

**RIEAS WORKSHOP**

**“PKK: FREEDOM FIGHTERS OR TERRORISTS?”**

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**“U.S. GRAND STRATEGY, THE MANAGEMENT OF RELATIVE DECLINE  
AND THE KURDISH PROBLEM”**

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**U.S. Grand Strategy, the  
Management of Relative  
Decline and the Kurdish  
Variable**

The United States of America Strategic  
Mismanagement of Grand Strategy  
Options in the Eurasian Continuum

## U.S. Basic Concepts-Neocon Grand Strategy

- Dissolve the U.S.S.R. to its constituent parts.
- Internally weaken Russia.
- Encircle Russia.
- Control the E.E.C./E.U.
- Establish an enhanced world financial system retaining the role of the US \$ as the main reserve currency.
- Apply the “Kissinger doctrine” on Eurasia.

## The Neocon Legacy-Obama's reality

- Economic and financial meltdown, bordering on federal bankruptcy.
- Social disarray and mistrust.
- Diplomatic isolation, and lasting injuries.
- Severe propagandistic defeat on values.
- Extensive disruption of the U.S.'s productive capabilities.
- Very serious military weakening and organizational disruption through centralization and politicization, resembling the soviet style of command.
- Strategic self-inflicted defeat on the major geopolitical goals: encircle Russia, contain China, control Europe, and secure the Middle East.

# Main U.S. Grand Strategy Problem

(As pinpointed by Charles Kupchan, Edward Luttwak and others.)

How to manage the U.S. decline in a world that is becoming multipolar, moving towards a more classic balance of power approach with at least five major powers competing, and with the power of the U.S. following the descending phase of a bell-shaped graphic with a gentle but firm slope.

Subtle context: managing hostility/ hatred/ enmity created in the past fifty years of power politics exercised-in important cases-recklessly.

## Sources of U.S.A. grand strategy doctrine (official expressions)

- ◆ N.S.C. policy directives/ papers/ analyses.
- ◆ D.o.D. white papers/ policy papers/ estimates and analyses.
- ◆ "Foggy Bottom" policy papers and analyses.
- ◆ D.o.E. policy papers/ analyses/ estimates.
- ◆ Federal Reserve policy papers/ analyses/ forecasts/ directives and regulations.
- ◆ White House policy directives/ decisions/ announcements.
- ◆ Dpt. Of Commerce policy papers/ decisions/ directives.

## Classical Examples

- N. Korea policy: food, embargo, military threat, technology restrictions, etc.
- N.S.C. 68 directive
- COCOM lists during the cold war and afterwards.
- Non-proliferation treaty sanctions.
- Non-tariff barriers and much more.

## Definition of Power

(utilitarian, and simple)

- The ability to make an actor in the international milieu act according to ones own wishes through the perceived, implied or threatened use of force, based on ones enabling qualities (dimensions of power):
  - -technological
  - -financial and economic
  - -military
  - -geopolitical (physical location and its consequences)
  - -cognitive (knowledge-based power)
  - -cultural (hearts and minds)
  - -diplomatic/ political
- The extent and severity with which an actor uses his dimensions of power delimits the transition from hard to soft power- politics.

# The New Power Order

(in descending order)

- U.S.A.
- China
- India
- Russia
- F.R.G.
- France
- Japan
- U.K. etc.

## The U.S. Middle Eastern Policy Mess

- **Go-it-alone policy**: many enemies, very few friends.
- **Iraq**: destabilizing a regime, and leaving a mess behind. Obvious solution was and is: tripartition of Iraq, with the creation of a Kurdish state in the context of a federate/ confederate Iraq.
- **Iran**: banking on an internal regime change. When and how?
- **S. Arabia**: internally unstable regime (both religious and demographical reasons).
- **Egypt**: it still has to find its internal balance and stability.
- **Jordan**: weak economy, demographic instability, troubled neighborhood.
- **Syria**: sloppy US and Israeli policy, risks of turning it into an Islamic hive out of control, like parts of Iraq.
- **Afghanistan**: no victory in political or military terms in sight.
- **Pakistan**: destabilized, internally weak, risks becoming the nuclear lab of Islamic terrorism (the US-Indian intervention plans notwithstanding).
- **Turkey**: an Islamic democracy? Contradiction in terms.

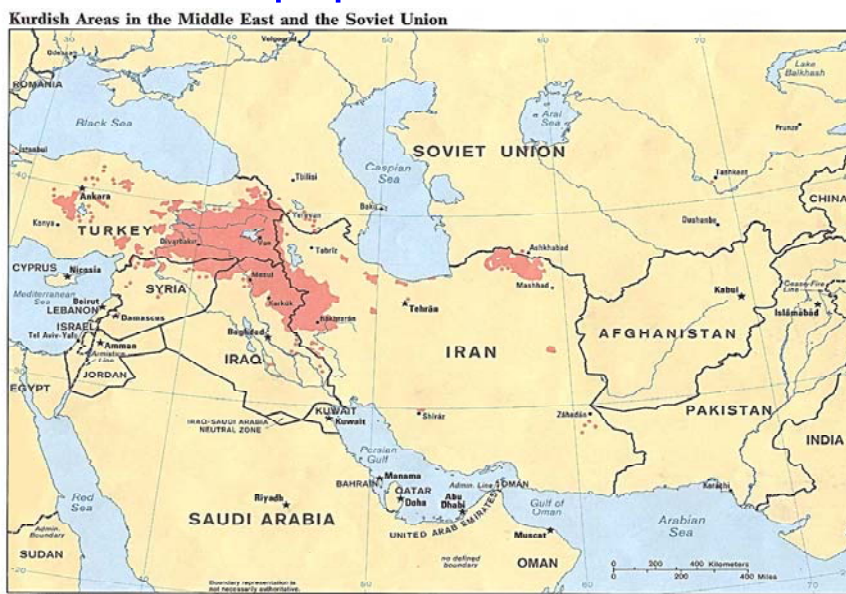
# The New Big Game (Brzezinski)



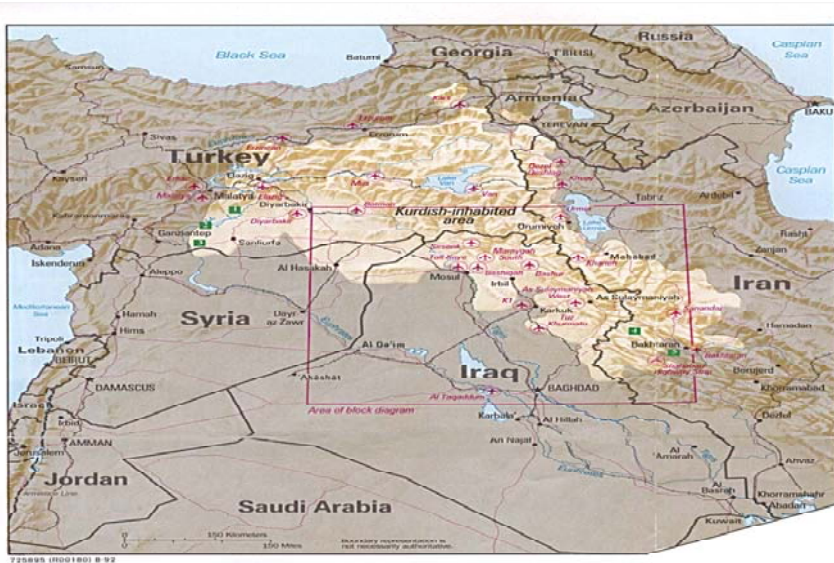
## Kurdish Variable

- **Iraqi stabilization problem:** either 3 autonomous regions/ states (therefore Kurdistan) or the country will soon fall apart.
- **Turkey stabilization problem:** the country is radically changing, becoming an Islamic republic or something like that. It's a contradiction in terms, and will backfire.
- **Spill over destabilization effect:** Syria, Jordan, and -quite possibly- Egypt and S. Arabia.

## Kurdish population areas 1986



# Kurdistan



# Iraq-Syria-Iran-Turkey-Kurdistan

