

From “Multilateral Engagement” to “New Unilateralism”

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Summary

In US foreign policy, since 2001 there was a great change from “multilateral engagement” of the Clinton administration to “new unilateralism” of the Bush administration. Unilateralism is not a new approach for US foreign policy. But new unilateralism has some specific characteristics such as change in the policy of deterrence, the emphasis on preemption, on the US power, will to act alone and advancing democracy. There are critics inside and outside the United States about this strategy. This paper focuses upon the changes in US foreign policy. It argues that 9/11 terrorism is not a cause in the change of US policy but rather an opportunity to change.

Key Words: US foreign Policy, Preemption, Unilateralism, Bush administration, multilateral engagement

Özet

ABD dış politikasında 2001 yılından başlayarak Clinton yönetiminin “çok taraflı katılım” politikasından Bush yönetiminin “yeni tek taraflılık” politikasına doğru bir büyük değişim yaşanmıştır. Tek taraflılık ABD dış politikasında ilk defa görülen bir yaklaşım değildir. Fakat yeni tek taraflılık stratejisi, caydırma politikasındaki değişim, önleyici müdahalenin vurgulanması, Amerikanın gücü ve yalnız hareket etme isteği ve demokrasinin yayılması isteği gibi bazı özellikler taşımaktadır. ABD içinde ve dışında bu politikaya eleştirel görüşler bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma ABD dış politikasındaki

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değişimi incelemektedir. 11 Eylül terör hareketlerinin ABD politikasındaki değişime yol açmadığını fakat değişim için bir fırsat olduğunu belirtmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ABD dış politikası, önleyici müdahale, tek taraflılık, Bush yönetimi, çok taraflı katılım

From “Multilateral Engagement” to “New Unilateralism”¹

Introduction

During the Cold War when there was bipolar distribution of power, the United States supported the establishment of multilateral cooperation in the world.² Soon after the dissolution of the Soviet Empire there was expectation for multipolar distribution of power in Europe³, which might lead to new isolationism of the United States.⁴ Relative decline of the US power was also expected. However, as the former Soviet Union lost its power, the United States has emerged as the world unipolar power⁵, and there emerged unilateral

¹ The first version of this paper has been prepared for the presentation in the first WISC, Bilgi University, August 26-29, 2005.

² According to Ikenberry, multilateralism “is the coordination of relations among three or more states according to a set of rules or principles”. Multilateralism can operate as 1) a “system multilateralism” like in the Westphalian state system; 2) “ordering or foundational multilateralism”, like an open and liberal international economic order; and 3) “contract multilateralism”, like specific intergovernmental treaties and agreements such as the WTO and the EU, where the states accept reduction of its political autonomy. See G. John Ikenberry, “Is American Multilateralism in Decline?” *Perspectives on Politics*, No. 1, 2003, p. 533-550.

³ John Mearsheimer, “Why we will soon miss the Cold War”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266, No. 2, 1990, p. 35-50.

⁴ Scholars disagree whether bipolar or multipolar systems are more stable. See Mearsheimer, “Why we will”, p. 39; Kenneth N. Waltz, “The emerging structure of International politics”, *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1993, p. 44-79; Michael Mastanduno, “Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and US Grand Strategy After the Cold war”, *International Security*, Spring, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1997, p. 49-89.

⁵ Charles Krauthammer (1989/90), “Universal Dominion: Toward a Unipolar World”, *The National Interest*, p. 46-49; Charles Krauthammer (1990/91), “The Unipolar Moment”, *Foreign Affairs*, 70(1): 22-33; Charles Krauthammer (Winter 2002/2003), “The Unipolar Moment Revisited”, *The National Interest*, 21(4); Charles Krauthammer (February 2004), “Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a unipolar

distribution rather than multipolar distribution of power⁶. Moreover, the US administration felt freer for action and rising American power was observed.⁷

Furthermore, international system was characterized as “unipolar moment”⁸ or “unipolar era”⁹ or “benign unipolarity”¹⁰ urging the United States to act unilaterally. For example, Krauthammer stated that the United States should focus on ‘a super-sovereign West’ which is economically, culturally, and politically hegemonic in the world. He proposed the United States to unite with the West and form a unipolar world.¹¹ Moreover, structural realism, classical realism and hegemonic stability theories predicted that the unipolarity decreases the likelihood of military conflict, because it would be difficult to change the United States and the United States is too powerful to counterbalance.¹² West should align its foreign policy behind the United States.¹³ Unipolarity would be durable and peaceful.¹⁴

Yet, there were also other arguments besides hard power based-unipolarity argument. For example, Nye stated that power is distributed in three dimensions. At the top, military dimension was unipolar, where there was only the United States. At the middle, economic dimension was multipolar, where

world”, *The AEI (American Enterprise Institute)*, Washington, D.C.; Charles Krauthammer (Oct 2004), “Neoconservatism and Foreign Policy”, *The National Interest*.

⁶ Krauthammer’s strategic thinking has become emblematic of neo-conservative school that has acquired strong influence inside the Bush Administration foreign policy team in the United States. Krauthammer advocates an American foreign policy of unilateralism.

⁷ Ikenbery, “Getting Hegemony”; Wohlforth, “Stability”; Wohlforth, “Transatlantic Relations”; Wohlforth and Brooks, “American Primacy”.

⁸ G. John Ikenbery, “Getting Hegemony Right – analysis of the United States as a “hyperpower” nation”, *The National Interest*, No. 63, (Spring) 2001; Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment”; Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Revisited”.

⁹ Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism”; Krauthammer, “In Defence”; Kagan and Kristol, “The Present”.

¹⁰ Charles A. Kupchan, “After Pax Americana”, *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1998, p. 40-80; Ikenbery, “Getting Hegemony”; Wohlforth, “Stability”; Wohlforth, “Transatlantic Relations”; William C. Wohlforth and Stephen G. Brooks, “American Primacy in Perspective”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No.4, 2002 .

¹¹ He considered that there would be no rival to this Western confederation. Around it there would be periphery circles, made up of decommunizing states and developing states. As the periphery states liberalize economically and politically, they would become member of the unipolar center. Krauthammer, “Universal Dominion”; Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment”

¹² Wohlforth, “Stability”; Wohlforth, “Transatlantic Relations”.

¹³ Nye, “What new world”; Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment”

¹⁴ Wohlforth, “Stability”.

there were the United States, Europe and Japan. And at the bottom, there were transnational relations at several dimensions, where power was dispersed.¹⁵ Secondly, Kupchan argued that there would be regional unipolarity in the North America, Europe and Asia – naming “benign tripolarity”. According to Kupchan benign unipolarity was taking shape in the North America and Europe, but not yet in the East Asia. Thus, the United States needed to give importance to regional integration rather than global multilateralism.¹⁶ Thirdly, Huntington argued about a uni-multipolar world. He emphasized that there was a transition from a bipolar to a multipolar system following a brief ‘unipolar moment.’ He thought that there were other significant major powers though there was one superpower. He considered that if superpower was unwilling to cooperation, it runs the risk of becoming a ‘lonely superpower.’¹⁷ Thus, Huntington’s central thesis and antithesis on unilateralism was the United States, as the only superpower needs international cooperation, especially with Europe, if it was not to grow lonely and isolated.

In the last five years there is again an increasing concern whether the United States should act unilaterally or multilaterally in its foreign policy. Since 2001 there was a great change from “multilateral engagement” of the Clinton administration to “new unilateralism” of the Bush administration. Unilateralism is not a new approach for the US foreign policy. But as the Cold War ended we would have expected that it would be much easier to form multilateral cooperation against common threats. This paper focuses upon the changes in US foreign policy. It argues that 9/11 terrorism is not a cause in the change of US policy but rather an opportunity to change.

Multilateral engagement

Today, multilateralism requires first a commitment to work with international institutions especially working with the UN framework. Thus, multilateralism believes in “internationalism (the moral, legal and strategic primacy of international institutions over national interests).”¹⁸ Second, multilateralism requires a commitment to work with agreed norms and rules. Thus, multilateralism believes in “legalism (the belief that the sinews of stability are laws, treaties and binding international contracts).”¹⁹ In this sense, multilateralism can be defined in economic and political spheres. Considering

¹⁵ Nye, “Redefining”.

¹⁶ Kupchan, “After Pax Americana”.

¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Lonely Superpower”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 2, 1999, p. 35-49.

¹⁸ Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment revisited”.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

economic sphere it is associated with rules such as convertibility of national currencies and application of the most-favored-nation principle on a non-discriminatory basis. In the political sphere, it is associated with commitment to international treaties and international law. And finally, multilateralism requires commitment to cooperate so that preventive policies should not be contradictory such as happened between the EU and member states in the recent conflicts.

Throughout the Clinton presidency for two terms (1993-2001) involvement as opposed to isolationism remained preeminent in US foreign policy. In addition, generally he preferred a vision of multilateral cooperation, believing that new world order can be established by international cooperation. These intentions turned into strategies of engagement and enlargement. Engagement meant that the United States would not retreat into isolationism as the Cold War over. Linked to engagement, enlargement meant the United States would promote democracy, open market and other Western political, economic and social values.

As signs of his strategies, the Clinton administration pursued multilateral efforts to prevent the proliferation of WMD such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and played a major role in creating multilateral economic institutions and agreements such as the World Trade Organization and Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Yet, although the Cold War was over security continued to play a major role in US policy. Nuclear issues, NATO expansion, the bilateral security relationship with Russia, the Balkans conflicts, the Haitian crisis, the Arab Israeli peace process and China with the strategic implications of its growing economy and human rights violations were some of the central concerns. Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and containing the terrorist threat were also important security items.

New unilateralism

President Bush mentioned during his presidency campaign that national interest is more important than multilateral approach in foreign policy.²⁰ This approach in defense of primacy of the US national interest also supported that the United States should increase defense spending, have military-based policy of strength and the United States intervention for humanitarian crises should be rare.

The Bush administration's policies also signaled a renewed emphasis on unilateralism. There were early demonstrations of unilateral policy, which

²⁰ Condoleezza Rice, "Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 1, 2000.

shown that the Bush administration had not respected international organizations and rules such as: the United States refused to join the international ban on antipersonnel land mines, rejected the Kyoto Environmental Treaty on global warming, rejected an inspection and verification Protocol for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, withdrew from the International Criminal Court and 'Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty'.

The Bush administration's foreign policy priorities became much clearer after 9/11. The Bush administration intervened in 2001 to Afghanistan against Taliban and al Qaeda targets. Furthermore, the Bush administration declared that the US would take the war to states that aided or sheltered terrorists. In 2002, the US President has referred to Iraq, Iran and North Korea as the "axis of evil."²¹ In explaining why he employed this phrase, President Bush stated that these countries possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD); they had developed long-range missile technologies to launch such weapons and had regimes enabling them to employ such weapons through missiles and other means. Thus, the United States started to threaten Iraq that it would attack. Towards the end of 2002, the Bush administration presented "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America" (September 2002) as the main demonstration of the US unilateral policy.

Characteristics of new unilateralism:

1. Rethinking the policy of deterrence

Deterrence posited that weapons are necessary for to assure that no enemy would attack the United States or its allies. During the Cold War, deterrence heavily relied "on a readiness to retaliate with robust and survivable nuclear forces-in-being (long range bombers, ICBMs, and SLBMs)."²² However, the US-Soviet rivalry that dominated the deterrence theory for 40 years ended living its place to political, economic and military cooperation between the US and Russia starting in the 1990s. Put in another way, the US-Soviet bipolar deterrence relationship of the Cold War has been replaced by a group of states, non-state actors, such as terrorists, ethnic militias, cults, organized criminals, and drug smugglers.²³ Furthermore, neo-conservatives²⁴

²¹ In a speech the US president addressed the US Congress in January 29, 2002

²² Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., 2001. *Contending Theories of International Relations*, New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Fifth Edition, pp. 344-397.

²³ Victor D. Cha, "Globalization and the Study of International Security", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2000, p. 391-403.

have assumed that threat to the United States and the world can come from 'rouge states' such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea, weak and failed states like Afghanistan and Iraq, because they relate religious terrorism with the WMD. Thus, the meaning of threat has broadened after the Cold War.

This broadening was noted in the NSS of the US. The NSS states that failed or rouge states pose a danger like strong states during the Cold War. The United States applied deterrence policy against strong states, but this policy considered not applicable and reliable against these unfamiliar enemies. There is a complex challenge to deterrence, therefore "the possibility of deterrence failure will increase."²⁵ The administration appears less confident that deterrence alone can protect the United States and its allies. As we have observed Al'Qaeda was not deterred by the US military capabilities.

If deterrence cannot work alone, the administration suggests preemption. The NSS asserts the right for pre-emption and no restraint on the US power. Furthermore, it looks for alliance but will not be constrained by alliance. It prefers 'coalitions of willing' rather than traditional alliance.

In short, there are four factors that led the Bush administration to reconsider its deterrence policies and see preemption as an alternative. The first reason is the United States can prevent attacks by "destroying opponents or opponents' capabilities to achieve their objectives." Second, deterrence does not work against terrorists. Third, due to 9/11, there is little toleration inside the administration for 'wait and see policy'. Fourth, earlier nonproliferation efforts failed to stop countries such as North Korea and Iraq to acquire WMD and thus still pose threats to international security. Under these circumstances, the Bush administration adapted a new doctrine to meet new dangers.²⁶

2. *Pre-emptive strike:*

It is apparent that there was a shift in the US policy of containment and deterrence applied during the Cold War with a new policy of pre-emptive attack on enemy state developing WMD.²⁷ Preemption is "the use of military force in

²⁴ Today generally, the policies undertaken by the Bush administration are labeled as neo-conservative.

²⁵ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001

²⁶ Wirtz, James J. and James A. Russell (Spring 2003), "U.S. Policy on Preventive War and Preemption", *The Nonproliferation Review*

²⁷ According to the US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military Terms (2003), preemptive war is defined, "as an attack initiated on the basis of incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent." Thus, preemptive war is waged in an attempt to repel or defeat an imminent offensive or invasion. However, there is debate if US policy is preemptive or preventive. According to the NSS (2002), the United States

advance of a first use of force by the enemy.”²⁸ It is an act of “anticipatory self-defense in a war initiated by the enemy.”²⁹ The important characteristic of preemptive war is that it sees a necessity- considering it is certain that attack will occur and the use of force by other state is imminent. Thus, it considers that a war is unavoidable and has to make the first strike. Preemptive attack is launched only after the state being attacked has either initiated or has given a clear indication that it will initiate an attack.³⁰

After 9/11 terrorist attacks, US security policy is to apply pre-emptive strike in order to prevent acts of terrorism, which is spelled out in many statements.³¹ This policy has been used as a justification for military intervention in Iraq. A link has been made between rouge states, terrorist groups and the WMD. It is warned that terrorists could now attack the United States with the WMD through their rouge allies. In 2003, the Bush administration pointed Iraq and identified Iraq as the most dangerous rouge state with WMD. It is considered that Iraq continues to produce and possess WMD and it has links with terrorist organizations, including al Qaeda. There was an increasing risk that Iraq or al Qaeda can attack with WMD against the United States or its allies. Thus, the fact that Iraq is a producer of WMD, and even of trying to produce nuclear weapons, possessing such weapons and their means of delivery, and that such weapons posed a significant threat to the world, furthermore, the Iraqi administration is considered unreliable were the reasons for military intervention in Iraq.

There were also other reasons for military intervention in Iraq, such as the need for the Middle Eastern oil, the security of the Persian Gulf and Israel, which the United States considers as a threat to American oil-based economy and to American security. Moreover, it is noted that the Bush strategy in the

will fight with terrorists and enemies having weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and will act against those threats before they are fully formed.

²⁸ Anthony Arend, (Spring 2003), “International Law and Preemptive Use of Military Force”, *The Washington Quarterly*, 26(2): 89-103.

²⁹ Betts, Richard K. (Jan/Feb 2003a), “Suicide from Fear or Death”, *Foreign Affairs*, 82(1), EBShost, April 20, 2005

³⁰ On the other hand, preventive war is a war used by a state under the assumption of preventive self-defense. It is assumed that war is ultimately inevitable. It is better to face earlier, when chances of military success are greater. But there is no certainty that war is inevitable. Betts, Richard K. (02, March 2003b), “Striking First: A History of Thankfully Lost opportunities”, *Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs*, on Carnegie Council web site (<http://www.carnegiecouncil.org>)

³¹ “*The National Security Strategy of the United States (NSS)*” issued by the Bush administration (*September 2002*), from World Wide Web page [Http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html).

Middle East depends on the assumptions that the status quo in the Middle East requires to be changed, Iraq's WMD poses threat, there is a need to push for Israeli-Palestinian peace and regime change, as well as promote democracy and freedom in the region.³²

Though there are other reasons for intervention, what we shall emphasize here is that the threat presented by the WMD and availability of these WMD to rouge and failed states as well as terrorist organizations present a threat to US homeland during the peacetime. Thus, there is a change in international security threats. Traditionally it was considered the WMD would be last resort to be used during the wartime. Now it is considered that they can be employed during the peacetime and against US homeland. Moreover, its effects will be severe. Thus, traditional deterrence conceptions are found insufficient alone for today's threats. For these reasons there was a shift towards preemption. In other words, what is new was to link the WMD, rouge and failed states and terrorists with importance of preemption.

There is a great emphasis in the US statements on the right of self-defense for military action. The administration argues that the nature of WMD, plus the emergence of international terrorist groups that may strike without warning, radically changes the situation with regard to defining imminent attack and thus, justify a pre-emptive attack. They claimed right to the military action against its enemies. They stated that the US "must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capacities and objectives of today's adversaries."³³

3. The Emphasis on the US power

The United States declared that they enjoy "a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence" in the National Security Strategy. It is hard to challenge US unilateralism, because the United States is the only country with military, diplomatic, economic, technological and political power, thus, can act unilaterally.³⁴ Based on military power-overwhelming nuclear superiority and having the world's dominant air force and navy, the United States has worldwide intervention capacity. There is increasing military spending and arms programs (spends more than 300 billion

³² Gordon, Philip H., Spring 2003. "Bush's Middle East Vision", *Survival*, 45(1): 155-165.

³³ "The National Security Strategy of the United States (NSS)" issued by the Bush administration (September 2002), from World Wide Web page [Http: // www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html).

³⁴ Ikenbery, "Getting Hegemony"; Wohlforth, "Stability"; Wohlforth, "Transatlantic Relations"; G. John Ikenbery, "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" *Perspectives on Politics*, No. 1, 2003, p. 533-550.

\$ per year on defense) in the United States. Meanwhile, as Nye³⁵ stresses on the importance of soft power, the United States also has cultural power- seeing American values and ideals are essentially universal, thus can advance them in universal interest.³⁶ The notion that the United States is, and should strive to remain, the world's only superpower has become widely accepted among neo-conservatives.

The neoconservatives believe that the US behaves unilaterally because it can. Yet, US power is not unlimited, but it is unprecedented – too powerful to counterbalance, there can be no other major power against the United States. Others such as Germany and Japan have economic power, Britain and France have diplomatic power, Russia has military, diplomatic and technological power, but non-have them have sufficient to be first rate-power. China is still a developing country in terms of both economic and military capabilities and 'Europe' also does not yet act as a single power as observed in the Gulf Crisis in 1991 and Iraq intervention 2003, lacks the political unity to act as a single global power.³⁷ Thus, they cannot challenge American primacy. Furthermore, the United States has dominance over the leadership of IMF; globalization spreads American values and favors American interests.³⁸ Thus, these will further promote American unilateralism.

4. Will to act alone

The United States prefers to cooperate with other nations, but if necessary will act alone. The United States will work with 'coalition partners' to fight with terror. In a speech given on April 22, 2002, Richard Haass, Director of the Policy Planning Staff, U.S. Department of State underlined the United States can and will act alone when necessary,³⁹ indicating unilateralism. He also stated

³⁵ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. "What new world order?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2, 1992, p. 83-96; Joseph S. Nye, Jr. "Redefining the National Interest", Vol. 78, No. 4, 1999, p. 22-35; Joseph S. Nye, Jr. "Seven Tests: Between concert and unilateralism – international relations", *The National Interest*, No. 66, (Winter) 2001, p. 5-13.

³⁶ Nye, a former official in the Clinton-era Pentagon and who is the Dean of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, argues that the United States have to learn to use power wisely, both 'traditional power' and 'soft power', the notion that nontraditional forces such as cultural and commercial goods can exert influence in world affairs. See Joseph S. Nye, Jr. "Limits of American Power", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 117, No: 4, Winter 2002/3

³⁷ Nye, "What new world"; Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment"; Ikenbery, "Getting Hegemony"; Wohlforth and Brooks, "American Primacy".

³⁸ Ikenbery, "Getting Hegemony".

³⁹ Richard Haass, "Defining U.S. Foreign Policy in a Post-Cold War World", *Foreign Policy Analysis Arthur Ross Lecture*, (April 22, 2002), available at World Wide Web page ([http:// www.fpa.org](http://www.fpa.org))

that due to differences in capabilities, location, foreign policy outlook, and domestic concerns, the United States should expect the US coalitions to be dynamic that will change through time. Thus, the Bush administration has a vision they will find allies/friends as “the mission determines the coalition”.⁴⁰ Moreover, President Bush has given *anti-terrorism ultimatum* to any state aiding or harboring terrorism.

5. *Emphasis on Democracy*

New unilateralism advocates promoting and advancing democracy and preserving peace by the United States being of last resort. According to the NSS, the United States “will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets and free trade to every corner of the world.” Since neo-cons related 9/11 terrorism to radical Islam, the US advanced a policy to create democratic political institution in Afghanistan and Iraq and furthermore throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Thus, during the Bush administration democratic transformation became the main pillar of the US foreign policy. According to Krauthammer this is acting unilaterally for global ends.⁴¹ Furthermore, Krauthammer argues that multilateralism imposed on the United States would restrain its power by creating reduction in American freedom of action.⁴² He states that the United States should support democracy against the Arab-Islamic totalitarianism in order to overthrow them.⁴³ In short, today, neo-conservatives try to use the US power to shape the Middle East according to the United States interests, focused on promoting democracy in the Arab and Muslim world, which Ikenberry (2003) calls it as “ a neo—imperial foreign policy.” Their policy to achieve these goals is unilateral.

Unilateral policy advocated by neo-cons in the Middle East seems a change in the US former policy, which has supported its allies in the Middle East region. However, we should also note that the US has also other priorities in the region than promoting democracy and the elimination of the threat of terrorism and the spread of WMD⁴⁴ such as the achievement of peace between

⁴⁰ Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment revisited”; Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism”; Krauthammer, “In Defence”.

⁴¹ Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment revisited”;

⁴² Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism”;

⁴³ Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism”; Krauthammer, “In Defence of Democratic Realism”.

⁴⁴ In general, the United States seems to have several goals overall in the Middle East. First of all we have to mention that the United States started to talk about a wider Middle East – as including North Africa, Northeast Africa, Near East, Middle East. They have determined terrorists or rouge states in this region which they consider posing threat. The US State Department in the beginning of 2001 announced that five of

the two states, Israel and Palestine and control of the Persian Gulf region and its oil supplies. Thus, war against international terrorism and promoting democracy are not their only policies though Afghanistan and then Iraq can be seen as a part of this general policy.

Neo-cons unilateral foreign policy seems to be using realism together with the emphasis on the promotion of democracy. Especially Krauthammer has united the two theories when he named his own policy as democratic realism that is made up of unification of liberalism and realism.⁴⁵ Krauthammer stated that the United States should engage in the world only selectively, need for “geopolitical strategic necessity as a condition for intervention.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, the sole goal of the United States should not be promotion of democracy in the post-communist world. He stated that

“The spread of democracy is not just an end but a means, an indispensable means for securing American interests. The reason is simple. Democracies are inherently more friendly to the United States, less belligerent to their neighbors, and generally more inclined to peace.”⁴⁷

Today the United States aims to shape the Middle East by promoting democracy in the Arab and Muslim world. President Bush said in a speech February 2004, where he discussed the importance of democracy in the Middle East:

America is pursuing a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East. We're challenging the enemies of reform, confronting the allies of terror, and expecting a higher standard from our friends. For too long, American policy looked away while men and women were oppressed, their rights ignored and their hopes stifled. That era is over, and we can be confident. As in Germany,

the countries giving support to terror are located in the Middle East and North Africa: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan. Others in the list of terrorist states are North Korea and Cuba.

⁴⁵ Krauthammer, “Universal Dominion”. After the end of the Cold War, Krauthammer defended ‘democratic globalism’, that is ‘making the spread of democracy, the success of liberty, the ends and means of American foreign policy’. Yet, he stated that it must be targeted, focused and limited. Fourteen years later he described this as more realistic which Krauthammer calls as ‘democratic realism.’ See Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism”; Krauthammer, “In Defence of Democratic Realism”.

⁴⁶ Krauthammer, “In Defence of Democratic Realism”.

⁴⁷ Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism”.

and Japan, and Eastern Europe, liberty will overcome oppression in the Middle East.⁴⁸

Thus, the Bush administration believes and emphasizes that the democratic Iraq will contribute to transformation of the Middle East – establishment of democracy in the region, though this assumption is debatable. However, the Bush administration “understates the price the United States pays in Arab and in world public opinion.”⁴⁹ Though the Bush administration is worried about the increase of negative sentiments in the Muslim world towards the United States related to its unilateral policies.⁵⁰ It might restrain the US power and unilateral policies. Meanwhile the head of the states which have given support to the US under the ‘coalition of willing’ have been blamed and criticized by their own public such as the example of Tony Blair.

Critiques of New Unilateralism

There are arguments that might be read as implied critiques of the apparent recent shift in American strategy toward unilateralism. ‘American Empire’ and ‘the new imperialism’ are the terms associated with a radical critique of US foreign policy.⁵¹

Liberal internationalist school of US foreign policy supported multilateralism, which has dominated the Clinton years. Both unilateralists and multilateralists except the United States as a superpower but differ in the ways in which the United States should continue to build the world order. Unilateralist approach is more like realism argue that ‘ultimate power is what matters’, while multilateralists argue for restriction on use of power. This vision has been dominant in Europe as well as of the Democratic Party in the United States⁵² that is advocating commitment to multilateralism and international law and the UN approval for the Iraq war. In general Europeans preferred multilateral institutions though Britain’s views tended to be closer to the Bush administration. Besides Britain and Australia, there was opposition to the

⁴⁸ “President Bush Discusses Importance of Democracy in Middle East”, Library of Congress Washington, D.C., February 2004, available at <http://www.whitehouse.com>

⁴⁹ Philip H. Gordon, “Bush’s Middle East Vision”, *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 1, 2003, p. 155-165.

⁵⁰ When there increased negative feelings in Turkey in the early 2005, US has been really worried.

⁵¹ See for details Michael Cox, “Empire by Denial? Debating the US Power”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 2, 2004, p. 228-236.

⁵² Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment revisited”; Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism”.

United States intervention in Iraq, thus, people did not believe in the legitimacy of the United States behavior. “This is not because the Security Council failed to endorse the war, but because many of our friends did not trust (the United States) us, that is the Bush administration...”⁵³ Legitimacy of the United States is decreasing while they choose unilateral intervention.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Europeans were saying attacking Iraq was wrong, rather than only legitimacy.⁵⁵

The United States have especially failed to win legitimacy, because the threat of the Soviet Union disappeared at the end of the Cold War, and there was no one challenging the United States dominance. Nevertheless, we can say that according to the US foreign policies after the Cold war radical Islam is competing with liberal concepts of democracy rather than communism versus democracy. Currently the United States has to deal with the issues in the Middle East rather than in Europe (being different than it was in the Cold War), but many differences exist with the rest of the world on how to deal.⁵⁶ Thus, the United States might look as an empire tempted to expand its control. Thus, the attitude of European intellectuals toward the American superpower especially of Germany is to view the US hegemony or superiority as imperialism rather than benevolent hegemon.⁵⁷

If we consider the United States as a benign hegemon, the United States should play by multilateral rules and cooperate with other states, i.e., other states are drawn into partnerships and consult with other governments, listen to allies. The United States should pursue its economic and security goals through joint or multilateral decision-making exercises.⁵⁸ Thus, joint decision-making and institutional rules and institutions would restrain the US power.⁵⁹ Based on these, the US benign hegemony would be legitimate and stable⁶⁰, though Krauthammer argues that benign unipolarity is “far more likely to keep the peace.”⁶¹

There are also some arguments criticizing the Bush administration’s policy of unilateralism and preventive war though considering the Iraq war was

⁵³ Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment”.

⁵⁴ Stefano Guzzini, “Foreign Policy Without Diplomacy: The Bush Administration at a Crossroads”, *International Relations*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2002, p. 291-297.

⁵⁵ Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment”.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Franz Nuscheler, “Multilateralism versus Unilateralism”, *Policy Paper 16 of the Development and Peace Foundation*, January, 2001.

⁵⁸ Ikenbery, “Getting Hegemony”; Kupchan, “After Pax Americana”.

⁵⁹ For example, the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, the NATO, the WTO are multilateral institutions that provide rule-based structure for political and economic relations.

⁶⁰ Ikenbery, “Getting Hegemony”;

⁶¹ Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment revisited”.

right.⁶² They tend to say that the Bush administration failed in coalition building and need to pay more attention to multilateral approach and use of diplomacy. Among the neo-conservatives there was also different approaches. For example, Fukuyama questions the United States ability to transform Iraq into a Western-style democracy,” and “and to go on from there to democratize the broader Middle East.” Culturally it would be difficult to establish democracy in the Middle East.⁶³ Spreading democracy in the Middle East is ‘more prayer than analysis’.⁶⁴ The Bush administration “underestimates the difficulties inherent in democratization”.⁶⁵ The United States needs to develop a “more complex strategy” rather than using “sticks and carrots” in dealing with the Middle East. The United States should not be inclined to use pre-emptive policy all the time because it will create resistance to the United States policies and frighten most of the world.⁶⁶ Fukuyama advises another way of dealing with the world: work of diplomacy and coalition building. The United States should try to build new global institutions that are based on norms and values the United States shares. If it cannot build up such institutions than should try for coalition building. Nation building is a difficult job; the United States needs to be better prepared for nation building.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the United States did not have a good record of nation building,⁶⁸ and it would be difficult for nation building in the Middle East.⁶⁹ Thus, among neo-conservatives there were also some debates in their unilateral approaches.⁷⁰

⁶² Scott B. Lakensky, “Right war, Wrong Doctrine”, *The Jerusalem Post*, March 30, 2003.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Morton Abramowitz, “Does Iraq Matter?” *The National Interest*, No. 75, (Spring) 2004, p. 39-44.

⁶⁵ Gordon, “Bush’s Middle East Vision”.

⁶⁶ Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment”

⁶⁷ Francis Fukuyama, “Nation-Building 101”, *The Atlantic Monthly*, January 20, 2004a; Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment”

⁶⁸ Francis Fukuyama, “Beyond our shores”, *The Wall Street Journal*, December 24, 2002. Nation-building has two phases, the first, post conflict reconstruction and the second, the transition to self-sustaining indigenous institutions, both are difficult. Actually, the Bush administration did not have a framework policy of nation-building and did not use the past experiences of Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosova and was not prepared for nation-building. See Fukuyama, “Nation-Building 101”.

⁶⁹ Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment”.

⁷⁰ On the other hand, Krauthammer wrote that Fukuyama’s “intent is to take down the entire neo-conservative edifice”, thus, Krauthammer considers that Fukuyama pulled out of the neo-conservative approach. Krauthammer, “In Defence of Democratic Realism”.

Conclusion

In short, after the National Security Strategy (NSS) issued by the Bush administration (2002), the US strategy became a product of neo-conservatives who are advocating unilateralism. The last example of US unilateral approach is observed in Iraq intervention in 2003 when the US embarked a war with Iraq in spite of the UN and its allies' opposition.⁷¹ When Dick Cheney -Vice President, Donald Rumsfeld-Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz-Deputy Defense Secretary that served in the President Bush senior's administration pushed for war and regime change in Iraq, neo-conservatives in general supported them and supported fight against terrorism, regime change by using power, plus new order to be established in the Middle East. Yet, "Americans remain divided on how to engage the world."⁷² Inside and outside the United States it is debated whether the United States unilaterally can judge if a country is supporting terrorism and can decide on preemption. Especially two different approaches of unilateralists and multilateralists present different choices for the US position.

What does our discussion tell us about US foreign policy in the post 9/11? It confirms that as many academicians and media have written US foreign policy is shaped by new unilateralist approach. Furthermore, analysis of the Bush administration foreign policy after 9/11 shows several priorities. First they have replaced diplomacy and negotiations with military force or power. Secondly, they reject partnership, institutions, international treaties and the rule of law, because they want to make the US unbound from these restrictions or constraints on the US freedom of action. Third, they have created 'coalition of willing'. It looks for alliance but will not be constrained by alliance. It prefers 'coalitions of willing' rather than traditional alliance. Fourth, they have followed a policy of regime change with dreams of democratizing the Middle East. In the aftermath of 9/11, the policy was put into effect via the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The goal was not merely to oust the Taliban from power, to kill or capture al-Qaeda leaders and personnel and eliminate Saddam's regime and his claimed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). It also involved another, more ambitious, objective: redrawing of the political map in the Middle East towards the establishment of pro-democracy, pro-America governments. Fifth, instead of deterrence and containment they focused on pre-emption. The NSS asserts the right for pre-emption and no restraint on the US power. Sixth, they see the US as a unique global power and want others know it

⁷¹ In 1991 Gulf War there was a coalition among many countries under the leadership of the US. However, in 2003 Iraq war, 'coalition of partners' has not been supported by many countries.

⁷² Ibid.

so. Seventh, they have made ties with WMD and terrorism and determined to prevent terrorists groups from achieving WMD. Eighth, they have emphasized security of homeland. Finally, they have used these policies for especially two major aims. One is to make the world more secure for the US; and second to create peace, democracy and liberal economy, which will in turn serve the US interests.

As a result, the attack on the homeland of the US in 9/11 and challenges of post 9/11 security environment seems to be reinforcing a strategy- new unilateralism based on the US unipolar power. Yet, outside the US, there are growing concerns about US unilateralism. In addition to the war on terrorism, there was also other body of evidence in international agreements that US reverted to unilateralism. Furthermore, many analysts believed that US intentions in the Middle East was unilateralist. Their intentions in Iraq seem as a desire to control oil production rather than for humanitarian needs and democratization or control of WMD. Besides it is considered that Iraq's WMD and missile capability have been potential risks rather than urgent threats, because what make potential threats concrete are political intentions rather than technical capability. Thus, negative feelings against US intervention increased. Some of the main critics against US unilateral policy are the need for cooperation in fighting against terrorism, on the legitimacy of the US actions, the development of negative world public opinion towards US unilateralism and the difficulties in democratization of the Middle East. Nevertheless, with the preponderance of the United States military, diplomatic, economic technological and political power, it is difficult to have multilateral global governance against the will of the United States.

In short, there is tension between unilateralism and multilateralism in American foreign policy. In the post-9/11 era we have observed a resurgence of unilateralist preferences in the US foreign policy. With unilateralist foreign policy, it seems that the US put global terrorism issues over other global problems and they have related terrorism with the radical Islam and the WMD. As a final world, the debate over US unilateral foreign policy will continue.

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