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A biweekly collection of articles, comments and opinion pieces from popular media and the blogosphere, thematically reflecting the spirit of George C. Marshall's enduring legacy of leadership and strategic vision.

Reassertion of the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region

By Tanguy Struye De Swielande in *Parameters*

The Asian-Pacific region currently forms the epicenter of world affairs and incorporates the majority of great powers (emerging and confirmed), most nuclear powers, and more than one-third of the world's population. Although the region is the new global economic driving force, security challenges remain (piracy, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, natural resources, border issues, etc.). Economic interdependence has not negated the risk of conflict; tensions remain with regard to the Korean peninsula, Taiwan, and the maritime border disputes in the South China Sea. As General Martin E. Dempsey summed it, "All of the trends, demographic trends, geopolitical trends, economic trends and military trends are shifting toward the Pacific. So our strategic challenges in the future will largely emanate out of the Pacific region, but also the littorals of the Indian Ocean."

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What will U.S. diplomacy look like in the 21st century?

By Ishaan Tharoor at TIME.com

In a speech last month Secretary [Hillary] Clinton explained how the U.S. intends to reshape its commitment to global development in the face of a rapidly changing world. "We have to think fast and innovatively and be willing to change ourselves," warned Clinton. Her message was a world away from the bluster of those in the U.S. who still hunger for a militarist, muscular stance on the global stage.

For Secretary Clinton, the U.S.'s top diplomat, the end goal for the State Department's development and aid programs ought to be "putting ourselves out of business." By shifting from aid to investment, from throwing money at governments to targeting projects with the private sector, from dictating terms to encouraging reforms, the U.S. can with greater agility and precision affect how development plays out in poorer countries worldwide.

Few would dispute that. Yet implicit in Clinton's address was a sticky tension: the champion of American diplomacy was facing up to the dawning reality that, in the decades to come, the U.S.'s ability to impose itself on global affairs will shrink. Clinton's trumpeted platitude, "We are standing up for democracies that unlock people's potential and against extremists who seek to exploit people's frustration," belied the fact that her good intentions are still not welcomed or trusted by many overseas. Writing in the *New York Times*, Indian

commentator Pankaj Mishra discussed the "inevitable retreat" of the U.S. from the Middle East, a region that has long bristled at U.S. diplomatic and military interventions.

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Defining vision

From the National Defense University

Vision is a widely used term, but not well understood. Perhaps leaders don't understand what vision is, or why it is important. One strategic leader is quoted as saying, "I've come to believe that we need a vision to guide us, but I can't seem to get my hands on what 'vision' is. I've heard lots of terms like mission, purpose, values, and strategic intent, but no-one has given me a satisfactory way of looking at vision that will help me sort out this morass of words. It's really frustrating!" To understand vision, clarify what the term means.

One definition of vision comes from Burt Nanus, a well-known expert on the subject. Nanus defines a vision as a realistic, credible, attractive future for [an] organization.

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Leadership and the need for creative thinking

By Edward de Bono, author of *Lateral Thinking*

It is almost impossible for a leader to talk about the importance of thinking. It has to be assumed that his or her thinking is near perfect. Furthermore, to talk about thinking makes the leader very vulnerable, as any policy or action can be attacked on the grounds that it shows poor thinking. So leadership is not often talked about in terms of creative thinking.

Business really needs to use creative thinking to succeed. Better and more creative thinking will result in more profits or market share. In business there is an obvious need for new thinking. In most other sectors of society there is no bottom line. In all other sectors of society, such as politics, the media and the academic world, it is enough to argue that you are right. There is no need at all for better thinking or creativity. In business you can argue until you're blue in the face that you are right and still go bankrupt a month later.

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Six leadership lessons from the *Deadliest Catch*

By Michael Riegel in *Forbes*

The last few years have seen an explosion of reality TV shows that lay bare the seedy undersides of their participants' personalities, and most of us go to work each day and recognize the characters we see on TV in our co-workers, bosses, and subordinates. My favorite of this genre is *Deadliest Catch*, with its competition among crab boat captains in the Bering Sea to see who can net the greatest number of crabs. Here are six main lessons:

1. Provide timely feedback on job performance. The brevity of a crab season requires constant performance observation and feedback between captain and staff. A corporate setting wouldn't generally support the language used on a crab boat, but the feedback is to the point, geared toward achieving the team's goals, developing staff talent (think greenhorn

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to deck hand or business analyst to project manager), and promoting the team's overall cohesiveness. Regardless of the captain, it is direct, timely, and forthright. Too often we hear from staff that annual performance evaluations aren't helpful. They may be mandated and viewed as a burden, but above all they should be a continuation of feedback and evaluation that goes on throughout the year.

2. Set clear expectations

3. Lead by example

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