

[Behind Schedule And Ahead Of The Curve](#)

By: [Spencer Ackerman](#) Tuesday August 3,
2010 5:00 pm



At the risk of unfurling banners on the aircraft carrier that this blog represents in my mind: *wow*, are these guestposts great. I post here with apprehension. You guys are putting me to shame. And I love it. Keep up the great work. (Though I have to ask Mikey: what's your beef with the X-Men? Check out the Second Coming storyline before you make any final critical assessments.)

So I've been hanging out at Andrews AFB since yesterday, making use of iffy-to-good internet access and waiting in vain to get to Germany on a big Air Force bird before moving on to Bagram. Flight yesterday got delayed until 11 or so. About an hour after we finally boarded, we learned there was a non-trivial problem with the aircraft and went back to the terminal. A few hours passed without us learning if we'd be able to get off the ground. By 4:30 I managed to get some sleep. Long story short: after one *big* scare this afternoon, it looks like I won't miss the plane in Germany that I'm scheduled to take to Afghanistan. Not counting chickens. Everyone who's ever flown mil-air knows what I'm talking about. [Adam sagely alluded to it yesterday.](#)

On to the reading front: Chris Preble has a [really excellent response](#) to the Perry/Hadley counter-QDR; the QDR; and critics of both documents. He teases out both documents' presumptions of hegemony:

Trade routes need not be policed by a single dominant power; the international economy is complex and resilient. Supply disruptions are likely to be temporary, and the costs of mitigating their effects should be borne by those who stand to lose — or gain — the most. Islamic extremists are scary, but hardly comparable to the threat posed by a globe-straddling Soviet Union armed with thousands of nuclear weapons. It is frankly absurd that we spend more today to fight Osama bin Laden and his tiny band of murderous thugs than we spent to face down Joseph Stalin and Chairman Mao.

And on and on. You could even *presume hegemony* and find yourself agreeing with Chris' points. One option in that regard would be to question whether expenditures relative to U.S. global burdens are too bloated, while presuming the burdens are in the U.S. interest. Another would be to question whether those expenditures ultimately jeopardize those burdens by bringing them to the point of fiscal and political insolvency, risking a contraction dangerous to sustained hegemony. (Though, in fairness, Chris might be disinclined to accept that as a genuine argument, given his assessment that "We could choose to shift money out of other government programs; we could raise taxes; or we could continue to finance the whole thing on debt, and stick our children and grandchildren with the bill.")

None of this is meant to make a case for hegemony, just to highlight that Chris is making insightful points about a mismatch between strategy and resources.