



Foreign Policy Begins at Home: The Case for Putting America's House in Order

By Richard N. Haass

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The biggest threat to the United States comes not from abroad but from within. This is the provocative, timely, and unexpected message of Council on Foreign Relations President Richard N. Haass's *Foreign Policy Begins at Home*.

A rising China, climate change, terrorism, a nuclear Iran, a turbulent Middle East, and a reckless North Korea all present serious challenges. But U.S. national security depends even more on the United States addressing its burgeoning deficit and debt, crumbling infrastructure, second class schools, and outdated immigration system.

Foreign Policy Begins at Home describes a twenty-first century in which power is widely diffused. Globalization, revolutionary technologies, and the rise and decline of new and old powers have created a “nonpolar” world of American primacy but not domination. So far, it has been a relatively forgiving world, with no great rival threatening America directly. How long this strategic respite lasts, according to Haass, will depend largely on whether the United States puts its own house in order.

Haass argues for a new American foreign policy: Restoration. At home, the new doctrine would have the country concentrate on restoring the economic foundations of American power. Overseas, the U.S. would stop trying to remake the Middle East with military force, instead emphasizing maintaining the balance of power in Asia, promoting economic integration and energy self-sufficiency in North America, and working to promote collective responses to global challenges.

Haass rejects both isolationism and the notion of American decline. But he argues the United States is underperforming at home and overreaching abroad. *Foreign Policy Begins at Home* lays out a compelling vision for restoring America's power, influence, and ability to lead the world.

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Editorial Review

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The greatest threat to national security is not a rising China or Islamic terrorists or North Korea's nuclear power. Instead, our greatest security threat lies in divisive politics and fiscal deficits brought on by costly wars that have resulted in underinvestment in human capital. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations with foreign policy experience in four administrations, is not arguing for isolationism but for a sharper evaluation of why we go to war and what it costs us. He begins with a historical perspective on U.S. foreign policy as it has evolved from the Cold War to U.S. primacy to a new era of rising powers and emerging nations. But his primary focus is on domestic policy—the need to reverse the decline of U.S. competitiveness, stabilize the middle class, and strengthen the economy. Haass follows up his *The Reluctant Sheriff* (1997) and *The Opportunity* (2006) to make his case that a focus on economics, energy, education, immigration, and other domestic issues, including fractious politics, can strengthen the nation from within and bolster its ability to deal with any external threats. --Vanessa Bush

Review

“Haass delivers a cogent picture of the world and supports it with sharp and precise arguments.”
—*Foreign Affairs*

“A must read for aspiring diplomats.”
—*American Diplomacy*

“Haass's call for getting America's domestic house in order should be listened to.”
—*New York Times Book Review*

"Haass is one of Americas most astute foreign policy analysts. His previous 12 books are gems of wisdom and this one is no exception.... The slim volumen is an excellent primer about the world in which the US operates today.... Haass should be read by everyone."
-*Choice*

“Haass persuasively shows that United States continues to be the indispensable nation.... Haass's writing style is straightforward and uncluttered by jargon. My academic colleagues will not find reference to ‘hegemonic transition theories’ or ‘postmodernism,’ which makes the book much more accessible to a wider readership.... Whether Haass chooses to run for office one day or not, a presidential candidate would do well using his realism as a platform.”
—*National Interest*

"Deft and wise book"
—*The Daily Beast*

“[Haass] argues brilliantly [his] prescription says charity starts at home.” —*UPI.com*

“This informative, well-written book is a necessary addition to any collection providing either experts or citizens with new and rational discussion of America's place in the world today.”

—*Library Journal*

“Lessons learned from the recent past and presented thoughtfully as a viable new course.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Richard Haass has long been a keen observer of the US position on the world stage, and his must-read book is no exception. Haass rightly explains that if the United States is to continue fulfilling the leadership role it has had since World War II, our country must be more restrained in what it does abroad and put its house in order at home by defusing the looming fiscal debt bomb that threatens our national security and global standing.”

—**James A. Baker, III.**

“A concise, comprehensive guide to America’s critical policy choices at home and overseas. Richard Haass writes without a partisan agenda, but with a passion for solutions designed to restore our country’s strength and enable us to lead.”

—**Madeleine K. Albright**

“A perceptive diagnosis and common sense prescription for what ails us as a nation. It is a practical guide for those who believe America’s continued global leadership is critical in the twenty-first century, but who believe it must be anchored in restoration at home and more effective use of all the tools of American foreign policy abroad.”

—**Robert M. Gates**

“Richard Haass is one of America’s most insightful and experienced thinkers. In *Foreign Policy Begins at Home*, Haass explains why our ability to wield power and influence abroad will depend on our confronting pressing challenges at home. He offers a sobering look at the domestic policies that are undermining our international competitiveness – and a thoughtful roadmap for strengthening America’s position on the global stage.”

—**Michael R. Bloomberg**

“Richard N. Haass shows us that maintaining America’s leadership in the world will require significant reforms within our own borders. Full of insight but without polemics or preachiness, it clearly demonstrates that our ability to inspire, influence, cooperate with or deter others depends upon our ability to promote shared prosperity and social progress at home.”

—**William Jefferson Clinton**

About the Author

Richard N. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations since July 2003, was previously director of policy planning for the Department of State, where he was a principal advisor to Colin Powell. From 1989-1993, he was special assistant to President George H. W. Bush and senior director for the Near East and South Asia on the staff of the National Security Council. Haass also served in the Reagan and Carter administrations. The recipient of the State Department’s Distinguished Honor Award and the Presidential Citizens Medal, he is the author or editor of twelve other books. Haass lives in New York City.

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