

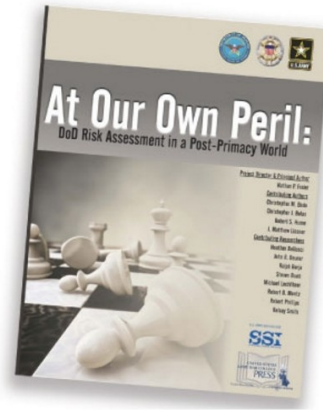


Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on August 21, 2017

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## Abandon American Imperialism — Before It Destroys America

The United States has — since at least World War II — been suffering from an identity crisis: We are a republic that calls itself a democracy and behaves like an empire. But now, the “primacy” of the United States in the order of nations is “fraying” and “may, in fact, be collapsing,” according to a report published in June by the U.S. Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute. With the American empire falling under its own bloated weight and coming apart at the seams, the report — rather than suggesting a return to the roots of the American Republic as outlined in the Constitution — suggests expansions of force, surveillance, and propaganda to reinforce the crumbling empire.



The report — entitled *At Our Own Peril: DoD Risk Assessment in a Post-Primacy World* — is the conclusion of a year-long study, with input from the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Army. Both the report and the study were sponsored by high-level government and military agencies, including the U.S. Army’s Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate; the Joint Staff, J5 (Strategy and Policy Branch); the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Force Development; and the Army Study Program Management Office.

The report — available for download [here](#) — laments the decline (and pending fall) of the American empire and predicts dire consequences if the “unassailable position” of the United States “versus state competitors” is not reinforced. The report goes on to say, “Status quo forces [comprised of ‘the United States and its major Western and Asian allies’] collectively are comfortable with their dominant role in dictating the terms of international security outcomes and resist the emergence of rival centers of power and authority.”

While the “fraying” and “collapsing” of what the report calls “the status quo that was hatched and nurtured by U.S. strategists after World War II” may concern those who accept that “status quo” as normal, it would serve Americans well to remember that this was a radical departure from the earlier “status quo” of noninterventionism that was advocated by the Founding Fathers. Thomas Jefferson cautioned us “in extending our commercial relations, to have with them [foreign nations] as little political connection as possible.” And George Washington advised: “peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.”

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If the report’s lamentations of the pending collapse of the American empire are alarming, the



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recommendations of the report for what it will take to continue the “status quo” of that empire are outright frightening. To combat what the report calls the “eroding reach and authority” of the empire, it recommends a “wider and more flexible military force that can generate advantage and options across the broadest possible range of military demands.”

In other words, having gotten ourselves into this mess by extending the empire by the use of military dominance (which has spread the United States too thin), the answer is to spread ourselves even further and thinner, completing the abandonment of “peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none,” for a policy of “do it our way, or be destroyed” and “resistance is futile; you will be assimilated.”

The report also laments that the “eroding reach and authority” of the empire — fueled at least in part by the ease of communication as the result of modern technology including the Internet — is not just an issue of foreign policy, but also a problem that must be dealt with domestically since the “United States and its population are increasingly exposed to substantial harm and an erosion of security from individuals and small groups of motivated actors, leveraging the confluence of hyperconnectivity, fear, and increased vulnerability to sow disorder and uncertainty.

To deal with those “threats,” the report recommends ramping up the surveillance state and the thought-control methods of propaganda and controlling the flow of information by “leveraging the U.S. intelligence community’s enormous human and technical analysis capability.” Claiming that “the U.S. homeland, individual American citizens, and U.S. public opinion and perceptions will increasingly become battlefields,” the report recommends “the purposeful exploitation of the same architecture for the strategic manipulation of perceptions and its attendant influence on political and security outcomes.”

Recommending more force, more surveillance, and more propaganda to prop up American imperialism is more than a little like prescribing an increased dosage of poison to cure a patient who is dying of poison.

Reducing matters of independence, national security, and personal liberty to a zero-sum game is slow (but sure) suicide for a nation founded on the principles of noninterventionism and liberty. These recommendations — which read like something out of Orwell’s *1984* — will, if followed, inevitably lead to the collapse of not just American imperialism, but America itself. Conversely, America’s survival depends not on continuing American imperialism, but on abandoning it for a return to the policies that served America so well before it behaved like an empire.



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