



Editorial Note

America's Four Revolutions

Richard C. Thornton

Korean Airlines Flight 007: Accident or Intelligence Probe?

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Russia's INF Treaty Violations: Evidence and Implications

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The Mughniyeh Mystery: Calculations and Betrayals

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The Institute for the Study of Strategy and Politics

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Abstract: The United States has experienced four political revolutions in the past two and a half centuries, not one. 1776 was the first revolution; the Civil War, the second; the Great Depression, the third; and the 2016 election, the fourth. Each involved the overthrow of the existing political order and its long-term strategy	
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Abstract: Conventional wisdom holds that the notorious terrorist's assassination in 2008 was a revenge killing carried out by the Mossad (with CIA support) under the nose of the Syrian government. This paper argues instead that Mughniyeh's death was facilitated by the Syrian regime as part of an attempt to reposition the country into the Western orbit in a manner reflecting the experience of Libya.	

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James D. Perry

Abstract: The first installment in Nigel Hamilton's trilogy about Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership in WWII covers the period between the 1941 Argentia Summit and the Anglo-American landings in North Africa in November 1942. Hamilton illustrates FDR's control of US strategy, but he focuses excessively on the Roosevelt-Churchill relationship and presents an imbalanced appreciation of the American president over the British prime minister.

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James D. Perry

Abstract: This second volume fixates on the president's "Battle with Churchill" during 1943, as plans are formulated for the allied invasion of France the following year. Hamilton not only misrepresents the British military position, he also largely fails to consider the two leaders' objectives with respect to the Soviet Union, and how this affected their military planning.

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James D. Perry

Abstract: The third of Hamilton's works on FDR examines the period from the Tehran Conference in November-December 1943, to Roosevelt's death in April 1945. Crucial decisions about the war's conclusion and aftermath are made between and among allied leaders, but the author remains confused about their strategies and key discussion points. There is useful detail about FDR's failing physical and mental health, but no critical inference about his decision to run for a fourth term.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue opens with Richard Thornton's sweeping review of US history, in which he delineates four distinct political orders—the last of which is evolving now. The American Revolution of the late 1700s was the first; the Civil War marked the second; the Great Depression precipitated the third, and the 2016 presidential election initiated the fourth American Revolution. Each of these eras is characterized by a dominant establishment in pursuit of a long-term domestic and international strategy. Failure of the strategy leads to the overthrow of its adherents and emergence of a new order. Each of the past transitions has been traumatic and the current one is similar in that regard. But a different geopolitical environment confronts the nascent American leadership. In addition to restoring domestic tranquility, the task at hand is to pursue an acceptable equilibrium in a tri-polar US-Russian-Chinese power structure.

The US-Soviet missile balance was a principal challenge of the order just ending. The situation became excruciatingly tense on several occasions, including in the early 1980s as the US prepared to install Pershing II missiles in Germany, and Moscow planned to put SS-20s in Grenada. In this context, it was imperative for the US to know the status of Russia's missile defense capability—specifically a large phased-array radar system in Krasnoyarsk. Thornton posits that Korean Airlines flight 007 on September 1, 1983, was used as an intelligence probe to test the Soviet system. The flight ended tragically for the airliner and passengers; but the mission provided the information necessary for President Reagan to guide the nation through a dangerous juncture in superpower relations.

The Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty negotiated between the US and the USSR several years later was degraded by Russian non-compliance. Dr. Mark Schneider, senior analyst with the National Institute for Public Policy, catalogs Russian development of ground-launched intermediate-range missiles over many years, contravening treaty limits and posing a significant threat to Europe. But no violation was officially and publicly declared by Washington until 2014.

Moscow's denial and refusal to desist ultimately led President Trump to withdraw from the treaty, effective August 2, 2019. This not only frees the US to develop systems to counter the growing threat from both Russia and China. It also is an important demonstration of resolve to enforce agreements, without which any future arms control negotiations with Russia, China or others would be worthless.

The Middle East is a geopolitical cauldron of shifting strategies and policies, as illustrated by the 2008 assassination of Lebanese terrorist Imad Mughniyeh and the aftermath. The story is told here by a sharp analyst of the region who wishes to remain anonymous. He shows how Mughniyeh's demise was a function of a US-Syrian rapprochement that ultimately languished when a new administration took the helm in Washington.

With his careful and critical reviews of Nigel Hamilton's trilogy of works on Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership during World War II, the Institute's James D. Perry showcases an egregious misrepresentation of history. Hamilton portrays FDR as brilliant and infallible, while maligning British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as opportunistic, erratic, and weak. Perry finds that Hamilton's interpretation of events is not supported by the sources he cites. A fundamental weakness is Hamilton's failure to acknowledge or understand how Roosevelt sought to shape the post-war world to US advantage by cooperating with the Soviet Union, undermining British objectives and betraying Chiang Kai-shek.

In sum, this issue begins with an overarching framework for analyzing the evolution of US strategy, and then presents analyses of key points in the political order immediately preceding the nascent one. In doing so, it seeks to provide perspective for the turbulent times the world is experiencing today.

– Joanne Thornton

Assistant Editor

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