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Chapter 9
Proposals for a Humanpolitik: Building a New Human-Centered Foreign Policy

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In perhaps the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*'s most revealing passage, Sarah Sewall, who wrote the introduction to the edition published by Chicago University Press, admits that the manual's ideas are "anything but new." The manual "embraces a traditional... British method of fighting insurgency," she explains. "It is based on principles learned during Britain's early period of imperial policing and relearned during responses to twentieth-century independence struggles in Malaya and Kenya," as well as lessons learned from the dying days of the French empire.

Such an admission should give people in the United States in the 21st century pause. Why, we may

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ask, is our country modeling its foreign and military policy on the tactics of 19th and 20th century empires bent on dominating colonized peoples? Why, for that matter, is the United States, like Britain and France before it, occupying other nations and facing violent insurgencies in the first place?

An honest discussion of these questions acknowledges that contemporary US counterinsurgency strategy has likewise been built on the US's own history of imperialism and counterinsurgency, from the suppression of anti-colonial insurrection in the Philippines at the start of the 20th century to the war in Vietnam to the wars in Central America in the 1980s. After all, the United States has been an empire for most of its history: conquering lands and peoples in North America and islands outside the continent in the nineteenth century, and since World War II depending less on controlling foreign lands and more on exercising economic, political, and military forms of power, including a massive collection of around 1,000 military bases outside the 50 states and Washington, D.C.

Despite its pacific-sounding talk about "non-kinetic operations" and "armed social work," counterinsurgency is, as Sewall's introduction acknowledges, a form of violent military occupation, not a new and improved vision for US foreign policy.

Counterinsurgency's proponents suggest that applying the lessons of past empires will allow the US to correct the mistakes of its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the lesson of these wars—in nations where the British failed to impose colonial rule and where tens if not hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, Afghans, and Americans have already lost their lives—is not that we need to embrace counterinsurgency and fight smarter, is not that we need to know more about the cultures of our enemies, is not that we need to embed anthropologists with our troops. The lesson is that wars like these, wars where the US is invading and occupying other nations, should not be fought at all.

Our nation is at a crossroads. We can continue a foreign policy of unilateral "preventative war," of a "war on terrorism" that has created more who would wish us harm and made the country less safe, of torture and "extraordinary rendition," of wanton disregard for international law, beginning with the Geneva conventions, of the destruction of domestic civil liberties and *habeas corpus*, of indefinite detention, of out-of-control military spending exceeding $1 trillion a year that's bankrupting our economy.

Or we can reject this foreign policy of invasion, occupation, and empire, and embrace a fundamentally different foreign policy, a different way of engaging with the world.

I believe we must choose the latter course. Using this moment of crisis to transform our foreign policy, we must reject shortsighted and fraudulent notions of "national security" and foreign policy "realism" and instead embrace a new foreign policy of "humanpolitik"—a human-centered foreign policy based around diplomacy, international cooperation, non-aggression, and the protection of human security as the best way to protect the security of the US and, ultimately, the world.

In what follows I outline the beginnings of this humanpolitik and nine main platforms for a foreign policy that provides clear alternatives to counterinsurgency.

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Rejecting Realism, Embracing Humanpolitik

A humanpolitik begins by placing human beings and the protection of human lives at the center of our foreign policy. It continually asks, What are the human consequences of the nation's actions not just for US citizens but also, given the increasing interconnectedness of the world, for citizens of the globe? Rooted in the anthropological challenge to see the world from the perspectives of others, this fundamentally different mode of engagement with the world focuses on securing human needs as the best way to ensure the security of the nation and the world.

At the heart of a humanpolitik are the principles of non-aggression and international cooperation. This means resolving conflicts through diplomacy and negotiation rather than invasion and occupation. Non-aggression also means ending covert CIA operations, like those that helped to install the Shah in Iran in 1954 and overthrow a democratically elected government in Chile in 1973. All too often these secret activities have caused tragic unintended consequences, known as "blowback," that have ended up harming the United States and global security—the most obvious case being the CIA's funding of Osama bin Laden and other militant radicals to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s. With a more focused and less overstretched military that would still provide the most powerful *defensive* force in the world, the nation would reserve the right to self-defense, enshrined in the United Nations charter, but only invoke it in the event of an immediate threat to the 50 states. Given that there will be limits to the effectiveness of diplomacy and international cooperation, the US would also remain prepared to participate in peacekeeping operations and military operations undertaken as part of UN-authorized multinational forces.

But what about protecting ourselves from terrorism? some will appropriately ask. Isn't counterinsurgency the best way to defeat terrorism and win the "global war on terror"? Analysts now increasingly agree that there can be no military solution to the terrorist threat, and that terrorism should instead be treated as a crime best confronted by law enforcement, not the military. Echoing the work of anthropologists Jane and Peter Schneider, among others, a 2008 report by RAND Corporation terrorism experts concluded that the United States should pursue a counterterrorism strategy emphasizing "policing and intelligence gathering rather than a 'war on terrorism' approach that relies heavily on military force."

Embracing a humanpolitik next means changing how we think about *security*. For years, empty invocations of "national security" have been a hallmark of a "realist" foreign policy that has most often ensured the security of corporate and bureaucratic elites. A humanpolitik incorporates a broader notion of security captured by the emerging concept of human security, which focuses on ensuring the ability of all humans to achieve fundamental freedoms from want and from fear. "A modern concept of national security demands more than an ability to protect and defend the United States," Gayle Smith writes for the Center for American Progress. "It requires that we expand our goal... to focus not only on the security of nation states, but also of people, on human security." In a world where World Bank and other statistics show that nearly half of

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today's six billion people live on less than two dollars per day, billions lack basic human security, threatening the species and making the world a dangerous place. As many (including members of the military) are predicting, global climate change, environmental degradation, disease, famine, rising refugee flows, growing inequality, and the exhaustion of critical resources will make the world more dangerous in the decades to come, paving the way for future wars. Left unattended, "human insecurity feeds on itself," Smith says, "laying the ground for conflict and the extreme vulnerability that causes people to fall over the economic edge." In the face of these challenges, a humanpolitik insists that the security of the US and its citizens depends on dramatic new investments in human security at home and abroad.

This won't be easy. Aggressive military solutions are almost always the easiest and most politically appealing. Embracing a humanpolitik approach will, paraphrasing David Halberstam's analysis of the failure of the "best and brightest" generation's war in Vietnam, require much political risk and a deeper, more interior form of strength and courage than that demonstrated by using military force.

In part for this reason, a humanpolitik rejects the traditional practice of foreign policymaking in which an elite group of government officials and think tankers craft policy based on their own narrow (often big business-shaped, economically-driven) perceptions of what's realistic. In its place, a humanpolitik emphasizes the democratization of policymaking, increasing grassroots involvement in foreign policy, and the consensual determination of the nation's interests. Although the idea that there is a singular "human

interest" is potentially as flawed as that of national interest, focusing on human needs can help to democratize foreign policy, bringing it closer to representing the interests of the many rather than just the elite few.

With two deadly and hugely costly wars dragging on, with the US economy in a recession and dangerously close to collapse, with the nation's debt reaching $11 trillion, the writing is on the wall for the US as an empire. We can choose the same path the British and French empires took in the 20th century, squandering more lives and dollars to maintain our empire, further bankrupting our nation and setting ourselves up for ignominious defeats like those at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and Suez in 1956, or we can avoid such tragedies by giving up our empire and embracing a model of global cooperation.

Some will still insist that a humanpolitik approach isn't realistic. The dead in Iraq, in Vietnam, and the dead across more than half a century of an interventionist foreign policy that has brought destruction abroad and helped create unparalleled bankruptcy at home demand that we ask, "Realistic for whom?"

Building a Humanpolitik

To further define a vision for a human-centered foreign policy I describe nine main platforms for a humanpolitik today. Each of the platforms is necessarily schematic but represents an outline for a different and eminently realistic way of engaging with the world. Each draws on the work and ideas of others, many of whom have far more detailed proposals than space allows here.

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There are certainly important foreign policy positions omitted here that should be included in a broader elaboration of humanpolitik.

Iraq and Afghanistan. Shifting the nation's foreign policy must begin with repairing the gravest error of recent years, Iraq. First, all US and other foreign troops should withdraw from Iraq with all due speed as requested by the Government of Iraq and consistent with Iraqi and US public opinion polls. The withdrawal must include the closure of all US and other foreign military bases in the country. Second, the US should commit to building cooperative diplomatic and political solutions to maintain peace. As many others have suggested, a withdrawal must be accompanied by a major diplomatic initiative, under the auspices of the United Nations and perhaps the Arab League, to initiate a ceasefire among all combatants in Iraq and to advance political and economic power-sharing arrangements in the country. A parallel regional diplomatic initiative under United Nations and Arab League leadership should seek to create a regional non-aggression pact to support the future stability of Iraq and the greater Middle East. The US must further commit to being the lead funder for an international reconstruction effort for Iraq. This Iraqi Marshall Plan should be directed by the Iraqi government, not the US or US corporations now engaged in reconstruction, and provide the government with significant reconstruction funds over at least a decade as a form of war reparations. The plan should focus on employing Iraqi rather than US or other foreign citizens and contractors and should provide assistance to displaced Iraqis within and outside the country.

In Afghanistan, the growing strength of the Taliban, rising civilian deaths from US military actions, and the failure of the British and Soviet empires before us signal that there will be no military solution there either. As repugnant as the Taliban is, engaging its leaders in political dialogue as part of international diplomatic and reconstruction initiatives similar to those in Iraq will be the only way to build peace and human security for the Afghan people. At the same time, US and international law enforcement agencies should continue to pursue the capture and prosecution of Al Qaeda members and other terrorist criminals in Afghanistan and Pakistan as part of the kind of police-based counterterrorism strategy the US should have pursued immediately after September 11, 2001.

Cutting Wasteful Military Spending. US military budgets, driven by the military-industrial complex President Eisenhower warned us against, have grown larger than they were during the cold war despite the absence of a threat on the scale of the Soviet Union. The Pentagon's official budget for the 2009 fiscal year is $515.4 billion. Adding budget requests for Iraq and Afghanistan and military and defense-related spending in the departments of Energy and Homeland Security and other agencies, the real US military budget is approximately $1.2 trillion. Such spending is obscene. It endangers our security by threatening the bankruptcy of the nation and the collapse of our economy.

The United States must substantially reduce the size of its military budget and refocus on defending the actual territory of the country. The US has the most powerful military on earth and with this proposed contraction can still comfortably maintain this position.

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Researchers at the Institute for Policy Studies and the National Priorities Project identified cuts to the Pentagon's 2008 budget that would result in a savings of around one-third, or $213 billion. The cuts would come from an Iraq withdrawal, the elimination of wasteful and redundant weapons systems (often pushed by Congress and unwanted by the military), and a one-third reduction in military personnel and the approximately 1,000 US military bases outside the 50 states and Washington DC, among other savings. Under the plan, the US would still have a military budget more than eight times larger than the world's next largest militaries in Britain, France, Japan, and China. Most importantly, the savings would "make the United States and the world safer and more secure" by creating a more efficient, less overstretched military force focused on ensuring the physical security of the US. Eliminating the further development of nuclear weapons (discussed below), space weapons, a missile defense system that does not work and is heightening tensions with Russia, and bases encircling and provoking China would further add to these savings and to our overall security.

Diplomacy, International Cooperation, and International Law. Encouragingly, many foreign policy elites have begun to embrace a new emphasis on diplomacy and international cooperation. One of the only foreign policy successes of the Bush administration—halting North Korea's nuclear program with the help of multi-nation diplomatic talks and economic concessions—is a prime example of how diplomacy can diffuse conflicts and improve national, regional, and international security. Making diplomacy the foundation, rather than an afterthought, of foreign policy begins with a substantial shift in funding from the Defense Department to the State Department and related non-military international aid programs, whose combined 2009 budget is about 30 times smaller than the Pentagon's.

The US must also recommit to full cooperation at the United Nations. While far from perfect and needing further reform, the UN is the best available forum for international cooperation, conflict resolution, and global development. Reform should include efforts to democratize the UN by expanding permanent membership in the Security Council to nations like Brazil and India, and to ensure the voice of smaller nations in decision-making processes.

A recommitment to diplomacy and international cooperation also means a recommitment to the system of international treaties, international law, and other mechanisms of global collaboration, beginning with a public pledge to uphold the Geneva conventions and prohibitions on torture (see "Human Rights" below). It should extend to joining European democracies and 106 other nations in accepting the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and the World Court, to joining 156 nations in the global landmine treaty, to re-signing the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty and forging other nuclear disarmament treaties (see "Nuclear Weapons"), and to ratifying and abiding by the Kyoto Protocol and future international agreements to confront climate change and other environmental threats (see "Climate Change").

Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution. In tandem with this emphasis on diplomacy, the US should make the peaceful resolution of international conflicts a major

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foreign policy goal. The successful reduction of tensions with North Korea is an important precedent and should lead to an effort to fully normalize relations between the two Koreas (which could allow the further reduction and eventual removal of all US troops from the peninsula). In the Middle East, the US should commit to local and regional peacemaking initiatives beginning with Iraq and Israel/Palestine. Just as the US should allow the UN to lead peacemaking efforts in Iraq, Foreign Policy in Focus's "Just Security" report outlines a similar plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict beginning with a UN-led international peace conference involving Israel, Palestinians, Arab nations, Europe, and the US.

The US should initiate another international effort aimed at decreasing equally longstanding tensions between India and Pakistan, which probably represent the most immediate threat of nuclear war on the planet. Given the US's increasingly close relations with both nations, the nation is now in a historic position, again with the assistance of the UN and other powers, to mediate Kashmir and other disagreements and to negotiate a lasting peace and demilitarization agreement. This initiative could be tied to a broader regional initiative aimed at bringing peace to Afghanistan.

Development Aid and Global Poverty Alleviation. In the face of widespread deprivation, hunger, and disease in an increasingly globalized world, the security of the US and its citizens depends on making a new commitment to dramatically increasing our development aid. While President Bush's augmentation of the foreign aid budget for HIV/AIDS treatment and other programs was again one of the few successes of his

administration, Gayle Smith cites statistics showing that just 3.5 percent of 2007 national security spending went to development while 95 percent went to the military. The US currently contributes less than 0.2 percent of GNP to development assistance, the lowest among advanced industrial nations and well below the UN's target of 0.7 percent. With the help of the one-third cut in the Pentagon's budget, the US should immediately aim to increase its overseas development budget to incrementally constitute 10, then 20, then 30 percent of total national security spending, while still leaving considerable monies to ensure that domestic human security needs in education, health care, employment, and housing are also well cared for.

Importantly, this new development spending should not be directed by the Pentagon as counterinsurgency strategy and plans for AFRICOM now suggest. Instead, as many development experts are proposing, the Obama administration should create a new cabinet level foreign aid agency or significantly re-empower the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to be the main arm of US development efforts. Of equal importance, a recommitment to foreign aid demands that we ensure that assistance benefits local people and not primarily US and other western aid agencies, which now sometimes take the lion's share of aid meant to benefit others.

Ultimately, increasing development aid is not just a good and humanitarian thing to do, it will fundamentally strengthen our national security by helping to eliminate some of the economic conditions that lead to militancy and terrorism, by helping to rebuild US moral leadership and authority, and by helping our country win allies. Alternatively, says Smith, "if we fail

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to act now, we will be forced to pay later, both financially and with our own national security."

Humanitarian Assistance. The US must improve upon its tradition of helping others in times of humanitarian crisis. Providing emergency aid will strengthen US and global security by increasing international stability, supporting development efforts easily hindered by humanitarian disasters, and improving the global reputation of the US. This is one of the areas in which the strength and skill of the US military can best be used. As the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami showed, the military's impressive logistics, transportation, and growing humanitarian capabilities are important tools to help people in need and to build global goodwill. These skills could be used to equal effect during domestic weather-related and geological disasters by demilitarizing elements of the US military into an unarmed emergency relief force, as part of revamping the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Anthropologists, sociologists, and others can play an important role, particularly in efforts abroad, by ensuring that emergency relief involves the participation and guidance of locals and is provided in a socioculturally appropriate manner.

Climate Change and the Environment. Along with nuclear weapons and poverty, the threats posed by global climate change and environmental degradation are the greatest facing humanity today. For too long, the US has lagged behind other industrialized nations in reducing its environmental impact, remaining the world's biggest polluter and consumer of oil and other fossil fuels.

The US must move forcefully to develop new clean and renewable energy supplies that will ensure our long-term energy security and quickly act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change. This will require major investments to develop new clean energy technologies as well as shifting tax incentives from oil production and toward encouraging energy efficiency, pollution control, and other environmental protections. Part of these efforts could come from military spending cuts (which would have the added benefit of cutting greenhouse gases that the US military produces at a rate higher than any other government institution) and through the direct conversion of armaments manufacturers into "green" industries. The US must also return to playing a leading international role in cooperatively confronting climate change and environmental degradation by signing and complying with new global agreements on emissions reductions and energy consumption.

The Abolition of Nuclear Weapons. Nuclear weapons, with their unfathomable destructive power, are the greatest threat currently facing human kind and have no place in a sane world. If we want to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, prevent nuclear materials from being acquired by terrorist groups, and safeguard our nation from any possible nuclear attack or accident, the United States must lead a historic effort toward the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. Some of the most prominent names in realist US foreign policy including Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, George Shultz, and William Perry have come to the same conclusion, arguing in a Wall Street Journal op-ed for "a world free of nuclear weapons." As numerous abolition plans propose,

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important first steps should include the cessation of all programs to upgrade US weaponry and the initiation of negotiations between the two nations with by far the largest arsenals, the US and Russia, to dramatically reduce stockpiles and take all weapons off hair-trigger alert. Subsequent negotiations involving all the nuclear powers should set goals for further reductions, rigorous monitoring and safeguards, and complete abolition, or at the very least very low numbers of weapons.

Human Rights. A human-centered foreign policy demands that the United States recommit itself to being a global leader in the protection and advancement of human rights. This must begin with correcting the scars that have so marred the nation's human rights record: the full closure of all detention facilities at Guantánamo Bay and all secret detention facilities globally; the complete repudiation of torture by the US government and all its employees and contractors, including the CIA; the termination and condemnation of extraordinary rendition as a practice sending detainees to countries known to use torture as an interrogation technique; and a reaffirmation of the US's full commitment to the Geneva conventions and all other applicable international conventions governing torture, abusive treatment, and conduct during war.

Next the US should return to its place as a leader in promoting the extension and protection of human rights globally, including social, economic, and political rights. Again this starts at home by working to bring our domestic human rights record into full compliance with all applicable international human rights covenants, beginning with the rights of women, ethnic and other minorities, immigrants, and prisoners.

As the nation corrects its own human rights record, we should begin to encourage human rights compliance in other nations, including the expansion of democratic rights, as part of our broader diplomatic relations.

A Guide for Action

While we must reject counterinsurgency and the entire Bush neoconservative legacy as the tragic strategies of empires past, these proposals for a humanpolitik are not a call for isolationism or disengagement. In our globalizing world, our security is directly connected to the security of others and demands mutual engagement and cooperation on the world's problems. Despite the destructive impact of Bush's foreign policy, for at least a decade we have seen the stirrings of a broadening public involvement in US foreign relations and in the global relations of peoples and nations worldwide—most notably in global anti-war protests that showed far more wisdom about a war in Iraq than most supposed foreign policy experts in the US. To achieve the fundamental shift in US foreign policy that needs now to occur, citizens must play ever more active roles in global relations by envisioning and demanding a new US foreign policy, researching policy alternatives, resisting warmaking, building transnational cooperation at every level, and by helping to make the world a more just, equitable, and secure place for all human beings. Anthropologists, in particular, often so good at critique, must work harder to research, develop, and implement foreign policy alternatives, to inform and influence policymakers, and to use their cross-cultural

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communication skills to assist in efforts for peaceful international cooperation.

Four decades ago, as the nation was deepening its involvement in Vietnam, a former National Security Council staffer wrote to *The New York Times* urging an end to "a needless war." "For the greatest power on earth has the power denied to others," James C. Thompson, Jr. said.

> The power to take unilateral steps, and to keep taking them; the power to be as ingenious and relentless in the pursuit of peace as we are in the infliction of pain; the power to lose face; the power to admit error, and the power to act with magnanimity.

We still have that power, though we may not for long. What we choose to do with the power hangs in the balance. ■

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NETWORK OF CONCERNED ANTHROPOLOGISTS

THE COUNTER-COUNTERINSURGENCY MANUAL

OR, NOTES ON DEMILITARIZING AMERICAN SOCIETY

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At a moment when the U.S. military decided it needed cultural expertise as much as smart bombs to prevail in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Pentagon's *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* offered a blueprint for mobilizing anthropologists for war. *The Counter-Counterinsurgency Manual* critiques that strategy and offers a blueprint for resistance. Written by the founders of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists, *The Counter-Counterinsurgency Manual* explores the ethical and intellectual conflicts of the Pentagon's Human Terrain System; argues that there are flaws in the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (ranging from plagiarism to a misunderstanding of anthropology); probes the increasing militarization of academic knowledge since World War II; identifies the next frontiers for the Pentagon's culture warriors; and suggests strategies for resisting the deformation and exploitation of anthropological knowledge by the military. This is compulsory reading for anyone concerned that the human sciences are losing their way in an age of empire.

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