negotiators and diplomats should respect these principles in working for peace and stability, while recognizing the interests of the actors involved. Ideally they will also be aware of the ever-increasing influence of social and technological changes and new modes of communication on perceptions of time and privacy. Yet, whether new states or treaties based on these forms of communication could possibly emerge remains unclear. Many norms and practices forming an effective component of the toolkit are thus still found in pre-established foundations.

As mentioned above, however, many of the increasingly influential new actors take issue with the dominance of Western values or norms and attempt to construct their

power in opposition to such structures. Simultaneously, rhetoric of “grand strategy” and long-term thinking, especially in cases of potential national retrenchment or relative decline, does not necessarily create confidence and stability, and thus further exacerbates the crises of leadership, ambiguity, and negativity. The West fears rhetoric of *hegemon* and *dominance* to describe the world system it created and from which it inherently benefits, while the rest of the world increasingly vocalizes a rejection of this reality. The toolkit thus requires a strategy of effectively communicating with those “others” not integrated into the system.

The ability to stimulate constructive discussion also ties to the long-term objectives of establishing peace while acceptably adjusting the status quo. The international system has become quite good at holding elections, but worse at connecting a political dialogue to these elections and making sure that voting is taking place on relevant issues for and by the right people and candidates. It is harder to foster a frank and open conversation connecting strategy and self-determination when it is unclear what the people are demanding from their leadership. At the same time, this type of success still hinges on the more hard-power dimensions of the toolkit. An effective toolkit must consider the need for security guarantees, as episodes of conflict often hinge on the roles of peacekeeping, security, and stabilization operations. It is more difficult in peacekeeping scenarios to establish and guarantee security, and many actors in the world do not have these capabilities. Political processes rather than violence are too often, unfortunately, a *privilege*. An agile and flexible toolkit should thus include provisions for establishing such security guarantees.

Tying in observations from hard sciences, there will always be features of a system that cannot be anticipated or understood. Systems can become so complicated that knowing failure *a priori* is impossible, as the surprisingly non-violent fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 demonstrated. The truism that accidents happen, both positive and negative, verifies such misunderstanding of failure mechanisms. To translate to the political realm, one must guard against complacency about what could

or could not happen, and instead think about sources of strength and flexibility while recognizing the limits of prediction. In accepting that planning, strategy, technology, and related instruments and tools may fail in unimaginable ways, how can we foster resilience in the face of potentially catastrophic, unanticipated risks, cataclysmic events, and the unintended consequences thereof?

Lastly, yet perhaps most importantly, an effective toolkit of statecraft has to allow for *prioritization*—an undeniably crucial aspect of crisis management and long-term strategic thinking—accompanied by the capability to *follow through* and effectively implement the matching of means and ends. A successful toolkit needs to be able to address the fundamental and increasingly relevant issue of *managing complexity*, requiring maximum flexibility, reliable information, understanding of risk and opportunity, forward thinking, prioritization, and public-private partnerships. The complexities of today require focus and new ways of thinking rather than just seeing a particular crisis as simply dire and overwhelming. Effective and capable grand strategy should approach the world informed by a realization of the interconnectedness of crises and theaters of operation and with an ability to discern and transcend notions of paralyzing complexity. The central challenge is how to stimulate and implement this type of big-picture thinking using the pre-established necessary tools.

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QUO VADIS MUNDUS?

In approaching today's myriad international challenges, one of the key issues going forward will be addressing the increasing complexity of both the top-down grand strategic notion as well as the bottom-up realm of self-determination. First of all, does a state or actor need a grand strategy? *Can* one even have an effective grand strategy? The ends, ways, and means are not always clear, but many times they become specified in the daily functioning of the system, which might still be costly. At the same time, it has become clear that a new international order appropriate to deal with the challenges of our time must work with and for a wider pool of actors and beneficiaries. *Inclusion*—and how to make this participation a reality—has become a new key issue in formulating a grand strategy, especially one based on self-determination and one to stabilize the global system. Such inclusion, however, entails a heightened level of global responsibility for each of the players involved, especially in our interdependent world with real-time interaction. It also demands a new conceptualization of partnerships for each new dilemma. How can the global system avoid Gilpin-esque revolutionary change and be incrementally updated instead of overthrown, with established institutions made to work more effectively and a wielding of proven as well as new international tools in a more appropriate manner?³ The current international infrastructure arguably originated to perpetuate Western influence. Once this influence ceases to be globally popular or even accepted, this may become a source of tension and require a new grand strategy which might have to consider that Western, especially United States, influence will no longer be paramount. What remains to be seen is how incremental or disruptive such a change might be.

From a long-term, international historic perspective, many of the external borders we have today are, in fact, an unusual aspect of human history, a result of the rise

of a state-based global system in the past few centuries. In the coming years, this will be an increasing challenge for states thinking in grand strategic terms. Many of the issues and challenges of self-determination today are also different from those of the last century, encompassing universal principles, movements, and networks. What will a sense of identity mean in the coming decades on multiple levels of analysis, and discussed in real-time from the communal to global level? Furthermore, analysis of power and legitimacy must take into account the changing nature of diplomacy, which now no longer represents only the dialogue between professionals of an elite club. New actors—including citizen diplomats and powerful individual actors operating in real-time—and international structures have become salient in international affairs. Those planning grand strategic objectives must include them and be concerned about their own acceptance with the relevant populations.

In debating the ways to reconcile grand strategy and self-determination, the most glaring disparity and potential hurdle emerged between the consensus that any strategy requires long-term perspective, and the recognition that some leaders and major actors seem too preoccupied with the short-term and the immediate tactics and payoffs in their respective media and political environments. A long-term coherent vision has been noticeably absent during the past decades. The effects have been corrosive on those tasked with running the state, who seemingly lack a sense of correct outcomes or notion of consistency. This results in a loss of faith among citizens, whose discontent can have profound consequences on the future running of that state. Today's emerging populist demagogues and radical political movements in many states are harbingers of this dissatisfaction. There also remains a distinct gap between political and moral viabilities, compounded by the underlying technological developments and uncertainties. What happens when the only thing politically viable is not morally viable, but seems to be the only option likely to succeed?

Co-opting the potentially revolutionary nature of self-determination into a grand strategy forms the basis for long-term, sustainable success. To reiterate the ongoing

3. On evolutionary versus revolutionary change, see Robert G. Gilpin, Jr., *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

query and critical challenge, *how* can the potentially radical and avant-garde power of self-determination be directed? Many instruments and principles already exist: the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Charter of Europe, the United Nations, and other international institutions. It is beholden to those in power and their representatives to channel and regularize the possibilities of ethnic, religious, national or other groups to use their right to self-determination in a constructive and peaceful way. But the question remains unsolved about how to incorporate non-state or transnational influences while maintaining the effectiveness, identity, and legitimacy of the core.

A consensus emerged that thinking and policy-making have become far too reactive and thus ineffective, while also incoherent and inconsistent. We have locked ourselves “inside the box” but need to move forward and outside in order to regain the ability to *think the unthinkable*—proactive, anticipatory, and cognizant of inherent paradoxes while remaining aware of the danger of unintended consequences. Such discussions take on additional meaning in an evolving technological context, where immediate 140-character sound bites or the fear of being recorded or quoted out of context have, perhaps, lessened the capacity to conduct candid and private discussions. Nevertheless, individuals, communities, groups, and states must listen to, interact with, and respect each other. Above all, they must also *know thyself (themselves)* in order to effectively decide what to accomplish and how. Reflection on the definition of self-determination, the myriad concepts of self, and the ensuing practical and moral dimensions is rarely seen in the context of grand strategy—often perilously ignored, or, at best, confined to the world of the ivory tower and the elites. The debate must expand beyond this realm in order to capture the underlying emotions of the very peoples and selves seeking determination. Without the necessary justifications to buttress the cause, the search for an effective and sustainable grand strategy by *any* actor will appear ever more difficult in a rapidly changing world where many of the traditional means are seen as ineffective.

Co-opting the potentially revolutionary nature of self-determination into a grand strategy forms the basis for long-term, sustainable success. [But] how can the potentially radical and avant-garde power of self-determination be directed?

When adapting these observations and debates to today’s world events the list of developments and issues dubbed as crises is almost too daunting to be enumerated. Over-use of the term crisis dilutes the term until *everything* is a crisis. How should today’s actors—from the individual to the supranational—cope, respond, and strategize? Global challenges must be concretized beyond the realm of theory and outside of just geopolitical circumstances. Employing self-determination as a central element, vehicle, and objective of grand strategy is the way to account for 21st-century realities and effectively tackle the challenges of today and the complexities of the future.

In an ideal world grand strategy would be a source of peace and stability, while self-determination and self-administration would be crucial ingredients in an effective toolkit for grand strategy.

KEY ISSUES AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- Power is emerging in confusing and complicated new iterations. Power is no longer confined to traditional notions of “hard” and “soft,” but is also in turn smart, compassionate, benevolent, considerate, canny, or sensitive.
- The tools and levers of power—exercised via social media, global corporations, or non-state actors—increasingly fall outside the purview of the state. What might this mean for all actors in the emerging global context?
- Given that new technologies and technical capacities bring up critical issues of responsibility and moral reasoning, who will be culpable if something goes wrong?
- Can the consequences of new means of influence be predicted or regulated? Should they be? What moral precepts should govern the use of these methods?
- What do grand strategic objectives of security and prosperity mean in the 21st-century context?
- How should we address current *Politikverdrossenheit*—a troubling but undeniable disenchantment and disillusionment with politics?
- Does today’s crisis-ridden and increasingly interactive world offer unique opportunities to reformulate tricky issues like the global status quo, reevaluating and recreating consensus about the strategic role of traditional and newly empowered actors?
- How can major powers cooperate to emphasize and achieve long-term strategic objectives despite disagreement over the crisis du jour?
- How can determination be defined in practice—by referendum, parliamentary vote, or any other manifestation of the will of the people?
- How can the motivation structures in politics today encourage long-term thinking?
- Is today’s “order” robust enough to work out effective responses to crises?
- What demonstrates that a strategy is sufficient to endure immediate trials and survive long term?
- How can resilience be fostered in the face of potentially catastrophic events, unimagined risks, and the unintended consequences thereof?
- What will a sense of identity—discussed in real-time from the communal to global level—mean in the coming decades on multiple levels of analysis?
- What happens when the only thing politically viable is not morally viable, but seems to be the only option likely to succeed?

REPORT SUMMARY

The notions of “grand strategy” and “self-determination” are of critical significance in today’s world of multiple international crises. At once potentially highly interactive or mutually exclusive, complementary or self-reinforcing, these concepts, however, are rarely analyzed simultaneously. Grand strategy—the utilization of all available means to achieve desired ends—retains remarkable importance, as it continues to shape approaches to the complexities of contemporary policy-making. Yet present-day grand strategy is challenged by evolving notions and distributions of power in the global context. Contentious debates emerge over the state of the international system, with challenges stemming from the role of scientific and technological developments like robotics and nanotechnologies, proliferation of information accessible in real time through social media, the radicalization of religious movements, unequal distribution of income, and high rates of mobility. Today’s world offers no shortage of short- and long-term crises, including the role of power and leadership, economic, financial, energy, environmental and health challenges, a reemergence of nationalism, great-power geopolitics, terrorism, and as-yet unimagined disruptions to or within the international system, with the resulting difficulty of defining and achieving the necessary elements of a toolkit for strategy and diplomacy. Self-determination has been both a source of peace and stability and also an objective and even an instrument of actors in this global context. At the same time, the powerful and often-contested matter of self-determination interacts with and further challenges ideas and norms of strategy and governance. It is here that these two central notions meet, with the conceptual interaction between an individual striving to “determine one’s destiny” and search for greater influence in governance challenged by a status quo which still encourages control and power by national governments. A truly successful grand strategy must, in fact, harness the potentially revolutionary power of self-determination, weaving together the threads of these two paramount principles to face the emerging challenges of the 21st century.

THE LIECHTENSTEIN COLLOQUIUM

“Grand Strategy and Self-Determination” was a meeting sponsored under the aegis of the Liechtenstein Colloquium on European and International Affairs (LCM). Over 40 scholars, practitioners, and diplomats participated in this LCM, including Prof. Robert Gilpin, Mr. Bernard Reverdin, and Amb. Vitaly Churkin.

The LCM is a platform for crisis management, conflict resolution, and education. It maintains an ongoing series of private colloquia, workshops, and seminars devoted to informed and frank discussions of specific topics with the goal of advancing peace and prosperity in the world. The LCM is independent, international, intergenerational, interdisciplinary, innovative, and educative with equal participation independent of gender, ethnicity, culture, and religion. The LCM provides a neutral forum for discussion and exchange of ideas among a variety of stakeholders. The meetings are private, off-the-record, and by invitation only. The LCM was founded in 1985 by H.S.H. Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein and Wolfgang Danspeckgruber, and since there have been over forty meetings.



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