

Three scenarios for American security in the year 2066

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Introduction :

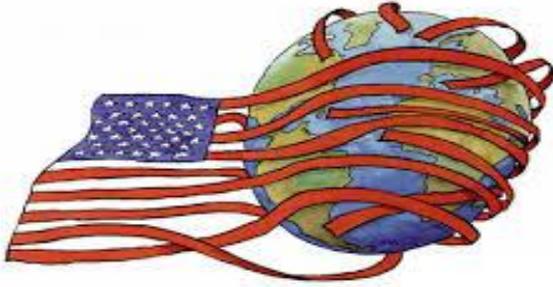
There have been a numerous of weak signals and critical uncertainties facing the United States' security environment escalated significantly in the last decade, and even the U.S. ability to keep up its predominance within this volatile security environment had been challenged by the fiscal austerity in the U.S. defense budget, thereby the future defense investments plans will fail to pursue their strategic requirements in the long-term future. Thus, three scenarios could be drawn to explain the challenges and opportunities of the U.S. security future in the next 50 years, and throughout these multiple scenarios we will figure out the main future shifts, today's urgent needs, and the most likely upcoming wild cards.

The following scenarios are planned and prepared to draw multiple stories from the security environment of 2066; these stories are built to answer the following questions: What are the top driving forces that will determine the future security trends in the next fifty years? What are the most threatening challenges in the U.S security environment of the future?

We have portrayed the narrative of each scenario from personal readings of Quadrennial Defense Reviews as supportive documents, which provide us with comprehensive knowledge about the range of future settings in which U.S. defensive planners have to operate, and enable us also to understand the strategic bets and the alternative approaches for coping with a range of future security challenges.

We will explore the three scenarios: the hegemony scenario, the "Black swan flock" scenario, and the Tooth and nail scenario. These three scenarios synthesize the wide spectrum of the possible futures which placed along of the two extreme scenarios: the desired future occurred in this paper as a Hegemony scenario, and the chaotic future is presented here as a "Black swan flock" scenario, whereas the tooth and nail scenario will reflect the middle ground futures between the declinists (Optimists) and the triumphalists (Pessimists).

1- The hegemony scenario:



In the hegemonic America era, the world will face an absolute U.S. dominance in an international system, due to its successful strategy of balanced relationship with several partners all over the world. Particularly, when the U.S. hegemonic ties become more spread over Asia-pacific, Europe, Middle East and North Africa regions. However, the hegemonic American security strategy will occur gradually over the next 50 years :

In fact, the first 20-25 years, the U.S defense strategy will be engaged totally (at the beginning) in homeland protection, through the strategy of deterrence in order to defeat any possible symmetric or asymmetric attack on the U.S. homeland territory .

In the second period between 25 - 50 years, we will witness a significant rise in U.S. hegemonic power as consequence of the previous American defensive strategies to establish offshore security (during last 25 years). Therefore, the absolute dominance of American power in that era cannot display without the prior successful regional policies, based on steady support to allies and partners by building their own capacity to deter conflicts and stabilize their security in terms of the hegemonic America .

Yet, there will be different challenges would emerge to tackle the U.S. power in the hegemonic era, in the areas of power projection strategy, the growing threat of terrorist attacks, and the catastrophic effects of natural disasters. However, the U.S. ability to neutralize these challenges and threats had been already developed remarkably later in the first 25 years, thus the U.S. defensive strategy in the hegemonic era would be more effective to sustain power projection programs, disrupt and destroy terrorists in places as far away as Yemen or Afghanistan, and provide humanitarian relief in the natural disasters .

In the year 2066, the U.S. will lead an almost unipolar international system alone, due to its robust nuclear deterrence strategy which provides ultimate protection against probable nuclear attacks on the U.S. and its allies . Fortunately, the U.S. hegemonic role in the 2060s international system will not display as a rude dissatisfied power but, a new approach of the U.S. global leadership will take place at 2050s threshold, by building a strong economy, setting a consensus over the common values that promote peace, democracy, and welfare through a global cooperation of satisfied and status-quo states.

2- The “Black swan flock”¹ scenario:



The 'Black swan flock' is a series of catastrophic events which come out rapidly between 10- 15 years, these series of unprecedented chaotic 'Black

¹ Nicholas Nassim Taleb was the first who used the term Black Swan events to explain the uncertainty and chaotic events, Black swan event carries an extreme impact, and is explainable only after the fact.

swans' in the U.S. security environment will disrupt the U.S. hedging strategies dramatically, by the surprise and panic. Whereas, the dissatisfied newborn powers chasing the advantage to create breakthroughs in the U.S. global leadership and its hegemonic position in the international system.

The backward dynamics of the U.S. security strategy begins with the growing fiscal constraints which affect the strategies of defense investment dramatically. The U.S. Department of Defense, for example, had begun absorbing significant impacts from the \$487 billion, ten-year cut in spending due to caps instituted by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 Department of Defense, Quadrennial of Defense Review (Washington D.C.: 2014), and BCA also instituted a sequestration mechanism requiring cuts of about 50 billion annually, and the outcome of maintaining this fiscal policy is 2.500 billion aggregate cut at 2066. Therefore, the budgetary constraints will increase the vulnerability of the U.S. homeland defense versus the potential asymmetric attacks intensely, and then the nuclear and the conventional deterrence of the United States would be assumed dysfunctional.

On the other side, the next serious challenges to the U.S. security environment in the 2060s come from the growing threat of states and non-state actors. Russia as revisionist power will reestablish its military strengths, including a rebuilt nuclear stockpile and reinforce its conventional capabilities. Nevertheless, China will present one of the most dangerous challenges to the U.S. global supremacy in the 2050s and 2060s, due to its size and capabilities, China will accelerate significantly the power projection programs through large investments in the army, the navy, and keeping its preeminence of the biotechnology industry. In the opposite, the U.S. defensive system should deal with wide range of critical threats, coming from states such as North Korea, Iran, and non-aligned states which are developing WMD, and benefit from the covert support of other emerging powers such as Russia or China .

Despite China's greater economy and its effects on the China's behavior as the superpower in the international system, China had also a great leverage over neighboring countries and elsewhere. Even if some powerful East Asian countries such Japan, South Korea, and Philippine will adapt to the advent of a

more powerful China by forging closer economic and political ties with Beijing rather than with Washington.

Finally, the withdrawal of the U.S. supportive role to allies and partners leads to erosion of the traditional alliances and the loss of military partners, fewer joint capabilities, and access to fewer strategic bases. That gloomy geostrategic vision will create short-term and opportunistic alliances which prevent trust and collaboration on security issues. Though, the U.S. fragility will be confirmed by an obvious failure to provide an active engagement in the international system.

3- Tooth and nail scenario:



The tooth and nail scenario will draw a hybrid world under the western collective leadership, whereas the U.S. old supremacy as uni-polar power will disappear beyond the rise of that collective power, which shares the same values and the same interests with those of the U.S. in the international system.

The measure of success for the U.S. in the tooth and nail scenario is not the absolute dominance in the international system but, the collective leadership will help the Americans to renew their security strategies and their military structure for the next fifty years .

Although the U.S. will engage several strategies in the short term future to face the fiscal deficits, changes in geostrategic environment, and the new requirements of the modern warfare, whereas the America's allies and partners assert the U.S. power projection programs, in order to cover the power vacuum and guarantee the western preeminence in the international system over the fifty years.

In fact, if the U.S. succeeds to manage the critical security challenges in the near future, the U.S. policymakers would be able to rebuild the American global posture again, throughout reinforcing the strategic relationship with Asia-Pacific Region and promote peace and the stability in the Middle East region, and then restore the role of hegemonic superpower in the long-term future.

Finally, the U.S. has to deal with the financial deficit in the 'tooth and nail scenario' as a most critical issue, because the failure to provide a minimum consistency in the U.S. defense budgets the U.S. decline would be inevitable. Nevertheless, the available financial resources should at least protect the U.S. key capabilities in cyberspace investments, missile defense, nuclear deterrence, *Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)*.

Conclusion:

The three scenarios represent multiple future possibilities in which major global shifts could shape the forces of change in the security environment over the next 50 years.

First, the hegemony scenario illustrates the U.S. preeminence likelihood in the international system in the next fifty years, but the U.S. hegemony in this scenario will rely more on a strong balanced relationship with allies and partners in the world. The U.S. hegemony endurance depends also on the power projects strategy, active engagement in the war against terrorist groups, and the adoption of robust nuclear deterrence strategy.

Second, 'the Black Swan flock' scenario draws the most likely critical events to the U.S. security environment in the short and the long-term future. This scenario assumes that the current U.S. predominance in the international system may not survive the radical changes in the future global security landscape.

Finally, the "Tooth and nail" scenario portrays Washington's struggle to assert its leadership in an increasingly diverse, complex, and fast-paced environment by reinforcing its capabilities in different strategic areas.