

New Model Federalist No. 11 – On Foreign Policy

That building might is necessary for maintaining liberty – That preserving the preeminence of republican forms of government is the highest foreign policy interest of the United States – That allies which advance this high interest ought to be held dear – That allies which advance a lower interest should be favored only while that shared interest persists – That our Republic ought to confront foes only so long as they threaten U.S. interests – That limited uses of force can support diplomacy – That diplomacy ought to continue while force is used – That China is the principal rival of the United States in this century – That our Union is a maritime power – That the Pacific Ocean is the main arena for our Republic’s contest with China, but not the only one – That our Union ought to strengthen relations with other maritime nations – That the U.S. military ought to re-emphasize training and the upkeep of equipment – That lesser challengers distract the United States from its main effort – That moral imperatives sometimes alter the rules of the Great Game

Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far. —Theodore Roosevelt, January 26th, 1900.

In our previous two essays, we discussed how the United States might secure to itself the full blessings of its vast territory and growing population, which together comprise a great part of our Union’s might. Might, we say, is the combined weight of population, resources, and territory, plus political and administrative organization that enables a country to bring its weight to bear on matters affecting its interests.¹ Competent governance, which we examined earlier in this series, accumulates might. Here we shall focus on the use of might: that is, on foreign policy, which is the conduct of the United States – herein, a singular Union – toward foreign governments in the perpetual contest of nations to secure their interests. This competition was once aptly described as a Great Game, and our Republic’s goals in it ought to be to maintain the peace and to uphold the preeminence of the United States and its allies, by which free government may be preserved.²

All countries strive to protect their population, resources, and territory and to ensure that they are able to procure the items they require from abroad. Republics, being accountable to their citizens, have an additional consideration to satisfy: they must maintain their freedom, for their people’s lives and property are never secure if left to the depredation of a tyrant. Thus, the first duty of the United States is to its people, and the first object of that duty is to preserve the liberty that the citizens of our Republic enjoy.

That much is evident. Yet the logic which proceeds from it, in regard to events abroad, is not as apparent. Citizens of republics, content with the freedom they enjoy at home and desiring to avoid the trouble of the world, invariably ask why enlightened countries cannot be content to be pacifistic, prosperous, and inward-looking. Our answer is that the choice of peace or war will not always be left to them, but may be forced upon them by the aggression of another; thence the only way to preserve their liberty is to possess the might to defeat or deter the aggressor.³

¹ Here we distinguish might, which is a latent measure of power, from force, which we define as an act of coercion.

² The Great Game in its narrow sense is the term given to the competition between Imperial Russia and Great Britain in Central Asia during the 19th century; but it can also be applied to great-power competition broadly, as we do here.

³ “If there were only small nations and no great ones, humanity would surely be freer and happier; but one cannot make it so that there are no great nations...Small nations are often miserable not because they are small, but because they are weak; great ones prosper not because they are great, but because they are strong. Force is therefore often one of the first conditions of happiness and even of existence of nations.” Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 1, Part 1, Ch. 8. Tocqueville here uses the term ‘force’ in the way that we have defined ‘might.’

Some citizens, acknowledging this truth, might argue that a republic ought to fight when necessary to defend itself, but should otherwise pay little heed to the outside world. Yet since the might of future aggressors cannot be known, a republic must have the capacity to expand its own might to meet the threat that may someday face it.⁴ This requires the republic to draw resources from beyond its borders and to find allies abroad. Great Britain, had it remained Little England and not acquired its empire, could not have stood alone against Nazi Germany; without allying with the United States and Russia, it could not have vanquished that foe. Our Republic, had it not expanded across North America and made alliances around the world, could not have overcome the Soviet Union, which had itself spread across Asia and installed vassals throughout the globe.⁵

The creeds of pacifism and isolationism are thus not merely self-destructive, but morally flawed. Decency in government must be accompanied by might, or else a republic will sooner or later be defeated and its decency left to the mercy of an aggressor who has none; and might can only effectively be built and preserved by looking abroad. Republics must play the Great Game.

The first principle of that contest is that interests, not relationships, are paramount.⁶ This wise maxim, when steadfastly adhered to, ensures that the well-being of the Union is not subject to the personal relations between its leaders and heads of state abroad, which ebb and flow with the fleeting impulses of personality and affection rather than the hard dictates of national interest. Yet, if interpreted in a superficial manner, it may be abused to justify discarding reliable allies in favor of momentary friends. A wholesome examination of this principle is therefore in order.

The paramount interest of our Republic is to preserve its liberty, which is best done by maintaining enlightened government as the dominant force in the world. A nation benefits from the presence of others that are governed in its image: their inner workings are better understood by it, so it can sooner reach accord with them. That is why Athens aligned with other Greek democracies; it is why the fascist states of Germany, Italy, and Japan banded together in the past century; it is why Russia once spread communism and now seeks to spread illiberal democracy; and it is why China extols the alleged virtues of unvarnished autocracy. It follows that our Union ought to strengthen other countries that practice republican government, for they, by their nature, share the interest of preserving it; and it ought to be wary of those that embrace dictatorship, for they, by their nature, oppose that interest. It is natural that most of the countries friendly to the United States today are republican in nature, whereas those most averse to it are dictatorial.⁷

⁴ “Because it is impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national exigencies, or the correspondent extent and variety of the means which may be necessary to satisfy them.” Alexander Hamilton, *Federalist No. 23*.

⁵ “It then could have been said to her, as it is now said to us, ‘Why go beyond your own borders? Within them you have what suffices for your needs and those of your population. There are manifold abuses within to be corrected, manifold miseries to be relieved. Let the outside world take care of itself. Defend yourself, if attacked; being, however, always careful to postpone preparation to the extreme limit of imprudence. Sphere of influence, part in the world, national prestige – there are no such things; or if there be, they are not worth fighting for.’ What England would have been, had she so reasoned, is matter for speculation; that the world would have been poorer may be confidently affirmed.” Alfred Thayer Mahan, “The Isthmus and Sea Power,” 1898.

⁶ “We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.” Lord Palmerston, Speech to the House of Commons, March 1st, 1848.

⁷ Of the former: Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, India, Israel, and more. The latter: China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and more. Some of the former are constitutional monarchies that are not republics in name, but have republican institutions that uphold their liberty; whereas the latter claim to be republics, but are so in name only. It must also be clear that it has long been the policy of the United States to object only to foreign governments, and never to their people, whom we assume to share a universal aspiration for liberty.

Old republican allies thus remain so because their systems of government advance this institutional interest, which supersedes narrower considerations. Allies of this type may diverge from our Union on occasion, such as when France objected to the invasion of Iraq, yet remain firm friends. But if they shed their republican institutions and degenerate into tyranny, their worth as allies shall extend only so far and so long as they serve a lesser purpose. Such was the case during the Cold War of many third-world tyrants, whom the United States aided only to contain the menacing spread of Soviet might and afterwards upbraided for their despotism.

There are therefore two classes of ally: one that shares institutional interests and another that shares narrow interests. Relations with the former ought to be of longer duration and greater closeness, and allowance ought to be made in them for differences in policy; whereas the latter ought to be given greater scrutiny and less tolerance for divergence.

The same principle applies to foes. Those which plot to undermine or overpower free government menace our Republic's institutional interest and ought to be dealt with sternly; but if they cease to do so, they ought no longer to be considered beyond the pale. Yet even the most hostile and subversive states are rarely irreconcilable in all affairs. If a temporary arrangement with them serves U.S. interests, then our Union ought to make one, for refusal to negotiate rarely accomplishes anything for either party.⁸ Lesser foes, moreover, ought to be treated as opponents only so long as they threaten narrow interests. If the conflict of interest ends, with it should end all resentment held by the government and people of the United States towards that country.

Thus may relations be brought in line with interests. If an alliance no longer supports any institutional nor narrow interest, it ought without hesitation to be ended; if rapprochement with an erstwhile foe serves an institutional or a narrow interest, and if an accord on latter does not prejudice the former, it ought to be struck without regard to present sentiment or past insult.

The second principle of the Great Game is that all national means must be used in concert to advance national interests. The tools of foreign policy are understood to consist of negotiation and force, the latter of which may include both military and economic coercion. All of these methods are and ought to be closely intertwined, and they are not limited to conventional modes of war and diplomacy. Russia has understood this truth clearly: its use of 'hybrid warfare,' in which it employs in tandem propaganda, foreign aid, diplomacy, sanctions, proxy war, special operations, and conventional arms, has in recent years won Moscow both territory and influence.

The United States, by contrast, has fallen into the habit of placing too much and too rigid distinction between force and negotiation, such that it either loses influence through reluctance to act, as it did recently in Syria, or overreacts when moved to fight, as it did before in Iraq. Yet our Union was once able to exercise all aspects of its power in such a mutually-reinforcing way, and can again;⁹ and it can do so in a more humane manner, and in support of a more decent end, than does Russia. But it must first remember how, and here we shall offer a few thoughts.

⁸ Indeed, our Republic often made such temporary arrangements with the Soviet Union.

⁹ As it did, for instance, in the Venezuelan Crisis of 1902-1903. Germany and Britain, to whom Venezuela owed a large sum of money, blockaded Caracas and threatened to seize Venezuelan territory, an outcome unacceptable to the United States. Theodore Roosevelt, President at the time, acted astutely to uphold U.S. interests. By assembling the U.S. Navy at Puerto Rico, he demonstrated might; with informal diplomacy, he conveyed the threat of force in secret to Germany, and also sowed division between London and Berlin; by referring the matter to formal arbitration at the International Court of Justice, he allowed Wilhelm II to save face. War was averted, and the blockade lifted.

Clausewitz is often cited for his maxim that war is but politics by other means.¹⁰ It may be derived from this thought that all war is politics, though not all politics is war. It follows that the United States ought not to take up arms without a political aim, nor use them with the sole intent to destroy its foe – which is costly and impractical – but rather to advance its interests. It must also keep in mind that its opponents have political considerations of their own. By taking astute note of them, our Union can settle conflicts more to its advantage and in a lasting manner.

Our Union must therefore conduct diplomacy while waging war; it must talk continually as it fights. That does not mean it must be friendly to adversaries whose acts are repugnant, only that it must communicate with them; and if they are willing to make concessions that satisfy its interests, it should allow them to back down with dignity. A foe that saves face among its own allies and citizens is less likely to return to the fight, for it shall have less political compulsion to do so than it would, were it humiliated by the stronger power.¹¹ If our Republic adheres to this practice, it will find that its battles are in general less bloody and of shorter duration, and more likely to succeed; for having first thought through what it intends to achieve, and limiting itself to that object, it shall be less apt to fall into the excess zeal or aimless drift that ruin armies.

Challenges to our Union's interests, moreover, ought to be met with alacrity and vigor when they first arise, lest they grow to such proportions that they require a general conflict to resolve. Indeed, a general war between great powers is to be avoided at most costs, because such wars are so destructive as to harm severely the interests of all sides: recall the First World War, which ruined two empires – Turkey and Austria – crippled two more – France and Britain – and sowed the seeds of vicious tyranny in Germany and Russia. The best way to prevent such war is not by pacifism or appeasement, but for it to be made clear in advance which side would win in battle and which encroachments would cause that country to fight.¹² Small uses of force, or even mere threats of force, so long as they are made with a mind to politics, can show capability and resolve, and thus bring the necessary clarity to those vital considerations.

Yet the use or threat of force serves no useful end if it is accompanied with belligerence and unpredictability, and may instead cause grave harm. Bellicosity is provocative, but adds no substance to might; unpredictability blurs the line beyond which a country is prepared to embark upon a general war. Either trait invites escalation that negates the purpose of early and vigorous action, which is to resolve a conflict in favor of our Union's interest.¹³ To resort to a large use of force to settle a dispute that could have been solved by a small one, or by a mere demonstration,

¹⁰ “We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy, but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means.” Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Ch. 1, Sec. 24.

¹¹ “Using words of little honor against the enemy arises most often from an insolence that either victory or the false hope of victory gives you. This false hope makes men err not only in speaking but also in working. For when this hope enters into the breasts of men, it makes them pass beyond the mark and most often lose the opportunity of having a certain good through hoping to have an uncertain better.” Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Titus Livy*, Bk. 2, Ch. 27.

¹² “To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace. A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite.” George Washington, address to Congress, Jan. 8th, 1790.

¹³ “I believe that one of the great prudences men use is to abstain from menacing or injuring anyone with words. For neither the one nor the other takes force away from the enemy, but the one makes him more cautious and the other makes him have greater hatred against you and think with greater industry of how to hurt you.” Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Titus Livy*, Bk. 2, Ch. 26.

is to act against that interest, for the blood and treasure of our Republic's citizens would then have been expended without need.

Credibility, therefore, ought to be prized: our Republic ought to state what it is prepared to do and, when necessary, to do it.¹⁴ By conducting its affairs in such a way, it may be assured – as much as is possible in the affairs of mankind – that it will only use force when force is needed, and only in such proportion as necessary. For if an opponent proceeds with its challenge in the face of a credible threat, then either it is testing this credibility, in which instance it shall refrain from further encroachment once the promised response has been given, or else it has resolved to try its fortunes in battle, in which instance battle is inevitable.¹⁵

Yet as harmful as it is for a country to act without stating its intention, so is it disastrous for a country to state its intention but then not act. Inaction often results from fear of escalation; yet it generally encourages escalation on the part of the adversary, who realizes he may obtain that which he desires by acting aggressively. The damage to a nation's interests in such an event, moreover, is not limited to the conflict in which it occurred, nor to those powers involved in it. Reputation cannot be fled from, and credibility cannot be kept if it is not continually maintained. Every move our Republic makes in the Great Game is observed by all of the contenders therein; every success is noted by them, and every stumble registered.¹⁶

By considering force as but one tool, therefore, to be used in tandem with negotiation and all other aspects of power, the United States shall find itself less inclined either to shy away from confrontation or to be carried away by it. Our Union has spectacular and singular might; if used in a way that is sensible, credible, and forceful, it will advance U.S. interests and keep the peace.

We shall now depart from the realm of maxims to survey the Great Game in this century. Today, our Union still stands preeminent; it is also the mightiest republican power and therefore the natural champion of free government in the world; no other champion has emerged, as the United States did upon the decline of Britain; and thus our Republic may not cede its position as first among the great powers, or it will have allowed liberty to take second place to tyranny.

There must be no mistaking that China is the foremost of those rivals which challenge the dominance of the United States and its republican allies, and that China is assisted in this regard by Russia.¹⁷ Our Republic must, however, strive to maintain its preeminence without resort to general war with either power, as the struggles of the past century could not equal the destruction wrought by total war in the nuclear age. Yet, to achieve this feat it is necessary that our Union

¹⁴ Credibility does not require detailed specificity. It is unwise to telegraph the exact manner of a planned retaliation, for doing so would give the foe an opportunity to prepare countermeasures that could render the response impotent. Rather, our Republic ought to make known the general contours of its response to an anticipated challenge, enough that a rival may ponder the consequences of acting against our interest, but may not formulate a plan to thwart them.

¹⁵ “For one ought to accept this conclusion: that a captain who wishes to stay in the field cannot flee battle whenever the enemy wishes to engage it in any mode.” Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Titus Livy*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10.

¹⁶ Thus, the failure to strike Syria in 2013 invited the Russian annexation of Crimea the following year. Our Union acted more astutely when the situation, regarding Syrian use of chemical weapons, recurred in 2018. In bombarding a Syrian airbase within days of that challenge, it acted promptly; by using force, it earned credibility; by using force proportionally and allowing Moscow to save face, it did not court escalation.

¹⁷ “China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence.” U.S. National Security Strategy, 2017.

maintain the might to prevail in any war, whether of limited or general scale, and the credibility to convince its challengers that it has the will to do so; and it must possess these qualities without bombast, which could push a rival to fight who otherwise would yield. Our Republic must heed Theodore Roosevelt's advice: it must speak softly and carry a big stick.

Furthermore, our Union must bear in mind the particular characteristics of its geography. It spans a vast continent, from which it can draw abundant resources, but is separated by two oceans from the more populous hemisphere. Its prosperity relies on freedom of navigation, and its security on command of the high seas.¹⁸ The United States is thus fundamentally a maritime power, though one which is capable of amassing military strength on land when circumstance demands it. It declared this truth when Theodore Roosevelt sent the Great White Fleet around the world; proved it in the Second World War, when our Union gained dominion of the Atlantic and Pacific while fielding a large army in Europe; and demonstrated it again in the past decade, when sorties from our Republic's aircraft carriers battered the 'Islamic State' in distant Iraq and Syria.

China, by contrast, is in certain respects a mirror image of our Union. Though similar in territorial extent, latitude, and climate, it rests on an edge of the great landmass of Asia and so looks for its prosperity and security not only to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, but also to the overland routes that have for millennia bound it to the populous regions of the Middle East and Europe. China is thus fundamentally a land power, but one which is capable of building military strength at sea when circumstance allows it – and it is presently doing so.

The Great Game in this century shall therefore come to a contest between two powers which are in some aspects alike and in others opposite: both vast, both industrious, both able to project power on land and at sea; but the one a republic, the other a dictatorship, and each reliant on somewhat different avenues of trade. The outcome shall turn, we believe, on the great issue of which power becomes the world's economic center,¹⁹ and on which power exerts greater control over that avenue of commerce which is vital to them both, the Pacific Ocean.

To hold its own in this contest, the United States must wisely build and wield its national might. We shall here divide might into three types: economic, diplomatic, and military. It is an artificial division, for each relies on the other and in a successful policy they function as a whole, but it can usefully illustrate some our Republic's priorities in the 21st century's Great Game.

Economic might we define simply as the wealth of the Republic and its citizens, which is acquired by growing the national economy through efficient utilization of our Union's resources. It is naturally of core importance to the object of maintaining the United States at the world's economic center. Accumulated wealth also enables our Republic to purchase essential goods, to raise and maintain armies and fleets, and to hold influence abroad through trading relationships,

¹⁸ "Further, is it too much to say that, as two of these links, the shipping and the markets, are exterior to our own borders, the acknowledgement of them carries with it a view of the relations of the United States to the world radically distinct from the simple idea of self-sufficingness? We shall not follow far this line of thought before there will dawn the realization of America's unique position, facing the older worlds of the East and West, her shores washed by the oceans which touch the one or the other, but which are common to her alone." Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward," 1890.

¹⁹ Foreign trade is drawn naturally to the largest, most varied, and most open economies. As such, the greatest volumes of trade will either flow through the Pacific and Eurasia, with China at the center, or through the Pacific and the Atlantic, converging on the United States. In the 19th century, Europe was the center, and both America and China stood on the periphery – as is still represented today on maps of the world.

among myriad other benefits. We shall not dwell on it here, because in several previous essays we examined at length how our Union may prosper through competition, free trade, and prudent management of public debt. We shall note only that the United States ought to be sparing in the coercive use of its economic might. Tariffs, embargoes, and sanctions, if employed excessively, have a twofold danger: they encourage other countries to craft new economic arrangements that avoid our Union, and, by stunting one part of the world economy, they might reduce growth in other, unforeseen parts of it and thus diminish our Republic's own prosperity.

Diplomatic might, which is commonly known as influence, we define as our Union's ability to access resources and places that are important to its interests, and to deny those things to its foes. It is acquired chiefly through negotiations with foreign governments. Among the benefits that can be derived from it are overseas bases, rights of transit across foreign territory, sharing of information, agreements for supply of important materials, and allied military support.

The United States, as a sea power that depends on oceangoing trade, ought to reinforce its influence across the maritime edges of the world: Latin America, Western Europe, the coast of Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, Australia, Southeast Asia, Korea, and Japan. The Republic of India, which rivals China in size and promise but has embraced free government, is of singular importance in this regard; and there are other nascent republics, possessing large populations and future potential, such as Nigeria, Indonesia, and Brazil, that the United States would be wise to invest in good relations with.²⁰ Our Union is aided in this endeavor by the fact that several of the countries in those areas emerged, as our Republic did, from the British and Spanish Empires, and so have similarities in language and culture to the United States; and even the nations that do not share those legacies often have kinship bonds with Americans who once emigrated from them.

Furthermore, it is sound strategy in any contest for a contender to dominate wherever he has the natural advantage, and to mount a challenge wherever his foe's natural advantage is most tenuous; this way he forces his foe to labor to maintain his position, rather than being forced by his foe to maintain his own. So, too, is it in the diplomatic aspect of the Great Game. The United States must view the maintenance of its influence in the above-mentioned maritime regions – where it has the natural advantage – as an imperative to be tended to at all times; but it ought also, when opportunity arises, to contest Chinese influence in the land areas of the Middle East and Eastern Europe, which connect China by land to the West. By virtue of the potential for Chinese trade along that route, Beijing has a natural advantage there: recognizing this, China has already begun to augment its influence under the auspices of its Belt and Road Initiative.

Moreover, as the western Pacific and, to a lesser extent, the Indian Ocean are the areas in which the advantage of our Republic relative to China is most tenuous, our Union must expect China to vigorously contest U.S. influence there, as it has done in the South China Sea. The United States ought to meet these challenges with equal vigor, and understand that they are not isolated instances, but part of a grand strategy meant to diminish our Union's diplomatic might.²¹

²⁰ Placing Nigeria on the now-notorious 'travel ban' list was a poor start, which shall serve only to increase Chinese influence there. A better investment, perhaps, would be to support the aspirations of those countries for reform of the United Nations Security Council, so as to reflect their growing role in the world.

²¹ "The central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by what the National Security Strategy classifies as revisionist powers. It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model – gaining veto authority over other nations' economic, diplomatic, and security decisions." U.S. National Defense Strategy, 2018.

Military might, the last of our three divisions, consists of the strength and competence of our Republic's armed forces, which is accumulated principally by training soldiers and procuring equipment. It is measured by the ability of those forces to triumph once battle has been hazarded; and if known to be considerable, it deters foes from attempting the use of force at all. Our Union has in the past few decades attained a reputation for formidable military might, and it is indeed well-earned, but no country can rest on its laurels for long. China is now developing formidable sea power even as it maintains the largest land army in the world, whereas Russia has modernized its own forces. Our Union's military authorities recognize the need to meet these developments;²² its citizens ought to enable them to do so, and expect them to do so wisely.

Maintaining military might requires that our Union preserve its qualitative advantage, for it cannot exceed China in its number of soldiers, nor Russia in its willingness to sacrifice them. The superiority of American arms is ascribed to high technology, and rightly so, but this focus is misleading when directed to narrow projects that are expensive, excessively complex, uncertain, and time-consuming.²³ Rather, the U.S. military ought to invest in technologies that have wide and versatile uses, as it did with the refinement of military radar in the Second World War and the development of satellite positioning in recent times. All new technologies are uncertain, but versatile ones are likelier to pay off in some way, even if their ultimate benefit is unforeseen.

Broader effort ought also to be devoted to training,²⁴ supply, and the replenishment of existing equipment which is known to be reliable. Particular attention in this last respect ought to be paid to the ships of the U.S. Navy; unlike armies, fleets cannot quickly be raised, as it takes far longer to build a ship than it does to train a soldier or assemble a tank. The National Guard ought also to be expanded, to enable our Union to swiftly mobilize if circumstances so require. By thus revitalizing the time-honored American tradition of the militia, moreover, the United States can increase the forces at its disposal in a way that reinforces the relevance of the several States and reduces somewhat the present gulf between soldier and civilian in American society.

There remain aspects of might that do not fit neatly into the categories we have defined here. Notable among these are the ability of the United States to inspire ordinary people abroad, known as 'soft power';²⁵ to invent and master new technologies; and to maintain an adequate supply of strategic resources. Our Republic may preserve the first by conducting its own affairs in keeping with its enlightened principles. It may see to the second by means of an open, competitive, and vigorous economy; we shall propose certain ethical bounds for invention in a later essay. The third requires foresight and planning, and here we have two notes: that the late revolution in energy production through 'fracking' has been a boon to our Union by freeing it

²² "Challenges to the U.S. military advantage represent another shift in the global security environment. For decades the United States has enjoyed uncontested or dominant superiority in every operating domain. We could generally deploy our forces when we wanted, assemble them where we wanted, and operate how we wanted. Today, every domain is contested – air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace." U.S. National Defense Strategy, 2018.

²³ Such as the development of the F-35 fighter jet, which is expected to cost \$1.5 trillion over the project's lifespan; yet it remains uncertain whether that aircraft could survive close combat against a swarm of inexpensive drones.

²⁴ Of critical importance is that soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are trained exhaustively in basic tasks, and that they are trained also to perform those tasks without the aid of computers, which can be hacked or incapacitated. An infantryman who can use a map and compass can fight on when his GPS is jammed; an artilleryman who can fire using a chart can still attack the enemy when his fire control system dies. These abilities have been neglected of late in the U.S. military; it is unlikely that the Chinese and Russian militaries are neglecting them as well.

²⁵ As coined and defined by the political scientist Joseph Nye.

from reliance on foreign gas and oil and by keeping low the world price of those commodities, and talk of banning it is thus self-destructive at this juncture; and that our Republic ought to take further measures to ensure its access to rare earth minerals, which are necessary for production of computer chips and at present are almost entirely obtained from China.²⁶

As we approach the end of this essay, we have so far offered thoughts on how our Union can maintain its position relative to its principal rivals. There are, however, lesser challengers that divert U.S. might and distract our Republic from preserving its primacy among the great powers. The most pressing among these are jihadist groups, North Korea, and Iran: the first must be vanquished, and the others contained until they cease their hostility to the United States.

Jihadist groups, having as they do an irreconcilable ideology and an interest in turmoil, do not fall entirely within the principles of the Great Game outlined in the first part of this essay; they must be dealt with unconditionally in some ways but carefully in others, lest our Republic exhaust itself in pursuing them. This is not to say that extended operations against them ought never to be undertaken; at times, as in Afghanistan after 2001, those have been necessary. But such campaigns ought to be avoided if possible, for they sap blood and treasure and leave U.S. forces exposed to rivals who would send proxies against them. When those battles must be fought, our Union ought to fight them through its own local allies, as it did to defeat the ‘Islamic State’ in Iraq and Syria.²⁷ North Korea and Iran, by contrast, ought to be treated in accordance with the ordinary principles of foreign policy. Those maxims do not deny the use of force when force may be useful, but any force used ought to be limited and support the aim of containment.

The Great Game is a contest of extraordinary complexity, and we could muse about it without end; but this essay must end, if it is to be read, and it is not at any rate meant to provide detailed strategy. We have but one final point to make. Several of the arguments we have made herein are based upon cold calculations of interest and might; and that is well and good, for in normal times it is best to play the Great Game dispassionately. The interests of China would, in many instances, conflict with those of our Republic even if China were not ruled despotically, and it is well to remember that the people of China do not pursue those interests out of villainy or hatred, but because they, too, seek security and prosperity for their country.

Yet there are times when moral imperatives enter into the contest of nations, and the rules of the Great Game must yield to them. Our Republic has encountered such instances in living memory, when totalitarian states attempted to expand across the world and it became the duty of all enlightened nations to fight them. The short-lived ‘Islamic State’ was one such menace, and the United States did its duty to defeat it, though the cost to us was small. At points throughout its sordid history, so was the Soviet Union, but, by good fortune and shrewd strategy, our Union prevailed without fighting it directly. So, too, were Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, which our Republic vanquished in a struggle that spanned the world – yet it did so with confidence that it would have greater prosperity after victory. We do not make such qualifications to degrade what our Republic has achieved in those moments, because its achievements have been great. We do so only to show that the decisions to fight were made easier by a reasonable certainty of success.

²⁶ The Department of Defense has now taken steps to accumulate a stockpile. These efforts ought to be continued.

²⁷ This method has, of course, been made more difficult by the present administration’s dishonorable abandonment of the Syrian Democratic Forces, who bore the battle against ISIS. Yet credibility can recover over time and through the keeping of new promises. Our Republic ought now to begin laboring toward that end.

The ultimate moral test of nations is to face the choice to fight in defense of fundamental and decent principles when the result is uncertain and ordinary maxims of foreign policy urge against it; that is, to choose between shameful surrender or, at best, a prospect of Pyrrhic victory.

Britain faced such a test in the Second World War. After the defeat of France in 1940, it had the opportunity to make peace with Germany, for Adolf Hitler's ambitions lay primarily to the east. Conventional wisdom demanded that Britain reach such an ignoble arrangement, and thereby avoid a general war that it was then ill-prepared to fight. It is to the eternal credit of the British that they refused to do so, and stood alone for that fateful year, knowing full well that prolonged war would likely end in bankruptcy, if not invasion and occupation by one of the most ruthless tyrants known to history.²⁸ Countries, even republics, often accumulate much moral ambiguity throughout their histories, and such was certainly the case with the British Empire; but on its day of reckoning, Great Britain proved itself beyond doubt to be both decent and brave.

Our Republic made such a choice once, too. In 1860, it stood on the brink of disunion, facing the prospect of a terrible civil war, threatened by a class of men whose fortunes depended on unimpeded expansion of slavery. Had our Union consented to shield that evil institution, then and forever, it might have avoided the cataclysm to come; and doing so might well have seemed the rational move in the view of foreign policy, for a nation divided against itself is weakened in regard to foreign rivals.²⁹ But the United States rejected that dark temptation, persevered through its hour of trial, and so imprinted its enlightened legacy firmly onto the pages of history.³⁰

Thus, fellow citizens, we urge you to uphold our Republic's legacy. The United States must keep an eye to its place in the world; it must build its might and wield it wisely; and it must summon the will, as it has before, to do what is right even in difficult times. In this way shall our Union be remembered not merely as a passing contestant in the Great Game of nations, but as a great nation, like Rome and Britain before it, whose deeds and courage advanced the progress of mankind. It is to this latter subject that we shall turn in our remaining two essays.

—U.S. Citizen

²⁸ "Nations which went down fighting rose again, but those which tamely surrendered were finished." Winston Churchill, reply to Lord Halifax's demand in a Cabinet meeting to explore German terms, May 28, 1940. In his reply, Churchill echoed an ancient principle: "One other thing here is also very much to be esteemed, which is that one ought to wish to acquire glory even when losing; and one has more glory in being conquered by force than through another inconvenience that has made you lose." Machiavelli, *Discourses on Titus Livy*, Bk. 3, Ch. 10.

²⁹ "It was evident to my mind that the election of a Republican President in 1856 meant the secession of all the Slave States, and rebellion. Under these circumstances I preferred the success of a candidate whose election would prevent or postpone secession, to seeing the country plunged into a war the end of which no man could foretell. ...I therefore voted for James Buchanan for President. Four years later the Republican party was successful in electing its candidate to the Presidency. The civilized world has learned the consequence. Four millions of human beings held as chattels have been liberated; the ballot has been given to them; the free schools of the country have been opened to their children." Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, Ch. 16.

³⁰ "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865.