MOVING AHEAD

This report has argued for the development of an American information strategy based on noopolitik. The information revolution has already deepened and diffused to such a degree that other actors—both state and nonstate—have begun to incorporate informational elements into their own strategies. The spread of the information revolution beyond the United States foreshadows an era in which many actors will be competing over who has an "information edge" (Nye and Owens, 1996), as well as over who is "bound to lead" the international system (Nye, 1990). There is no assurance that the United States will necessarily assume or sustain such a role. Despite all of America's advances in the technological realm, only strategies applied wisely will enable their potential to be realized. Thus, whether the United States wants to or not, it must think strategically about the role of information in statecraft.

A NEW TURN OF MIND

The key to making information strategy a workable, distinct tool of statecraft lies in learning to benefit from the emergence of a global noosphere. Without an unbounded, global "realm of the mind," it will be difficult to project "information power" to the distant locales and into the many situations where it is likely to prove useful. Just what building a global noosphere means is not yet clear. But, in our view, it consists less of expanding cyberspace and the infosphere, and much more of building new institutional and organizational links. These might take the form of increasing juridical recognition of NGOs (perhaps even to the point of giving them seats in the

United Nations, as the Tofflers have suggested). It also likely means that traditional approaches to diplomacy may have to be upended, to be replaced by a revolution in diplomatic affairs.[1]

The best possibilities for U.S. information strategy gravitate toward fostering openness. But what of guardedness? While we noted in Chapter Four some of the areas in which guardedness is a preferred policy (e.g., protection of intellectual property and sharing sensitive data with semi-trusted allies), it is important to realize that guardedness can coexist with openness. Thus, the United States may be quite open with semi-trusted allies, even though there will be some types of very sensitive information that ought not to be shared with them. Finally, while something will often be held back, in information strategy the overall balance between being open and being guarded is more likely to be weighted in favor of openness.

In addition, a symbiotic relationship exists between information strategy and the other tools of statecraft. It seems clear that information strategy can improve military performance, increase economic efficiency (whether via markets or sanctions), and aid diplomatic processes. What are less clear are the effects that political, economic, and military initiatives might have on information strategy. For example, a particular policy aimed at encouraging the liberalization of an authoritarian society, by means of increasing its interconnectivity, might actually be undermined if that same society were suffering under economic sanctions designed to close it off from the rest of the world. The same sort of reservations might be applicable to the case of using military demonstrations or shows of force to try to coerce a desired response. Under such circumstances, it would be harder for an information strategy to be optimized.

The possibility that traditional political, economic, and military means may actually vitiate information strategies suggests the need to think through the problems in question prior to selecting which tools of statecraft to employ. If the situation seems to call intuitively for military involvement, or economic suasion, the tendency to seek out counterintuitive solutions (i.e., the use of information as an alternative to the use of force) will be diminished. This is related to the

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[1]For elaboration of what we mean by an RDA, see Arquilla and Ronfeldt (1997, Ch. 19, and 1998b).

phenomenon that Herbert Simon (1982) called "satisficing"—searching out alternatives for a limited time, then settling on the first acceptable option. Unless decisionmakers habituate themselves to thinking about the possibility of using information first, in lieu of sanctions or military action, it will be all too easy to "satisfice" by settling on old, familiar policy options.

We are not arguing that political, economic, and military power are passé. Rather, we are suggesting that decisionmakers be encouraged to develop a new turn of mind—one more open to thinking about information strategy earlier, and more often. Otherwise, the older tools of statecraft may be unduly relied upon, and possibly employed inappropriately or ineffectively. The added benefit of first employing information strategy is that it will rarely impede later use of other political, economic, or military measures. But first using armies or economic sanctions may make it impossible to use information strategy later to reach either the leaders or mass publics of the other party in some international negotiation or dispute.

Ultimately, information strategy will become an attractive choice for the decisionmaker only after it has been cultivated and developed sufficiently. The challenge is to begin flexing this new, sensory musculature of statecraft that holds so much promise. In this regard, we have mentioned that there are two fundamental approaches to information strategy. The first recognizes the continuing importance of the traditional political, economic, and military dimensions of grand strategy, and seeks to employ information in complementary ways, as an adjunct of each of the traditional dimensions—as in the case of using advanced information technologies and network-centric organizational designs to enhance military effectiveness. The second approach proposes that information is itself in the process of becoming its own distinct dimension of grand strategy—e.g., it is capable of being employed *in lieu of* field armies or economic sanctions. Getting both approaches right in their own times—and making an effective transition from the first to the second over time—are major challenges that lie ahead.

U.S. HEGEMONY REQUIRED TO CONSOLIDATE THE NOOSPHERE?

The information revolution is full of paradoxes and ambivalencies for the United States. It enhances our country's capabilities to deal with others, but it also amplifies our vulnerabilities—the American infosphere presents the richest target set of all. It benefits our worldwide technological edge and ideational appeal and thus makes others look to the United States for leadership—but the prospect of U.S. hegemony and "information imperialism" may also arouse fear and concern. When conflict occurs, it makes us better able to organize and manage security coalitions in which we can share sensitive information for common security—but this also raises the risks of misuse and misconduct by semi-trusted friends or allies. How are Americans to work their way through these paradoxes and ambivalencies?

Where balance-of-power dynamics persist and prevail, so will realpolitik—and neither a global noosphere nor noopolitik will spread sufficiently to guide the course of world politics. Americans thus face a choice: whether to persist in the exercise of classic power politics, as leading powers normally do, or to embrace and hasten the rise of a new paradigm. Noopolitik will not be readily adopted among states if the United States, as the world's leading power, stresses power balancing games above all else (or if it tries to withdraw from these games entirely). To the contrary, heavy, though in some respects redirected, U.S. engagement, may be essential for noopolitik to spread. In our view, America stands to benefit from the rise of the noosphere and noopolitik—and should begin to work to shape it.

It may take some exercise of hegemonic power to foster the development of a global noosphere. Much as classic theories of trade openness depend on a benign hegemon to keep markets open and provide "public goods" (like freedom of the seas), so, too, noopolitik may need a "hegemonic stability theory" of its own—especially if the rise of noopolitik necessitates a permanent disturbance of the balance of power that proponents of realpolitiks so closely guard and relish.[2] In particular, a benevolent hegemon may be needed so that

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[2]It should be noted that a body of thought holds that efforts to achieve hegemony cause their own cycles of conflict and destruction (Gilpin, 1981; Goldstein, 1988; and

NGOs, individual activists, and others, have the space to build the networked fabric of a global civil society—and a noosphere.

But is there not ultimately some contradiction between the consolidation of a global noosphere and the persistence of the hegemon who works to implant it? Once its catalytic/midwife roles have been completed, does the hegemon just "wither away"? Shouldn't it? Or is continued hegemony needed to sustain and safeguard the noosphere? Just how robust will a noosphere be on its own? And if it is but an artifact of some kind of hegemony, does this mean that noopolitik depends on a continuance of realpolitik at its base? Because, after all, the hegemon, by definition, is the most overarchingly powerful state. These questions and issues bear future inquiry.

Could the United States serve in this hegemonic capacity to good effect? If so, we should cease letting the threat of a "digital Pearl Harbor" be a main metaphor for our strategic thinking and shift to an equally classic, but positive, metaphor along the lines of a "Manifest Destiny" for the information age.

Modelski, 1987). All offer critiques of any form of hegemony, although Modelski considers that hegemony might be a good thing.