

# ENGAGING THE BRIC COUNTRIES: DIPLOMACY OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL

BY

MR. MATTHEW D. MURRAY  
United States Department of State

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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Mr. Matthew D. Murray  
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Topic Approved By  
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U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013



## **ABSTRACT**

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## ENGAGING THE BRIC COUNTRIES: DIPLOMACY OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL

The "BRIC" countries -- Brazil, Russia, India, and China -- increasingly are demonstrating global economic and political clout. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's "Transformational Diplomacy" initiative was a step in the right direction towards repositioning diplomatic resources to the BRIC countries, but the policy fell short of its desired end state due to insufficient resources, thereby worsening inherent strategic risk. Enhanced engagement, including shaping public opinion, building relationships with future leaders, and gauging on-the-ground realities in the high-population, politically decentralized BRIC countries, demands expanded diplomatic outreach beyond capital cities. The U.S. Government must commit resources to establish new consulates and develop additional virtual presence posts (VPPs) as part of a robust BRIC strategic communications plan. Optimal engagement with Brazil, Russia, India, and China requires a revolution in national security strategic planning by channeling resources through a comprehensive BRIC strategy, as well as developing sub-national strategies for key cities and provinces. Strengthening the diplomatic instrument of power outside BRIC capitals is an important way to support the U.S. interest in "positive, constructive and comprehensive" relationships with Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

### The Rise of the BRIC Countries

The "BRIC" countries -- Brazil, Russia, India, and China -- increasingly are demonstrating global economic and political clout. Although not a formal coalition or alliance, the four emerging economies account for approximately 15 percent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 40 percent of currency reserves. At the first-

ever BRIC summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia in June 2009, leaders from the four countries discussed ways to leverage their financial clout and reduce their reliance on the United States.<sup>1</sup> The BRIC countries have enjoyed a stronger voice in global economic affairs commensurate with the growing strength of their respective economies. In December 2009, the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference provided another platform for the BRIC countries to exert their influence as leaders of the developing world. Chinese state media later boasted that China, along with India and Brazil -- as well as other emerging economies such as Indonesia and South Africa -- played a "key role" in the climate change negotiations.<sup>2</sup>

The BRIC is steadily translating economic clout into political power -- sometimes at odds with U.S. strategic objectives. During the past decade -- while U.S. policy has focused on Iraq and Afghanistan and the Global War on Terror -- Brazil, Russia, India, and China each have strengthened their respective power positions vis-à-vis the United States commensurate with their growing economic influence. China's growing political and military power, as well as its deployment of "soft power" in Asia, is challenging U.S. strategic objectives. There is growing consensus that Beijing's maneuvering may force the United States "to adapt to a new role in Asia."<sup>3</sup> China's rapid naval build-up, which is designed to protect its growing economic clout, underscores this transformation.<sup>4</sup> In South Asia, India has forcefully advocated at the World Trade Organization (WTO) for a more advantageous trade regime as part of its effort to be recognized as a regional power. The Bush Administration moved forward on U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation, but according to Henry Sokolski, "India's nuclear ambitions and its friendship with Iran have proven to be obstacles to bilateral relations."<sup>5</sup> The BRIC's views on Iran are

increasingly divergent from U.S. policy. At the second BRIC Summit in April 2010, the Brazilian Foreign Minister said Brazil shares an "affinity" with India, as well as with Russia and China -- both of which sit on the United Nations Security Council -- on opposition to new sanctions against Iran.

The influence of the BRIC countries will grow even stronger in the future. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): "If they can consolidate the conditions necessary for structural growth, by 2025 the sum of the GDPs of the BRIC economies could equal half the equivalent of the G-6 countries (United States, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom, France, and Italy). By 2040, assuming strong and sustained growth rates, they could overtake the G-6 altogether."<sup>6</sup> Thanks to their relatively newly found affluence, Brazil, Russia, India, and China's growing populations and rapidly changing consumption patterns will also require a disproportionate allocation of natural resources. A 2007 report by the International Energy Agency predicted, for example, that if energy demand continues to increase at the same rate over the next 20 years, then developing countries would account for 74 percent of the increase by 2030 with China and India alone accounting for 45 percent.<sup>7</sup> Because of the BRIC's growing importance, it is in the U.S. national security interest to promote sustained engagement with each of the four countries.

### Transformational Diplomacy and BRIC

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's "Transformational Diplomacy" initiative was a step in the right direction towards increasing diplomatic engagement with the BRIC countries. In a January 2006 speech at Georgetown University, Secretary Rice acknowledged that "in the 21st century, emerging nations like India, China, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, and South Africa are increasingly shaping the course of history."<sup>8</sup> The

Secretary said a key element of transformational diplomacy would be shifting State Department resources to these new priority countries. Observing that there were the same number of State Department personnel in Germany with a population of 82 million as India with more than one billion, Secretary Rice proposed an immediate "global repositioning" to shift diplomats from Europe to India, China, and Brazil.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, she advocated for a stronger diplomatic presence outside the capital cities of emerging countries, stating that "diplomats will move out from behind their desks into the field, from reporting on outcomes to shaping them."<sup>10</sup>

Transformational diplomacy was akin to parallel defense transformation efforts under the Bush Administration. Like former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's advocacy for defense transformation, transformational diplomacy was an attempt by the State Department to develop a "more agile, flexible force."<sup>11</sup> This new diplomatic force structure would aim to give diplomats the tools they would need to reach out to grassroots communities in emerging areas. The policy also included diplomatic support to reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan through expanding the capabilities of State's Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), but transformational diplomacy's emphasis on global repositioning, and its focus on large population centers, "localization" outside foreign capitals, developing new diplomatic skill sets, and promoting interagency cooperation primarily was directed towards countries like Brazil, Russia, India, and China.<sup>12</sup> Just as Defense Secretary Robert Gates wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 2009 that "the Department of Defense must set priorities and consider inescapable tradeoffs and opportunity costs" as part of a "balanced strategy," Secretary Rice attempted to make a similar transition at the State Department.<sup>13</sup>

However, transformational diplomacy fell short of its desired end state due to insufficient resources, worsening inherent strategic risk. The policy's "means" were insufficient to support the desired "ends." Secretary Rice did not realize her vision to "work more closely with Congress to enhance our global strategy with new resources and new positions."<sup>14</sup> In fact, Secretary Rice met immediate resistance from a Congress that could not be convinced of the long-term strategic benefits of this new brand of diplomatic engagement.<sup>15</sup> Many State Department Foreign Service Officers who worked to implement the policy later said that while they initially were inspired by its lofty vision, they quickly realized that resources were insufficient. Because of Congressional reluctance to support the policy, there was limited funding available to support global repositioning at the same time the Department also was increasing staffing in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, by summer 2008, the cumulative effect was hundreds of newly created but vacant "globally repositioned" Foreign Service positions overseas.<sup>16</sup> This lack of resources threatens to undermine diplomatic efforts in Brazil, Russia, India, and China where the imbalance between transformational diplomacy's "ends" and "means" has worsened strategic risk.<sup>17</sup>

#### Enhanced Engagement Demands Expanded Diplomatic Outreach Outside Capitals

As policymakers consider allocating additional resources to diplomatic engagement in the BRIC countries, it is important to recognize that deepening this engagement demands expanding diplomatic outreach outside capital cities. Strengthening the diplomatic instrument of power in Brazil, Russia, India, and China to shape public opinion, build relationships with future leaders, and gauge on-the-ground realities in these high-population, politically decentralized countries cannot afford to neglect important cities and regions "beyond the beltway." In recent years, the U.S.

national security community did not foresee several trends and events in the BRIC countries, many of which originated outside capital cities. Policymakers need to address this shortcoming in order to bolster U.S. national security policy towards the BRIC countries.

*Shaping Public Opinion.* Diplomacy in Brazil, Russia, India, and China must focus on shaping public opinion, but in recent years, despite the best efforts of U.S. diplomats, the U.S. Government often has failed to understand public opinion -- much less shape it. Shifts in national public opinion do not necessarily begin in BRIC capitals - - and may even begin with dissatisfaction in secondary cities and the countryside. In Brazil, for example, the 2002 Presidential election surprised many analysts, as Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva rode a wave of left-wing populism to election victory. With support from his home region in northeastern Brazil, as well as from factory workers in coastal cities, "Lula" was able to turn public opinion towards his advantage.<sup>18</sup> At the time, however, many observers in the United States were concerned about the impact of Lula's victory on foreign investors, as Lula had pledged to implement an aggressive economic reform agenda. Caught completely unprepared by this left-wing populist movement, some political figures in the United States reacted harshly. Underscoring concern wrought by U.S. failure to shape public opinion in Brazil, then-Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee Henry Hyde referred to Lula as a "pro-Castro radical who for electoral purposes had posed as a moderate," and then-Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill implored Lula to "assure (the markets) he is not a crazy person."<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, Lula's bases of support outside Brasilia rejoiced over his election victory.

Similarly, the growing strength of anti-globalization forces in India have challenged U.S. economic interests in the sub-continent in recent years, as public opinion outside New Delhi has pressured the Central Government to reject investment. Farmers throughout the country protested against Wal-Mart in 2007 after learning that the U.S. company had signed a joint venture agreement with Bharti Enterprises to open 15 new wholesale outlets.<sup>20</sup> The strongest source of anti-investor protests historically has been in West Bengal in eastern India several hundred miles from the capital. Anti-globalization fervor in West Bengal is so strong that the public routinely rejects Indian investors as well as foreigners. In September 2008, for example, Tata Motors abandoned plans to build a factory in West Bengal for the economical Nano car after large-scale protests in the rural area disrupted construction of the plant.<sup>21</sup> The Wal-Mart and Tata cases underscore the difficulty for U.S. economic policy when negotiating economic agreements with India. The Central Government in New Delhi must answer to anti-globalization views in other parts of the country, and even if U.S. negotiators reach economic agreements in New Delhi, there is no guarantee those agreements will be implemented nationally. Protestors in other regions -- where the U.S. diplomatic footprint is small -- may very well have the final say.

*Influencing Future Leaders.* National leaders in the BRIC countries do not spend their whole careers in capitals, and if the U.S. Government is going to influence future leaders, it will need to focus more resources on engaging counterparts at provincial and municipal levels. In China, officials who are being groomed for higher office in Beijing normally spend much of their careers outside of the capital. A Congressional Research Service report on Chinese politics cites Zhu Rongji as a typical case:

The career of Zhu Rongji, one of China's most influential figures from the 1980s to the early 2000s, is an example of how a successful official can rise from a junior position to a leadership role.... In 1982, Zhu was promoted to be a member of the State Economic Commission, and then in 1987, he was reassigned to become the mayor of Shanghai. From 1989 to 1991, Zhu oversaw the development of Shanghai's Pudong District. Based on the success of the Pudong project, he was made a Vice Premier of the State Council in 1991.... In 1998, Zhu was chosen as China's 5th Premier, in part because of the success of his macroeconomic policies during the 1990s.<sup>22</sup>

Zhu's career highlight that propelled him to the top leadership was his accomplishment in Shanghai. Fortunately, there is a U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai, and State Department officials there had opportunities to meet with Zhu when he was mayor. However, Chinese leaders do not always spend their tours outside Beijing in cities where there is a U.S. diplomatic presence.

Current Vice Premier Li Keqiang, for example, served in the Communist Party and Provincial Government leadership in Henan Province -- where there is no U.S. diplomatic post -- from 1998 to 2004. He then spent three years in Liaoning Province (where there is a U.S. Consulate in Shenyang) before being called up to the Central Government as Vice Premier.<sup>23</sup> With only three years for U.S. diplomats based in Shenyang to get to know him, Li, who is considered to be likely the next premier of China in 2012, remains largely unknown to U.S. Government officials because of a lack of previous interaction. Limited U.S. influence prior to Li reaching the national stage could impact future U.S.-China relations. Li's January 2010 speech in Davos, Switzerland at the World Economic Forum, which raised his international profile, also highlighted a general lack of knowledge about his political and economic views.<sup>24</sup>

In this regard, a May 2009 article by the Jamestown Foundation on China's future leaders should worry U.S. policymakers. Of the five officials reportedly most likely to rise



to high office when China transitions to its "Sixth Generation" of national leadership in 2022, three currently are serving in provinces (Hunan Province, Hebei Province, and Xinjiang Autonomous Region) where the United States does not have a diplomatic post. The article identifies the two most promising candidates as Hunan Governor Zhou Qiang and Hebei Governor Hu Chunhua.<sup>25</sup> While it is possible for U.S. officials to meet occasionally with these rising political stars either in their home provinces or in Beijing, the U.S. Government is losing a tremendous opportunity to build relationships with China's future leaders because of limited diplomatic outreach outside capital cities.

*Gauging On-The-Ground Realities.* In recent years, the "hot spots" in Brazil, Russia, India, and China where the U.S. Government needs to be able to assess on-the-ground realities are hundreds of miles outside capital cities. Sometimes, there is a U.S. diplomatic presence in the area when events transpire, but often, because there are so few consulates in Brazil, Russia, India, and China, there is not a U.S. diplomatic post. For example, there are no U.S. diplomats stationed in the Russian Caucasus; therefore, during the build-up to Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008, the U.S. national security community was aware only of the rhetoric emanating from Moscow and Tbilisi. A stronger U.S. diplomatic presence outside Moscow would facilitate engagement at the local level, and more regular meetings with local officials in the Russian Caucasus might have helped sensitize U.S. officials to growing friction on the border and the seriousness of the South Ossetia problem. Instead, according to Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies program research director Svante Cornell, the United States and other Western countries "were caught unaware, and appeared unable or unwilling to respond meaningfully to Russia's attack."<sup>26</sup> In the BRIC countries, the U.S.

Government's inability to "plant the flag" and establish a diplomatic foothold in key areas like the Russian Caucasus reduces or eliminates U.S. influence in these regions that will be the "hot spots" of the 21st century. Added Cornell: "Russia's aggression against Georgia sent a strong message to the West: that the South Caucasus and the entire former Soviet Union are parts of Moscow's exclusive sphere of influence, and the West should stay out."<sup>27</sup> With no U.S. diplomatic presence in the Russian Caucasus, the United States effectively already has ceded this point in a geopolitically critical region.

In China, two incidents in ethnic minority areas during the past two years have demonstrated the limitations of U.S. influence in areas where the United States has interests but does not have a diplomatic presence. Ethnic unrest in northwestern China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region in July 2009 underscored this problem. When more than 150 Uighur Muslims and Chinese troops were killed in clashes, there were no U.S. diplomats on the ground to monitor the situation.<sup>28</sup> The situation in July 2009 was familiar to China watchers, as one year earlier, U.S. diplomats had faced a similar challenge in Tibet. In March 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged Chinese security forces to show restraint after violent protests erupted in Tibet.<sup>29</sup> Secretary Rice also acknowledged that promoting U.S. interests in Tibet -- including religious freedom for the Buddhist population and dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government -- is hampered by the lack of a U.S. diplomatic presence there. During hearings on Capitol Hill in April 2008, Secretary Rice supported opening a consulate in Tibet, acknowledging that diplomatic access to the region during the crisis "wasn't good enough" because there was not a diplomatic post in Tibet and diplomats from the embassy in Beijing and the consulate in Chengdu had to request access from hundreds

of miles away.<sup>30</sup> In the aftermath of the crackdown, Congressman Mark Kirk proposed \$5 million in funding to open a U.S. consulate in Lhasa to "ensure that we always have diplomats and journalists on the ground [in Tibet] to keep Americans safe and defend human rights."<sup>31</sup>

### Committing Resources for a BRIC Strategic Communication Plan

The U.S. Government must commit resources to establish new consulates and develop additional virtual presence posts (VPPs) as part of a robust BRIC strategic communications plan. Tibet is not the only region in the BRIC countries where the United States has important interests but no diplomatic presence. Despite having a combined population of nearly half the world's people, Brazil, Russia, India and China have a total of only 19 diplomatic posts -- four embassies in their capital cities (Brasilia, Moscow, New Delhi, and Beijing) and 15 consulates. By comparison, the State Department's Bureau of European Affairs, engaged with a population roughly equivalent to China alone, has 44 embassies and 17 consulates (excluding Russian posts).<sup>32</sup> As an example to illustrate the insufficient diplomatic representation in the BRIC countries, China's expansive territory has only five consulates in Shenyang (northeast), Shanghai (east), Guangzhou (south), Wuhan (central), and Chengdu (southwest), leaving critical areas -- including Tibet -- with only limited engagement via short-term visits by U.S. diplomats. According to a report by the CSIS Commission on China, "the U.S. Department of State should at least double, if not triple, the number of consulates around the country to bring within reach the huge swath of the Chinese public that has little understanding of the United States."<sup>33</sup> To do so will require a significant increase in resources, but the benefits would be long-term at a fraction of the costs of financing the military instrument of power.

Debate rages within the U.S. Government, however, over resources to support non-military instruments of power. In his oft-cited speech at Kansas State University in November 2007, Defense Secretary Robert Gates stated emphatically that "there is a need for a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security - diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and development."<sup>34</sup> However, not everyone shares Secretary Gates' view. In April 2010, for example, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-North Dakota) led the Congressional effort to cut President Obama's proposed \$58 billion international affairs budget for 2011 by \$4 billion.<sup>35</sup>

Without increased funding, the State Department will not be able to adequately support either traditional diplomatic roles or public diplomacy in the BRIC countries. Public diplomacy -- "U.S. programs dedicated to promoting U.S. interests, values, culture, and policies within foreign audiences" -- is an increasingly important element of U.S. diplomatic efforts and was a focus of Secretary Rice's transformational diplomacy vision.<sup>36</sup> In the BRIC countries, in particular, it will be critical to merge the diplomatic and information instruments of power into a coherent strategic communication plan. With additional resources, U.S. diplomats would be able to carry out strategic communication -- this "proactive and continuous process that supports the national security strategy by identifying and responding to strategic threats and opportunities with information related activities."<sup>37</sup> As pointed out in previous sections, resources for a stronger strategic communication plan in Brazil, Russia, India, and China will need to feature diplomatic tools outside capital cities, including building stronger public diplomacy outreach platforms through new consulates and virtual presence posts.

*Expanding the USG's Physical Presence.* With only a handful of consulates in each of the BRIC countries, the U.S. Government lacks a physical and consistent diplomatic presence in many regions of these critically important countries. In India, for example, the U.S. Consulate General in Hyderabad opened in 2008, fulfilling President Bush's pledge to open a consulate in the heart of India's high-tech belt; however, it was only the fourth U.S. consulate in India after Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), and Chennai (Madras), and the first to be established since India's independence in 1947.<sup>38</sup> The consulate in Hyderabad, which is the state capital of Andhra Pradesh, provides the United States with a foothold in a state with a population of 75 million people.<sup>39</sup> Until the consulate was established, U.S. diplomats had only periodic interaction with a city of seven million people -- 40 percent of whom are Muslim -- where a series of terrorist bomb blasts killed dozens of people and injured hundreds more in 2007.<sup>40</sup>

As in India, the number of U.S. diplomatic posts in China increased when the U.S. Consulate General in Wuhan opened in 2007 and was the first new U.S. post in China since the consulate in Chengdu opened in 1985. Prior to opening the consulate in Wuhan, the U.S. Government had little diplomatic engagement with central China -- four provinces with a combined population of nearly 300 million people. Although the consulate in Wuhan has been open for nearly three years, it still has not been given the resources necessary to provide visa services -- a key component of the operations of U.S. diplomatic posts.<sup>41</sup> Unless additional funding is provided to build new consulates in Brazil, Russia, India, and China, U.S. engagement with the BRIC countries will continue to suffer from a lack of sustained diplomatic presence.

*Innovative Approaches.* Without funding forthcoming for a sufficient number of new consulates, U.S. diplomats in Brazil, Russia, India, and China attempted to adopt innovative approaches to increase the level of U.S. engagement with key audiences. In her 2006 speech, Secretary Rice identified virtual presence posts (VPPs) as the "newest and most cost effective way to expand the American posture locally in a country."<sup>42</sup> In fact, VPPs pre-dated the transformational diplomacy policy, having originated in Russia earlier in the decade. In 2003, the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy identified "virtual consulates" as a tool with "the potential to stream germane and time sensitive information to audiences in major cities and remote regions where the United States has no physical presence" and credited the U.S. Consulate General in Yekaterinburg, Russia for pioneering the concept as a way to promote outreach in eastern Russia.<sup>43</sup>

In recent years, enterprising State Department Foreign Service Officers in Brazil, Russia, India, and China demonstrated the potential positive impact of virtual presence posts to support enhanced diplomatic engagement outside capital cities. The U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, for example, developed five VPPs to promote outreach in other areas of Brazil. The VPPs in Porto Allegre, Salvador, Fortaleza, Belo Horizonte, and Manaus, which feature Portuguese-language websites with links featured on the Embassy's main website, serve to help organize mission outreach to these five key cities and promote exchanges with key contacts in local governments, universities, media outlets, and civil society.<sup>44</sup> The U.S. Embassy in Beijing also understood the value of VPPs, launching fifteen virtual presence teams (eight of which also have their own website) since 2007. Wrote Embassy Beijing public diplomacy officer Mary Kay

Carlson in *State Magazine*: "Before VPPs, outreach to these areas was irregular, and without dedicated Web sites, lacked a way to engage with selected locales."<sup>45</sup> In China, outreach to VPP cities paid off with stronger engagement in the provinces, making positive contributions to U.S.-China relations. The state-run *China Daily* newspaper reported favorably in January 2010, for example, on U.S. diplomats' attendance at the opening of the Jiangsu Provincial People's Congress in the provincial capital, Nanjing, where the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai established a virtual presence post in 2008.

In order to fully realize their potential in the BRIC countries, however, VPPs also will need additional resources. Managing websites costs money and manpower, and there needs to be sufficient staffing at U.S. embassies and consulates in order to allow diplomats to make frequent trips to regions outside capital cities. The virtual presence post concept is similar to the Department of Defense's "network-centric warfare" (NCW), for just as NCW pursues "advanced integrated information technology to enable warfighting in the future," VPPs aim to utilize information technology to enhance diplomatic engagement in the future.<sup>46</sup> The development of VPPs will be particularly important with the internet-savvy populations of the BRIC countries. Like NCW, VPPs must strike a balance between technology and people-to-people interaction, and advances in both areas will be expensive. Improved technology for VPP websites and additional foreign service officers to expand outreach to key cities and regions in Brazil, Russia, India, and China will require a significant amount of additional funding. With an ever-shrinking international affairs budget, and with competing interests in other parts of

the world, U.S. diplomatic engagement with the BRIC countries -- particularly outside capital cities -- will require a new approach to strategic planning.

### A Revolution in Strategic Planning for the BRIC Countries

Optimal engagement with Brazil, Russia, India, and China requires a revolution in national security strategic planning by channeling resources through a comprehensive BRIC strategy, as well as developing sub-national strategies for key cities and provinces. The Pentagon, State Department, National Security Council, and Congress have dedicated much of their attention and resource commitment to Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. Shortly after assuming office, President Obama announced a much anticipated new strategy for Afghanistan in March 2009.<sup>47</sup> This focus on Iraq and Afghanistan is justified given the Global War on Terrorism and the need to support our troops in the field. However, the national security community currently pays little attention paid to the long-term strategic importance of the BRIC countries, leaving a strategic planning vacuum with regard to U.S. policy in Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

*A Comprehensive BRIC Strategy.* The March 2006 National Security Strategy makes only passing references to Brazil, Russia, India, and China -- normally with regard to economic liberalization.<sup>48</sup> It also virtually ignores other emerging economies such as Indonesia and South Africa for which many of the principles espoused in this paper also may hold true. The Obama Administration has yet to publish its own National Security Strategy, but given the current environment, there are few indications that it will focus substantive attention on long-term U.S. interests in emerging economies, including the BRIC. One indicator of the absence of strategic thinking about the BRIC as a group is that the 2009 U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute "Key Strategic Issues List" does not even list the BRIC as a topic for "strategic"



research, identifying only trends in the individual countries such as "India as a rising Asian power" and "Russia's future relationships with Europe and the United States."<sup>49</sup> At the State Department, long-term planning in the BRIC countries is similarly hampered by an organizational structure that divides the four countries into four different geographic bureaus -- Brazil in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, Russia in the Bureau of European Affairs, India in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, and China in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. The geographic bureaus each have a chapter in the 2007-2012 Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development Strategic Plan, which is divided into regional sections. The document did not refer to the BRIC grouping and included only one reference under the strategic objective of economic growth and prosperity on converging interests with Russia, India, and China with regard to U.S. energy security priorities.<sup>50</sup> The State Department plan lacked any discussion of increasing U.S. diplomatic engagement outside BRIC capitals.

The U.S. national security community has reached a point when there must be a strategic appraisal of the BRIC countries as a group. The purpose of such an appraisal, states Harry Yarger at the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute would be "to quantify and qualify what is known, believed to be known, and unknown about the strategic environment in regard to a particular realm of strategy and identify what is important in regard to such strategy's formulation."<sup>51</sup> This paper contributes towards the first step of Dr. Yarger's strategic appraisal process -- "understanding the stimulus or the requirement for the strategy."<sup>52</sup> Given recent developments in the strategic environment, including two BRIC summits and accompanying rhetoric by Brazil, Russia,

India, and China on key national security issues such as the BRIC's role in Iran, energy security, and global climate change, it is time for the U.S. Government to assess the BRIC as a group and formulate a comprehensive BRIC strategy. Allowing bureaucratic hurdles such as "stove piping" by geographic bureaus to block progress in this area would handicap long-term U.S. strategic interests.

*Sub-national Strategies.* At the same time the U.S. national security community works to formulate a comprehensive BRIC strategy, there also is a need for sub-national strategies in key regions. While there is a State Department Strategy for Micronesia with a population of 108,000, for example, there are no strategies for key regions such as India's Uttar Pradesh state with a population of 166 million (according to the 2001 census).<sup>53</sup> Of course, population is not the only factor that should be considered when formulating sub-national strategies, but a quick glance at new from in Uttar Pradesh -- where there also is no U.S. diplomatic post -- demonstrates clearly that the United States has economic and security interests in a state that is struggling to create jobs, protect the environment, and deter terrorist attacks.<sup>54</sup> Through the process of developing sub-national strategies in the BRIC countries, determinations of ends, ways, means to support these regional strategies will help inform policymakers on the most critical priority regions for establishing consulates and virtual presence posts.

*Eyes on the Prize.* Moving forward with a comprehensive BRIC strategy and sub-national strategies in key regions would revolutionize national security strategic planning, beginning a necessary process, as "the challenges and opportunities found in the 21st century will require the flexibility to craft interests that work in this complex world."<sup>55</sup> This complex environment will require a more nuanced understanding of the

emerging BRIC powers. In November 2009, President Obama said during a speech in Shanghai that the United States and China have a "positive, constructive and comprehensive relationship that opens the door to partnership on the key global issues of our time."<sup>56</sup> The United States has an interest in "positive, constructive and comprehensive" relationships with Brazil, Russia, India, and China -- and with the BRIC as a collective group. Globalization dictates that what happens in the future in cities such as Sao Paulo, Yekatrinnburg, Lucknow, or Zhengzhou could have a significant impact on U.S. interests. It is time for the U.S. policy community to address long-term strategic interests in these critical regions, and strengthening the diplomatic instrument of power outside BRIC capitals presents an important opportunity to do so.

## Endnotes

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