


# A bit of self-promotion

Posted By Stephen M. Walt ■ Thursday, June 23, 2011 - 4:57 PM ■  Share

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I'm gratified by the number of people who read this blog, and in the unlikely event that some of you are starved for something to do or truly desperate for some form of entertainment, here are links to two recent appearances of mine.

The first is a **video of the talk** I gave in Dublin last week, on Obama's foreign policy and the twilight of the American era. The video covers the speech itself but not the Q & A, which is unfortunate because some of the questions were excellent. And kudos to the IIEA for getting the link up quickly. There's a summary and analysis of the talk from the Irish Times **here**.

The second item is the NPR show "On Point" with Tom Ashbrook. The topic of the **one-hour segment** on Monday was "Bringing the Troops Home," and the main theme was the growing chorus of voices calling for significant cuts in defense. The other participants were Chris Preble of the CATO Institute and Rachel Kleinfeld of the Truman National Security Project (both of whom were excellent) and on the whole I thought the discussion covered lots of ground fairly well. My central theme was that you can't save much money simply by redeploying U.S. forces; the only way to save real money is to shrink the size of the force (fewer people, weapons, etc.), and be a lot more careful about which wars you choose to fight.

As I've noted before, states don't need to think that clearly about strategy when they have a comfortable surplus, but the need for clear strategy goes up as soon as resources are constrained and/or threats multiply. It's therefore a good thing that we are *finally* beginning to have a more serious discussion of U.S. grand strategy, and it might even figure significantly in next year's presidential race. It's just too bad that it took a couple of military debacles and a major financial meltdown to get us there.

*Postscript:* I was attending an advisory board meeting yesterday and missed the President's speech on Afghanistan. It's a baby step in the right direction, but nothing more. If Obama believes it's time to rebuild America instead of rebuilding Afghanistan, he's certainly doesn't seem to be in any hurry to get to it.

