



Saving America From Itself: Avoiding the Fallen Empire Syndrome

U.S. Army War College, Major Shannon W. Caudill

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Americans cannot envision a day when the U.S. is not a superpower. Although it is impossible to know how long America will be able to sustain its status as the world's sole superpower, many historical and quantitative trends can be examined to predict potential future outcomes. Historian Paul Kennedy's seminal work *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* provides a context for discussion of former empires by focusing on the economic power of nations. Based on this analysis of previous world powers, Kennedy argues that a nation's economy is central to its overall power, fueling its military strength and foreign enterprises.

Modern U.S. national security strategy is based on four elements of national power: Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME). This paper analyzes the U.S. strengths and weaknesses in the DIME formula, while contrasting the U.S. strategic position with those budding world powers identified by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in his 1994 book *Diplomacy*. He states that the 21st Century "will contain at least six major power centers - the U.S., Europe, China, Japan, Russia, and probably India."

Subsequently, statistical indicators will be used for each area of the DIME construct from which to evaluate the present day strategic situation and project potential outcomes. This paper analyzes the strategic position of each nation-state competitor. It makes recommendations for U.S. policy changes to improve national security strategy implementation and preserve America's place as a world power.

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