

As September 11 approaches once more, it's pretty easy for current events in the Middle East to cause us to feel a pervasive sense of despondency and despair with respect to the future of the world. I've recently discovered a whole new way to understand these events that leads to a future that can be more hopeful than any of us may have dared to imagine, and I'd like to try to introduce you to this way of looking at things.

Thomas Barnett, a senior strategist with the Pentagon (and especially with the Navy), has written three fascinating books that have taken the Pentagon and much of the world's military by storm. The first book was written ten years ago, and it amazes me that I have never heard any of this in the popular press.

Barnett has perhaps two basic premises. The first premise is that the major economic nations of the world are extremely unlikely to engage in warfare with one another in the future, simply because our economies are so integrated and mutually-dependent that it will never be in the self-interest of any of these nations to engage in war with each other. Barnett calls these nations "**the Functioning Core**," and he divides this into the *Old Core* (America, Europe, Japan) and the *New Core* (China, India, Brazil, Russia).



Barnett's second premise is that many of the remaining nations (the Caribbean Rim, Andean South America, virtually all of Africa, portions of the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, and most of Southeast Asia) are currently not integrated into the Functioning Core and are looking on with envy "through the glass" at the prosperity of the Core. Barnett calls these nations "**the Non-Integrating Gap**."¹

Thanks to globalization, two thirds of the world's population now lives in the global economy's Functioning Core, and one-third of humanity remains trapped outside this peaceful sphere in regions that are weakly connected to the global economy—the Non-Integrating Gap. Barnett points out that "Since the end of the Cold War, all the wars and civil wars and genocide have occurred inside the Gap, and so my vision of ending war as we know it begins with shrinking this Gap and ends with making globalization truly global and eradicating the disconnectedness that defines danger in the world today."

Barnette's overall strategy is for the Core nations to invest heavily in integrating the Gap nations into the Core, a process that will be both long and messy, but that has the real possibility of creating a world without war of any sort within the lifespans of some persons already born. (He doesn't say it loudly, but for those who listen carefully, Barnett's view of the future is strongly grounded in his Christian faith.)

¹ Between the Core and the Gap are the nations Barnett calls the "**Seam States**" that ring the Gap (Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia). These states are important with regard to international security, because they provide terrorists with geographic access to the Core.

And, as current events bear out in ways very similar to what Barnett predicted a decade ago, America not only can *make* a difference in this global outcome; **America is the difference** that will bring about this outcome—if we understand what is really happening and commit ourselves to the integration of the Gap for the good of all the world.

The Non-Integrating Gap is unintegrated for many reasons, but chief among those reasons is bad leadership or lack of leadership in the Gap nations. Barnett outlines procedures for global tribunals to decide the order in which to “discipline” these non-integrating leaders, after which it will generally be U.S. forces that apply overwhelming force to secure the removal and subsequent trial of those leaders. Barnett calls this “overwhelming force” function “**the Leviathan role**,” and he notes that there simply is no other force in the world able to contend with the U.S. for this role.

More crucial than the Leviathan role, though, is what Barnett calls the “**System Administrator**” or “nation-building” role, which must necessarily follow quickly on the heels of Leviathan. The System Administrator (or “**SysAdmin**”) role involves peacekeeping, crisis response, humanitarian and disaster relief, training of foreign troops, post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction, and continuing counterinsurgency work.

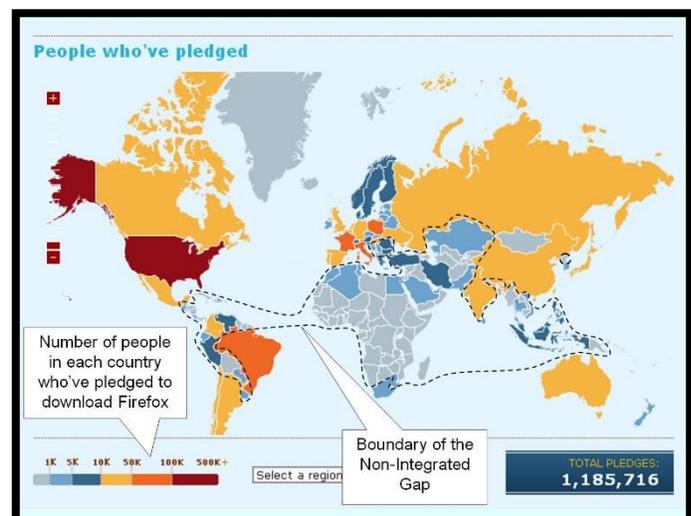
“If you’re waging a global war on terrorism,” he writes, “and all you’ve done is kill the bad guys, what you leave behind is no more likely to produce good guys than it was before – in fact, it’s more likely than ever to produce *even worse guys*. You may enter with surgical precision, but all you leave is an open wound in your wake – *unless you make good on the peace.*”

According to Barnett, the U.S. has pretty much botched our SysAdmin role in Iraq and Afghanistan, but we can learn to do better—and we *are* learning to do better. But more importantly, most of the militaries in the Core, while ill-suited for the Leviathan role, are well-suited and often eager to play the System Administrator role.

Barnett argues that “**Eradicating disconnectedness is the defining security task of our age, as well as a supreme moral cause on behalf of those who suffer it against their will.**” So long as the Gap nations are disconnected and unintegrated with the global economy, just so long will rogue states such as North Korea and rogue groups such as ISIL and Boko Haram have free rein in the Gap.

But as those nations become secure—a process that Barnett says will usually begin with substantial and well-trained U.S. SysAdmin (nation-building) troops on the ground—foreign investment will be attracted to these newly-secure markets, allowing improved infrastructure and enhanced prosperity for the populations of these nations. And as individuals become empowered and self-directed through being connected to the Core (often through the Internet—see the *Firefox* graphic), they will become less and less tolerant of the bad actors among them who jeopardize this new-found prosperity.

According to Barnett, “**America stands at the tipping point of possibly the most peaceful era in human history**, where war as we have known it for centuries is banished from the strategic landscape.



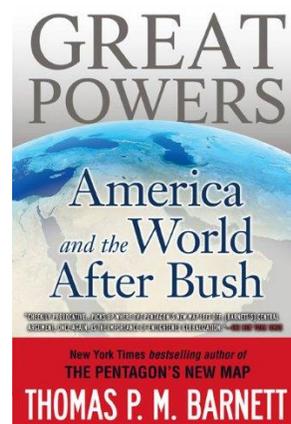
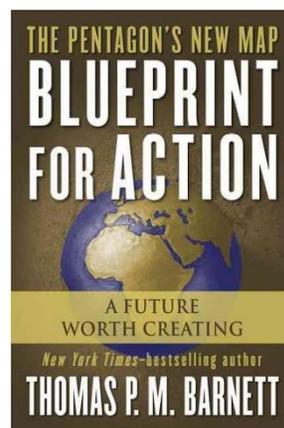
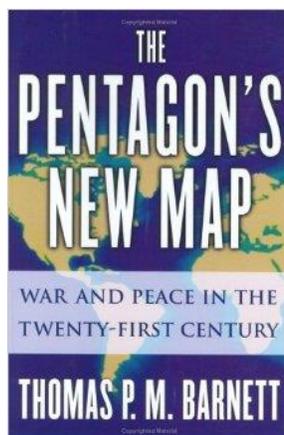
But to achieve these lofty ends, we need even loftier means. We need to end the disconnectedness that defines danger in our world. We need to shrink the Gap and all of its pain-and-suffering – right out of existence. We need to make globalization truly global in a just manner.

“Our goal is universal inclusiveness and global peace. America needs to commit itself to the concept that getting countries out of the Gap and into the Core is not only a national security imperative, it’s our overarching foreign policy objective for the next several decades. *We need to declare our intent to wage peace as effectively as we wage war.*”

Well, I’ve not done a very good job of summarizing three books in such short scope, but I hope that you’ve been able to glimpse what seems to me to be divine Hope and Purpose in the future Barnett pictures for us. Further, these principles suggest clear directions for our own communication with policy makers in Annapolis and in Washington.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

Dave



The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know **O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)**

Week thirty-six: Back to Basics

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Immediately before His ascension back to heaven, Jesus stood on a mountain in Judea. There He reinforced His Great Commission by calling upon that small group to take His good news to whole nations, not simply to a few locals. Since the last words of those who leave us are always intriguing and important, let’s dissect this parting challenge from the lips of our Lord and seek to apply it to our lives.

THE WHO OF EVANGELISM

“But *you* shall . . . be witnesses to *Me*.” This challenge to take the gospel to the world is one Jesus gives to all of us. Jesus did not say, “You shall be My chart makers or date keepers, but My witnesses—all of you!” None of us is exempt from this basic element of Christian living; that is, to share the good news.

THE WHAT OF EVANGELISM

You shall receive what? Power! This is a great need of believers today. Perhaps the greatest difference between the first-century church and the twenty-first-century church is summarized in two words—*influence* and *power*. Today we pride ourselves on our influence. But the early church did not even have enough influence to keep their leader Simon Peter out of prison. They were virtually void of influence with the civil and legal authorities. But the more important news is, they had enough power to pray him out of prison!

THE WHEN OF EVANGELISM

When did this power come upon the group of believers? When the Holy Spirit came upon them. There is no such thing as a Christian without power. When you receive Christ, you have the Holy Spirit. He takes up residency in you. Thus, you have power.

Many church members get all dressed up and are ready to go out and witness, but they never seem to get started. Why? We are in need of a power outside of ourselves to energize us.

THE WHY OF EVANGELISM

The Holy Spirit enables us to be witnesses. This is the very reason why we have power—to be His witnesses. There should be no such thing as a Christian who is not a witness. If we are saved, we have Christ. If we have Christ, we have the Holy Spirit. If we have the Holy Spirit, we have power. And if we have power, we will be Jesus’ witnesses.

Jesus called us to simply tell others what we have seen and heard from firsthand experience. We are not recruiters trying to get people to join our club. We are not to be salesmen trying to persuade others to buy our product. We are simply to be Jesus’ witnesses.

THE WHERE OF EVANGELISM

Jesus told us to take His good news across the city, across the country, across the continent, and, yes, across the entire cosmos. Here is total participation: all of us are to be witnesses. And here is total penetration: we are to go “to the end of the earth.” The gospel will never find its final destination until it is shared with every person on the planet.