



INSTITUTO PORTUGUÊS DE RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS
UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA

WORKING PAPER 14

Striking First: The Use of Force in Post-Cold War American Foreign Policy

Vasco Rato,

Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais-Universidade Nova de Lisboa

The cataclysm unleashed by al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001 generated what by now has become a familiar mantra: the attacks changed the world to such a degree that nothing would “ever again” be as before.ⁱⁱ Yet the notion that 9/11 permanently and substantially altered international affairs is considerably more apparent than real. To the extent that American security concerns and grand strategy underwent a fundamental shift as compared to the Cold War paradigm, 9/11 did in fact originate a profound impact on world affairs. Nonetheless, the attacks merely catapulted to the top of the President Bush’s policy agenda a number of tendencies already manifest since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some of the Bush Administration’s responses – in terms of both rhetoric and policy - constituted an undeniably radical departure from the approaches of the bipolar era. Yet the claim that “nothing would be as before” was hyperbolic in that the nature of international politics – the unceasing, ever-changing equilibrium between cooperation and conflict – remains largely unchanged since Thucydides set out to record the history of the Peloponnesian War. While 9/11 demonstrated that security threats have mutated since the end of the Cold War, the logic of international politics endures.

One of the fundamental tenants of both realism and neoliberal institutionalism – the two dominant international relations theory paradigms - posits that anarchy is the structuring principle of international politics.ⁱⁱⁱ Such a characterization is meant to denote that the behaviour of the main actors (states) in the present international system is grounded in “self-help”. Self-help signifies that states cannot rely upon a common power for the preservation of their security. That is, in a “self-help” environment security is ultimately derived from, and guaranteed by, the capabilities of states themselves. This anarchy, in turn, generates the security dilemma.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ The “security dilemma” concept conveys the following problem in international relations: since states must rely upon themselves for guaranteeing their security, they invariably respond to capabilities rather than to intentions. However, states’ perceptions of threats, and the responses articulated to address those threats, lead, paradoxically, to a spiral of insecurity. For example, if a state reinforces its military capacities to diminish the threat that it believes to be posed by a neighbouring country’s capabilities, the second country interprets those defensive measures as an

offensive act, as a threat to its security. In other words, because threats emerge from capabilities rather than from intentions, an action of a defensive nature taken by state A is perceived as offensive by state B. In sum, the security dilemma results when states seeking to bolster their security take actions that actually exacerbate the insecurity of their neighbours, thus leading to a spiral of insecurity.

The “security dilemma” concept is indispensable if the role of force in world politics is to be accurately appreciated. Since national security is fundamentally determined by state capabilities, the security dilemma may be diminished; but never can it be entirely transcended by statements of good-will, treaties, international law, international institutions or other such instruments of inter-state cooperation. This is not to suggest that these and countless other instruments fostering cooperation are valueless. To the extent that they diminish the security dilemma, these mechanisms are of the utmost utility. But because these instruments lessen rather than abolish the security dilemma, states do not relinquish their inherent right to self-defence, their right to resort to force when all other options are exhausted. In short, state survival is ultimately dependent upon force. And since it is an instrument of last resort employed when mechanisms of cooperation fail to achieve states’ security needs, force can never be entirely eliminated from international affairs.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the American view of force following the end of the Cold War, and the responses given by George Bush’s Administration to the post-9/11 international security environment. Accordingly, but prior to analyzing the preemptive war problematic, an evaluation of American foreign policy objectives, as well as the role of force in their achievement, will be undertaken.

The Role of Force

A curious paradox informs contemporary thinking about world affairs: despite the wide acceptance of the security dilemma and its consequences by international relations theorists and practitioners, public opinion in democratic

societies has ceased to regard war as a “normal” phenomenon in world politics. Democratic regimes continue to wage wars, and, when hostilities ensue, public opinion not infrequently approves of the decision. But war – at least major war – has come to be understood as an abnormal, primitive instrument for resolving conflict. A number of theories purporting to account for this contemporary *Zeitgeist* have been advanced.

A group of scholars alleges that complex interdependence – or, in its regional expression, integration – makes war excessively costly (in a material as well as a human sense) for it to be contemplated as a normal extension of politics.^[iv] Advocates of complex interdependence do not necessarily argue that war is inherently abnormal in the sense that “Humanity” has developed some type of post-war ethic relegating major conflict to the dustbin of History. The claim is considerably more modest: the probability of major war involving interdependent societies is reduced because the costs are enormous. In sum, the claim is that rational self-interest will impose itself upon other logics that may lead to the outbreak of major war.

Apparently, the theory corresponds to reality: interdependent states have not engaged in major war since 1945. However, and as much as it may seem counterintuitive, a more historically distanced appraisal reveals that interdependence is not always an inhibitor to war. For instance, on the eve of World War I, the level of interdependence in Europe was, arguably, as intense as it is today. Yet interdependence proved insufficient to avoid the cataclysm of 1914. Perhaps the analytical error resides in the conviction that war results from rational calculation; indeed, from the dubious belief that war is necessarily and in all cases an irrational state policy. To put the matter simply: states have often won considerable advantage through war. War may in fact be rational since the immediate costs of waging it are outweighed by future gains. Winston Churchill’s call for a preventative war against Nazi Germany exemplifies such a calculation, as does the 1967 Israeli decision to strike preemptively against its Arab enemies. Finally, empirical studies suggest that rationality breaks down during moments of crisis, not least of all because errors of perception and judgement inevitably flow from the imperfect information available at such

times.^[vi] Miscalculation leading to the outbreak of hostilities is frequent, and, since information is always imperfect, rational decisions grounded in partial information may actually lead to the outbreak of war.^[vii]

A second argument suggests that major war may be superseded through democratization.^[viii] Interdemocratic peace theories – irrespective of the nuances that distinguish the assorted approaches – maintain that democratic regimes do not wage war against other democratic regimes. Empirically, the finding is non-controversial; democratic countries have, in fact, not waged war against each other. Yet, the crucial question is: why not? Democratic peace theorists attribute the absence of inter-democratic war to values, norms and institutions (or any combination of these) specific to pluralistic regimes. Yet, alternative causal relationships may be advanced to explain the absence of major war between democracies. For example, it is possible to suggest that the inexistence of inter-democratic war stems from the fact that the overwhelming majority of post-1945 pluralist regimes – facing the imminent threat posed by the Soviet Union and its allies - sought a security guarantee from the Atlantic Alliance.^[ix] Simply put, it was the security community embodied by NATO – rather than interdependence or European integration - that maintained the peace between democratic nations.

Ultimately, it is impossible to determine unequivocally which variable - NATO or democratic regime-type - was determinant for preserving the peace in the latter half of the XX century. But while the democratic peace argument remains inconclusive – at least until further historical evidence is accumulated -, it is reasonably safe to conclude that democratic regimes are more inclined towards cooperation than other regime types. Consequently, and even though democracies do not eliminate the security dilemma, democratization contributes to the peace in that accountable governments tend to be more transparent in their intentions and, thus, the threshold for trust between democracies – and, therefore, greater cooperation – increases through the reiteration fostered by democracy.^[ix] For this reason alone, democratization reinforces regional security.

A third argument, most famously presented by John Muller, claims that major war has been historically superseded, that it is obsolescent.^[xi] In the aftermath of the devastation produced by the Second World War, war as an institution became discredited and then obsolescent as had slavery, another historical institution that Muller sees as having been overcome as a result of attitudes. Peace was generated by a human aversion to war. Analyzing war in this manner raises another issue: if attitudes in the developing world have led to the discrediting of major, new wars in the periphery conducted by those some developing countries have certainly become common in the post-1991 period.^[xii] Indeed, preemption has arisen from the need to address those emerging conflicts and the consequences they produce.

These and other arguments suggesting an end to major war are, at best, overly optimistic.^[xiii] Such claims are underpinned by the presupposition that the “normality” of the Cold War is susceptible of being projected into the future. Put simply, the underlying assumption of these theories is that politics in the future will, essentially, mirror present tendencies. Ruptures are, for all intents and purposes, dismissed. Yet, realist and neo-realist scholars, emphasizing the import of the balance of power, suggest a rather more prudent conclusion. Realists point out that an overturning of the balance of power compromises stability in the international system, a development leading to what Robert Gilpin has termed “hegemonic war”.^[xiv] Flowing from this insight, it may be concluded that the present stability of the international system owes much to the preponderance of power held by the United States; that is, to unipolarity.^[xv] However, challenges to unipolarity by major powers seeking to fashion a new balance – whether it be bipolar or multipolar – contains the predictable risk of unleashing hegemonic war.^[xvi]

While realists are correct in pointing out that major war derives from systemic causes, and, therefore, cannot be excluded in the future, it also seems evident that major war has ceased to be part of “normal” state practise. The recognition that major war is infrequent is not synonymous with the belief that war has ceased to be any less of a political concern. Major war has given place to “new wars” driven by religious extremism, inter-ethnic conflict, state

disintegration and a host of other causes.^[xvi] Violence thus continues to be endemic to international politics. The diminished probability of major war, coupled with the emergence of new patterns of political violence, obliges us to rethink the traditional mechanisms used to preserve the peace. Specifically, a unipolar international system, conjugated with novel – and, crucially, non-state - threats such as al-Qaeda-style megaterrorism, make it impossible to continue to conceptualize force in Cold War terms. Faced with the necessity to establish new rules governing the legitimate use of force, the United States has been stymied by Cold War norms that most states see as a means of binding the American colossus. To a large extent, American views on the use of force over the last decade and a half have constituted attempts to provide an answer to this challenge.

Evidently, force is inherent to international politics; but it is equally plain that force must be managed so as to afford maximum systemic stability. Effective rules and norms governing the use of force reduce anarchy, and, in that manner, contribute to the preservation of the peace.^[xvii] From a normative perspective, it also seems uncontroversial to acknowledge the inherent desirability of developing rules delineating the conditions under which force is to be legitimately employed. But while there is general agreement as to the desirability of these rules, controversy permeates the discussion relative to the specific rules deemed desirable. Indeed, in the aftermath of September 11 calamity, the debate surrounding the legitimate use of force in international relations intensified as policymakers and commentators, both within and outside the US, voiced their distress over the Bush Administration's public willingness to resort to preemptive force.

Not an insignificant amount of this angst stemmed from a commonly held assumption: "preemption" and "prevention" are one and the same. But if President Bush's view of national security and the role of force in achieving it are to be comprehended properly – that is, if the aim is to understand what the Bush Administration actually advocates as opposed to what is often inaccurately ascribed to the White House -, it must first be acknowledged that prevention and preemption are far from synonymous concepts.

Richard N. Haas provides a useful distinction between the two concepts. Preventive wars are defined as “those that seek to either stop another state or party from developing a military capability before it becomes threatening or to hobble or destroy it thereafter”.^[xviii] In contradistinction, preemptive uses of force come against a backdrop of tactical intelligence or warning indicating imminent military action by an adversary”.^[xix] In sum, preemptive war rests on the belief of imminence, and, for this reason, has usually been deemed as an act of legitimate self-defense.

Following from this clarification, it is unproblematic to suggest that a state may achieve preemption without resorting to military force.^[xx] Economic sanctions, for instance, exemplify the type of non-military means available for securing preemptive outcomes. Although historical cases involving the use of preemptive non-military means are widespread, even if the efficiency of such means has proven extremely limited, this paper will restrict itself to addressing the use of military force. After all, it was the potential use of military preemption that caused such controversy when the Bush White House issued the National Security Strategy. Still, in the interest of avoiding distortion, it is useful to once again emphasize the fact that military action is a last resort and, as such, constitutes an exception to regular state practice.

State use of preemptive military force in the post-1945 period is not unprecedented, and, before that date, was a rather common occurrence in international relations. In the Cold War era, the most widely referred case is the Israeli decision to initiate the 1967 Six Day War.^[xxi] And although not a technical instance of preemptive war, Tel Aviv’s 1981 air strike against Iraq’s Osirak nuclear facility was an unequivocal instance of preemptive use of military force. In addition to actual cases of preemptive action, there are numerous examples of situations when policymakers contemplated resorting to preemption. The Kennedy Administration considered a military invasion of Cuba during the 1962 October Crisis, but, instead, imposed a naval blockade that, arguably, could be deemed to be an act of war under international law. President Kennedy justified the option by pointing out that Soviet missiles discovered in Cuba amounted to an imminent danger compromising the

security of the United States. Finally, and most importantly, the United States, throughout the duration of the Cold War, never formally excluded the preemptive war option; indeed, to assure the continued credibility of its nuclear deterrence policy, Washington systematically rejected calls for the unilateral abandonment of a nuclear first strike option.

Still, an assessment of the Cold War decades cannot but conclude that actual instances of preemptive military force were infrequent. The reason for such exceptionality resides in the specific configuration of the bipolar order. Since the possibility of escalation could not be excluded, the superpowers generally refrained from employing preemptive force because of the tremendous risk of transforming a local conflict into a global, superpower confrontation. As a consequence, superpower stability was underpinned by a host of international norms making the preemptive use of force a risky, and largely illegitimate, undertaking. Indeed, the Cold War nuclear balance of power reinforced the norm making self-defence the principal cause justifying the use of force. Post-1945 international norms delegitimated preemptive force; but those norms were perpetuated because the bipolar balance of power made their violation a costly undertaking. In other words, normative regulation mirrored the raw realities of power.

At this point, objections may be raised. For instance, it may be argued that norms deligitimating the use of preemptive force – inherently indicative of a more enlightened form of structuring behaviour between states – are expressive of “progress” in international affairs. Normative observations of this nature are common, and, perhaps even compelling; but, ultimately, such crude ahistoricism utterly fails to appreciate the symbiotic relation between norms and power. Stated simply, normative arguments of this type neglect the fact that international norms are sustained by power. But if that is so, profound alterations in the balance of power - such as the transition from bipolarity to unipolarity - invariably lead to a reformulation of international norms in accordance with new power realities. Applying this proposition to contemporary world politics, it is natural to expect that the systemic shift towards unipolarity would necessarily be accompanied by an alteration of norms structuring the

behaviour of states. That is, the United States would invariably seek to define norms facilitating its autonomy of action, and, as a corollary, strive to modify existing Cold War (bipolar) norms constraining its ability to pursue its international goals and priorities. To a large extent, this is precisely what has occurred over the last decade. Indeed, the Bush Doctrine may be understood as the climax of an American grand strategy posture in the making since the end of the Cold War.

The use of force was a rather predictable affair throughout the Cold War period as the United Nations Charter emerged as the primary codification of the norms regulating the use of force between states.^[xxii] Rooted in a doctrine of collective security, the Charter legitimated the use of force for purposes of self-defence. Indeed, Article 2(4) of the Charter prohibits the use of force between states, albeit recognizing two exceptions. The first is the right to self-defence, as per Article 51; the second is the collective security provisions stipulated by Chapter VII. Article 51 has generally been interpreted in minimalist terms; that is, the right to self-defence arises in the aftermath of a direct “armed attack”. As for Chapter VII of the Charter, the determination as to what constitutes a threat to international security - and the necessary means to neutralize it - was entrusted to the Security Council. Herein reside the deficiencies of the Charter-based security framework. First, the concept of armed attack in an era of megaterrorism and weapons of mass destruction is excessively reactive, and, thus, does not afford potential victims the capacity to act preemptively to forestall threats until it is too late. In other words, until the attack is consummated. Second, although the Security Council may authorize preemptive action – military or otherwise – to neutralize regional and international security threats, the political character of the organ virtually excludes such consensus. The problem with the Security Council is that, quite simply, the dominant powers use their presence on that body to pursue national advantage, which usually expresses itself in terms of great power rivalry.

This brief recapitulation of the rules structuring the use of force in the post-1945 era suffices to demonstrate that applying these rules in the post-Cold War period is fraught with tremendous difficulties, a number of which were

highlighted during the Security Council debate preceding Saddam Hussein's ouster. The contentiousness underlying the 2002-03 Iraq debate raised an inescapable query: the extent to which the UN Charter continues to be relevant for contemporary world politics. To address this issue, it is useful to note that, first, the rules stipulated by the Charter codify the use of force between states; that is, the intent of the document's framers was to minimize inter-state conflict. Put differently, to secure the avoidance of major war. Accordingly, an implicit set of assumptions informed the rules outlined in the Charter: the balance of power between the great powers served to guarantee the Charter's collective security system. Yet, to the extent that it presupposes that threats are similarly identified by states, and thus states will respond alike to such threats, the logic of collective security is inherently faulty.^[xxiii] Indeed, throughout its history, the Security Council reached a consensus on what constituted a collective threat on only two occasions: Korea in 1950 and Iraq in 1990/91.

A more pertinent observation resides in acknowledging that the Security Council *cum* security institution had been historically superseded. That is to say, the world no longer conforms to the power balances that allowed the five permanent members to effectively decide on matters of regional and international security. Put simply, why those five and not others? Indeed, this is precisely the question that had been raised recently in discussions surrounding the need – which is virtually consensual – for some type of reform allowing the Security Council to mirror present realities. But reforming the Security Council, albeit necessary, is insufficient. The altered international security environment also demands a revision of the norms that govern the use of force. Responding after a terrorist attack has been consummated – particularly if WMD are involved – is tantamount to state suicide. In short, a new international order cannot be established exclusively through greater inclusiveness in the Security Council; it also must incorporate new rules regulating concepts of self defence and threat response that, obviously, were inconceivable when the Charter was initially drafted.

To some extent, such a “loosening” of bipolar norms and institutions has transpired since the end of the Cold War. Following the collapse of the Soviet

Union and the Cold War balance, resorting to preemptive military action became less costly for the United States. Prior to the 2003 Iraqi war, the 1999 Kosovo campaign constituted the prime example of the preemptive use of military force. Seeking to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe, President Clinton and the NATO allies - proceeding without an explicit mandate from the United Nations Security Council - employed military force against Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia. Having proved incapable of resolving the Kosovo crisis, Germany and France accepted Tony Blair's arguments for American-led NATO military intervention. Although the campaign dragged on for considerably longer than initially anticipated by President Clinton, thus generating a not inconsiderable degree of friction within the Atlantic Alliance, the preemptive use of force achieved the broad objectives formulated by the coalition.^[xxiv] Rather than allowing the Kosovo crisis to reach disastrous proportions, military intervention effectively avoided a humanitarian calamity. Kosovo, in short, demonstrated that preemption could be successful, and, if undertaken for humanitarian reasons, its legitimacy was difficult to question though such action formally contravened the UN Charter.^[xxv]

Clinton's New World

The demise of the Soviet Union signified that America's Cold War grand strategy required an overhauling. Defined in the late 1940s, and structured around the containment doctrine, the domestic bipartisan consensus aiming to contain Soviet ambitions was preserved until the collapse of European communism.^[xxvi] Once the object of containment disappeared, a debate on foreign policy for the new era was bound to be cantankerous. Isolationist sentiment in the early 1990's - most notoriously expressed by Pat Buchanan on the right, and Ralph Nader on the left - sought to avoid entangling relationships beyond America's frontiers. Specifically, force was to be used for realizing a narrowly defined national interest that precluded the maintenance of a host of America's international commitments. Yet, given the new international realities - specifically, the fact that the United States emerged as the sole superpower - any type of isolationist posture in foreign policy was unthinkable unless

Washington were willing to accept the international disorder invariably resulting from its disengagement from international politics.

International stability therefore required some type of internationalism on the part of the hegemonic power. The real question was not whether the United States was to play a role in international politics, but what type of a role it was willing and capable of playing. Acknowledging the opportunity for renewed American leadership, Madaleine Albright characterized the United States as the “indispensable nation”, a designation that was soon to become a staple of presidential speeches.^[xxvii] Gradually, the Clinton Administration forged a new bipartisan consensus around the promotion of democracy and markets and, as crucially, the determination to preserve American military preponderance, economic expansion and political leadership.

The post-Cold War world that Bill Clinton sought to fashion was virtually unrecognizable from the one that George H. Bush encountered when sworn-in as Commander-in-Chief. During his inaugural address, President Bush had expressed concern over two salient foreign policy issues: international drug trafficking and the need to “re-evaluate” relations with Mikhail Gorbachov’s Soviet Union. As democratic revolutions swept communism from Eastern Europe and, then, the Soviet Union, President Bush’s priorities were clearly overtaken by events. A traditionalist in foreign policy, Bush remained bound to the realist paradigm just as the White House began to confront the need to think strategically about the new post-communist security environment. That task would be thrust upon Bill Clinton.

In contradistinction to Bush’s *staus quo* oriented approach to international affairs, Bill Clinton’s grand strategy aimed to “enlarge” democracy, foster globalization and preserve American economic leadership. Fashioned to deal with the unpredictable challenges of the post-bipolar world, the Clinton Doctrine was meant to be sufficiently flexible so as to respond to new realities at the same time that it shaped events. The tone for such a proactive foreign policy had been outlined some months prior to the November 1992 presidential elections. During the campaign, Clinton adopted a moralistic and multilateralist approach to foreign policy. Reproaching Bush for his complacency in Bosnia,

the Democratic Party candidate pledged to use air power to lift the siege of Sarajevo. Commenting the Administration's dealings with China, Clinton charged Bush with "coddling dictators" and sacrificing the nation's values to commercial advantage. Infused with the rhetoric of idealism, Clinton's foreign policy statements seemed to herald a new synthesis between power and principle.

Anthony Lake, Bill Clinton's first National Security Council (NSC) director, outlined the main pillars of the Clinton Doctrine in a speech given on September 21, 1991, at the Johns Hopkins University.^[xxviii] Lake declared that the United States' primary mission was the enlargement of the "community of free nations" so that as this community grew and consolidated itself, the United States would become "more secure, prosperous and influential". The Clinton Doctrine posited that globalization, understood as the liberalization of national and international markets – as well as the extension of the free trade regime - would provoke internal socio-economic changes beneficial to democracy's advocates. As globalization fostered processes of democratization, security would be attained by the extension of the "interdemocratic peace". The democratic peace – built on the assumption that democracies did not wage war against each other - was seen as a means of achieving greater regional and international security. Understood as mutually reinforcing, globalization and democratization were deemed to be tremendous sources of American security. Put differently, democratization and globalization - although desirable from a normative perspective - were understood as instruments designed for the enhancement of US national security. In sum, no noticeable contradiction existed between democratic promotion and the fulfilment of American national interest in a Hobbesian state system. Indeed, these two aims were wholly coincidental.

Yet Lake recognized that the White House's strategy for promoting democracy would be tempered by irrefutable power constraints. For example, it was explicitly admitted that the Administration would readily support "non-democratic" regimes if American national interests determined such a course of action. Furthermore, Lake cautioned that humanitarian missions were not to be understood as paradigmatic of US foreign policy under Clinton, nor were such

missions indicative of the role that the Administration was defining for itself in the post-bipolar world. Rather than exemplifying Clinton's grand strategy, the interventions in Somalia and Bosnia were exceptional and, to no small degree, determined by the extreme humanitarian conditions verified in those countries. At the same time that humanitarian interventionism and nation-building were deemphasized, Lake was adamant in claiming that "backlash states" such as Iran and Iraq would be isolated until regime change was successfully achieved. Although the doctrine articulated by Lake suggested that the use of force would not be as extensive as candidate Clinton had earlier indicated, the White House clearly began distancing itself from the Cold War status quo that so constrained the use of military force.

Although Lake's vision was permeated by a substantial degree of idealism, a generous appreciation of realist thinking was evident when it came to identifying the constraints imposed by international politics, including the necessity to define foreign policy by calculation of national interest. For that reason, references to collective security built on the United Nations system were absent from the Johns Hopkins speech. For Clinton, American leadership was to be paramount. Also, the implicit understanding that disarmament would signify an end to US military superiority prevented the NSC director from making pledges leading to substantial arms reductions. And since adherence to collective security meant trying the country to multilateral agreements and processes that would constrain America's ability to proceed with the objectives of its grand strategy, Lake preserved a judicious silence regarding the specific means to be employed in the fulfilment of the objectives stipulated in the Clinton Doctrine.^[xxix] True, the Administration's ambiguity relative to the use of military force mirrored Clinton's tense relationship with the Pentagon over Defence Secretary Les Aspin's aptitude for the job, the "gays in the military" controversy and the adequacy of the Powell Doctrine. But, much more critically, the ambiguity was rooted in the conceptual inadequacies of the Clinton Doctrine itself.

The theoretical edifice underpinning the Clinton Doctrine was shaky because the argument that globalization would emerge as a force for democratization

amounted to a conviction unsubstantiated by empirical evidence. Clinton and Lake viewed globalization as a benign phenomenon; a cause of greater tolerance and, therefore, a generator of pluralist civic societies underpinning democratic polities. Such an optimistic conclusion rested on the somewhat superficial belief that “the more people know, the more opinions they are going to have; the more democracy spreads”.^[xxx] Although inspiring in rhetorical terms, the relationship between democracy and globalization is not as simplistic as President Clinton suggested. Globalization does not bring equal advantage to all states and societies; rather, differentiated results are produced. But even if globalization did, in the long-term, bring advantage to all, the point would be rather moot. The real issue is what type of outcomes result from the rapid societal processes of change characteristic of globalization.

A number of theorists have pointed to the less benign consequences of globalization. For example, Benjamin Barber, echoing Samuel Huntington’s findings of the late 1960’s, suggests that cultural backlash is a predictable occurrence in countries exposed to rapid pressures for change induced by the forces of globalization.^[xxxi] As they seek to liberalize their economies and open their markets, developing countries are overtaken by social change tremendously difficult to channel through weak, existing institutions. The result is often one of backlash, a rejection of the forces deemed responsible for promoting change. And since globalization and Americanization have become virtually synonymous in many parts of the globe, the United States is not infrequently perceived as subverting traditional beliefs and cultural norms.

Confronted with change that is not merely economic - but also cultural -, social sectors castigated by globalization evince an ideological resistance to globalization *cum* Americanization. As a result, fundamentalist ideologies advocating the certainties of tradition, culture and history arise as an antidote to American-led modernization. Fundamentalist political movements – be they nationalist or religious – express a common rejection of change introduced by globalization. Al-Qaeda terrorists, Hindu fundamentalists and Milosevic’s Serbian ultranationalists all reject change, addressing their message of grievance and resentment to those most negatively affected by the forces of

change.^[xxxii] And to the extent that the United States – and, to a lesser degree, Europe – are seen as the catalysts for brusque change operating at the local level, anti-Westernism becomes part of the lexicon of resistance.^[xxxiii]

Conceptualizing the United States as a preponderant power with new responsibilities for the maintenance of international order meant that the Cold War grand strategy had to be reformulated as new interests and threats were ascertained. In short, the underlying pillars of the Cold War bipolar order had to be reconfigured so as to respond to a new security environment. Such a redefinition of goals implied that the means to achieve them – particularly the use of force – also required revamping. While the Clinton Administration – through the Clinton Doctrine – articulated a rather coherent vision of the objectives to be pursued by the United States, the means to achieve them – specifically, the use of military force – proved considerably more problematic. Indeed, the Clinton Administration largely failed to define and pursue a coherent military posture.

A post-Cold War military posture gradually evolved in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's disintegration. Rather than ushering in a new world order, the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was actually the last great conflict of the Cold War era. Responding to Saddam Hussein's aggression, President Bush sought to activate the traditional instruments of collective security institutionalized in the United Nations. Bush sought to return to Franklin Roosevelt's vision of superpower politics and collective action to enforce the international *status quo* outlined in the Charter, and unambiguously overturned by the Iraqi invasion. The Desert Storm campaign confirmed the awesome military power possessed by the United States. But because American power was exercised under the authority of the United Nations Security Council, this new military might did not appear particularly menacing since the American-led coalition sought the restitution of Kuwaiti sovereignty. Ironically, it was precisely this limited objective that prevented the US from prolonging the war and deposing Saddam Hussein.

American power was used judiciously in the Gulf war because the country's military doctrine – the Powell Doctrine – emphasized the careful and limited

use of military power. Largely a reaction to the experiences of Vietnam, the Powell Doctrine proved to be a tremendous constraint on political decision-makers during the immediate post-Cold War years. Powell maintained that the use of military power was to be employed under specific and quite restrictive conditions. Military power was to be employed only when the national interest was compromised, and, in that case, the objectives to be attained were to be clearly articulated. Moreover, a prior exit strategy had to be defined so as to avoid open-ended commitments and subsequent mission creep. In addition to these limitations, the Powell Doctrine posited that the United States had to develop a military capacity allowing it to conduct two Gulf War-type campaigns simultaneously.

These restrictions made it extremely difficult for the White House to deploy American forces in a new international security environment characterized by unpredictability generated by local religious, ethnic and boundary wars. In his role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Powell advised President Clinton against the use of US forces in the Gulf War and in the Balkans, a reluctance that led an exasperated Madaleine Albright to ask what the point was of possessing such a powerful military if it could not be employed.^[xxxiv] Albright's poignant comment is pertinent for it reveals the extent to which Powell emerged as an obstacle to the White House's attempts to use military force in the post-bipolar environment. But the remark also indicated the diplomatic concerns raised by such a restrictive military doctrine. Given the difficulties faced by political decision-makers seeking to obtain the Pentagon's acceptance of the need to employ force, the United States could not effectively present a dissuasive military instrument. Said differently, US options were largely limited to carrots.

The problem of a credible use of military power was partially solved by Powell's retirement in late 1993. At that juncture, the Powell Doctrine was effectively abandoned as Washington became increasingly entangled in local conflicts. Madalaine Albright, one of the Clinton Administration's most vocal hawks, pushed increasingly for the unilateral use of force. The increasing willingness to employ military force resulted from an American technological superiority that made it possible to conduct military operations without

resorting to the use of boots on the ground. Surgical use of military – particularly air – power minimized the risk of casualties, the White House’s prime political constraint before 9/11. As the decade proceeded, employment of force became more frequent as a means of resolving conflicts, but also as means of deterring or of inducing belligerents to the negotiating table. One such example was the selective bombing of Serbian targets until Slobodan Milosevic accepted the Dayton Agreements. At any rate, Powell’s retirement from active service, and increasingly complex regional post-Cold War conflicts, pushed the White House into a greater reliance on the use of force.

Curiously, the Pentagon and the White House did not usually refer to these operations as war, or use of force. Rather, the term Operations Other Than War (OOTW) rapidly gained currency. The increasing use of force under the OOTW designation evinced the shift towards a more unilateral approach to foreign policy. As early as June 1993, President Clinton ordered the destruction of Iraqi military installations in retaliation for the Baathist regime’s plan to assassinate President Bush. Later, in December 1998, Clinton again resorted to unilateral force in reprisal for Baghdad’s expulsion of the UN weapons inspectors. During four days, Operation Desert Fox dealt gruelling punishment to Saddam Hussein’s military capabilities. Following the air strikes, Hussein, defiant as before, refused to allow the return of the weapons inspectors and claimed that the exclusion zones in the north and south of the country would no longer be respected. From that point forth, it was relatively clear that the containment approach to the Iraqi problem – relying on air strikes and economic sanctions – was all but exhausted. Accordingly, Clinton adopted a policy of “regime change”, although the White House continued to shy away from a ground invasion of Iraq.

Even earlier, the Administration had grappled with the ambiguities of regional conflicts and American military interventionism. Bosnia emerged as the first, critical test for the newly-elected president. Throughout the campaign, Clinton, charging President Bush with timidity, advocated the employment of American power to end the persistent bloodletting in that country. But this call for intervention contrasted sharply with Clinton’s policy as president. During

his first year and a half in the White House, President Clinton refused to act in the Balkans, maintaining intact the fundamental tenants of his predecessor's policy in the region. Only with the launching of the 1995 Operation Deliberate Force – an aerial bombing campaign designed to bring Slobodan Milosovic to the negotiating table – did the Administration conclude that it could no longer procrastinate over the use of military force. Later, in Kosovo, the same ambiguities surfaced. Clinton finally decided to act in the Balkans because of the serious risk that continued paralysis in the region would sap American credibility in Europe and elsewhere.

The ambiguities manifest in the Balks, as well as the decision to pursue the status quo in Iraq, stemmed from the indecisiveness of US policy in Somalia, where Clinton's performance proved terribly detrimental to the credibility of American power. Weeks following his 1992 defeat at the polls, President Bush ordered the military to undertake Operation Restore Hope - a mission designed to alleviate the famine in Somalia. Entering the White House, Clinton transformed that limited humanitarian mission into a national reconstruction mission under the auspices of the United Nations. Soon after, American aims in Somali collided with the brutal realities of local factional politics and, on October 3, 1993, Rangers and Delta Force troops were pinned down in an all-night battle against Mohammed Farrah Aidid's militia. Eighteen American soldiers were killed, and a Black Hawk pilot was dragged through the streets of Mogadishu as television cameras broadcast the incident to the world. Clinton's reaction was immediate, if not entirely predictable: the troops were ordered out of Somalia.

The Somali withdrawal revealed that the United States could not sustain even a limited number of casualties in the pursuit of its goals; a lack of resolve that apparently emboldened adversaries of the United States such as Osama bin Laden to pursue a strategy of confrontation. The Somali disaster also demonstrated that the "assertive multilateralism" centered on the United Nations - advocated by Madeline Albright in the summer of 1993 - would be rapidly overturned. In the aftermath of Mogadishu, a shift away from multilateralism and international institutions was clearly detectable. As for the

use of military force, the Mogadishu fiasco contrasted sharply with the success of the Persian Gulf War. The latter had demonstrated the overwhelming advantages of American might in open-field combat; the former revealed that in situations of urban warfare, where the risk of casualties increased due to the proximity of the fighting, the United States was constrained by its domestic, political concerns. The net result of these lessons was that the Administration's use of force would become increasingly unilateral, but also timid in its employment and unfocused in its objectives.

Even in the two cases where force was used in the least unambiguous fashion – Iraq and Kosovo – the lack of clearly defined goals prevented an effective use of military force. The December 1998 Operation Desert Fox in Iraq – the largest military undertaking between the Persian Gulf war and the removal of Saddam Hussein – attests to these failures of the Clinton Administration. The ultimate aim of the attacks against Iraqi targets was unclear, and the use of military force proved inconsequential: the arms inspectors were not allowed to return to Iraq and the tyrant remained in power. Indeed, it was the increasing frustration over the inadequacy of Iraqi policy led the Congress to call for regime change in Iraq. How such a policy of incremental change was to be implemented in a totalitarian context that squashed all dissidence remained an unanswered mystery. Unless a commitment to a ground war seeking the overthrow of the Baathist regime was made, calls for regime change would remain hollow and, consequently, detrimental to American credibility. It was precisely this dilemma – a failed policy of containment and the impossibility of promoting peaceful regime change – that would set the course for the Bush Administration's decision to act preemptively in Iraq.^[xxxv]

Lastly, the Clinton Administration was confronted with what would subsequently prove to be the most challenging security threat of his successor's Administration. Clinton publicly acknowledged the serious threat posed by international terrorism during the August 1998 Al-Qaeda bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole. What was frequently criticized – and candidate Bush would echo these criticisms – was the excessive caution (or timidity) of the Administration's

response to these attacks. True, Clinton did authorize the use of force against Al-Qaeda targets, including cruise missiles strikes against Osama bin Laden's training camp in Afghanistan in retaliation for the Africa embassy bombings. But these token responses failed to produce noticeable results and, in the words of candidate George Bush, it seemed pointless to utilize expensive cruise missiles to "hit tents and camels".

Terrorism, coupled with the Clinton Administration's dismal record in preventing the proliferation of WMD, made for an increasingly dangerous international security environment. If the world that Bill Clinton inherited from his predecessor was considerably more complex than the Cold War order that guided American grand strategy for over four decades, the world that Clinton bequeathed to George W. Bush was incomparably more dangerous. And, to no small extent, the responsibility for that degradation in the security environment rested with Clinton's ambiguities relative to the use of force in the post-bipolar world.

The Bush Doctrine

In two significant recent books, Max Boot and John Lewis Gaddis argue that preemptive force was a traditional staple of American foreign policy until Franklin Delano Roosevelt designated collective security as the cornerstone of the post-1945 international order.^[xxxvi] The observation is pertinent for if the point of departure for an analysis of American foreign policy shifts from 1945 to the century and a half that preceded the founding of the republic, George W. Bush's adoption of a doctrine of preemptive force ceases to constitute a rupture with foreign policy tradition.^[xxxvii] Bush's embrace of preemptive force thus becomes firmly anchored in American foreign policy traditions, and, just as significantly, it is Cold War multilateralism and collective security that become truly anomalous.

George W. Bush did not always embrace preemptive force. In point of fact, during the 2000 presidential campaign, the Republican Party candidate advocated a traditional realist foreign policy agenda rooted in a narrow understanding of national interest.^[xxxviii] Clintonian interventionism and nation-building were rejected in favour of limited engagement abroad and the prudent

use of military power. Signalling an intention to scale down existing international commitments, Bush floated the possibility of phased troop withdrawals from Bosnia and Kosovo. Later, during the Administration's first foreign policy crisis – the 2001 incident surrounding the forced landing of a US spy plane by Chinese fighters –, the White House, particularly keen to avoid a permanent rift between Washington and Peking, adopted a cautious response with a view to reducing tensions. Critics censured President Bush's "unilateralist" stance on the International Criminal Court and the Kyoto Protocol, but, until 9/11, policy statements and practise were in full accordance with a traditional realist foreign policy outlook markedly less interventionist than the previous Administration's.

September 11 was the catalyst that forced American policy makers to face the nation's vulnerability in the post-Cold War security environment. In the aftermath of al-Qaeda's attacks on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers, it became readily apparent that the security of the homeland could no longer be preserved by the Cold War security architecture of the previous decades. National security policy was, in this sense, profoundly and irrevocably altered by al-Qaeda's megaterrorism. Given the unpredictability of 9/11, and the devastation that it wrought, Condoleezza Rice asserted that such threats "cannot be contained", and then concluded that "the United States must be prepared to take action, when necessary, before threats have fully materialized".^[xxxix] Similarly, Secretary of State Colin Powell bluntly stated that "if you recognize a clear and present threat that is undeterrable by the means you have at hand, then you must deal with it. You do not wait for it to strike; you do not allow future attacks to happen before you take action".^[xli] On the crucial issue of the need for preemptive force, the Administration's main players were of the same mind.

Two separate but interrelated questions were raised by September 11. First, who was responsible for the attacks and, second, how should the United States respond? More specifically, was there a role for force and, if so, under what conditions could it legitimately be employed? On the day of the attacks, President Bush stated that Washington would "hunt down and punish" the perpetrators; although no specific mention was made as to the method to be

employed. Later that same day, in a nationally televised address, Bush reiterated the intention of punishing the culprits, and, ominously, added that his government “will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbour them”.^[xli] Both statements, and the determination underlying them, were to cast a long shadow over international politics during the subsequent months.

The initial response to 9/11 was remarkably similar to the language of the Cold War.^[xlii] International terrorism was equated with the danger posed by fascist and communist ideologies. And like the prolonged struggle against totalitarianism, the war against Islamic fundamentalist terror would be a protracted affair of indeterminate duration. Victory would therefore not be immediate, and, judging by the historical parallel invoked, neither would it be effortless. If the parallels were readily apparent, the dissimilarities were no less striking. Firstly, unlike the threat posed by the Soviet Union, terrorism could not be addressed by Cold War containment and deterrence. Since the threat posed by Islamic terror was of a politico-ideological nature, the Bush Administration could not simply treat the attacks as a mere criminal occurrence requiring redress through police action, as was suggested by some observers.^[xliii] To have done so – to have excluded a military response - would not only negate the political dimension of 9/11, it would also reduce available options for confronting a momentous national security threat.

Although al-Qaeda refrained from claiming responsibility for 9/11 until much later, evidence rapidly mounted confirming that the attacks had been planned from Osama bin Laden’s sanctuary in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Secure in this knowledge, the Administration moved to assemble international diplomatic backing for whatever type of action it chose to pursue. Political support for the Administration proved overwhelming as allied countries denounced the attacks. NATO characterized 9/11 as a collective attack and, in conformity with its Charter, invoked Article 5 committing all Atlantic Alliance members to the defence of the United States. One day after the attacks, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1368, acknowledging that the US was the

victim of a hostile aggression, which, for all intents and purposes, allowed Washington to invoke the Charter's Article 51 provisions on self-defence.

These diplomatic outcomes mirrored the expectation that Washington would respond militarily to the aggression. But the critical question was: respond against whom? The answer to this query surged in the subsequent weeks. Attributing to the Taliban regime joint responsibility for the attacks, the White House demanded that the Afghani government extradite Osama bin Laden. When the demand was met with refusal, Washington, on October 2001, initiated Operation Enduring Freedom. In less than two months, with a limited amount of military support from key allies, the US ousted the Taliban from power and began a search for Osama bin Laden and other al-Qaeda terrorists in the Afghan-Pakistani border areas. In the meantime, Pakistan, the Taliban's regional patron, rapidly distanced itself from the Kabul regime. George Bush's warning that countries were to choose between "us or the terrorists" convinced the Islamabad military-dominated regime that its continued survival was contingent upon the definition of a new policy orientation.

Operation Enduring Freedom set a precedent for a principle that was subsequently incorporated into George Bush's National Security Strategy (NSS): states harbouring terrorists could be subject to military action. Bush, during a speech to a special session of Congress, made this intention clear when he stated that "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime".^[xliv] The statement – amounting to a practical extension of the war on terror to countries designated by the US as "rogue states" - was met with unease by a number of allies, including some of the NATO partners. Deemed "simplistic" and Manichean, the "us versus them" rhetoric was viewed as an example of an increasingly militarist approach to the terrorist threat. Such a chasm in perception between Washington and its allies was perhaps unavoidable; after all, the victim of aggression quite naturally develops a more acute sense of existential threat than those that have not actually been subject to a devastating attack.

Despite the controversy surrounding President Bush's remarks, there is nothing inherently objectionable to the idea that states supporting and harbouring terrorists represent a threat to international stability and peace. Indeed, the removal of the Taliban regime conformed to the international consensus governing the use of military force. Rulings from the International Court of Justice – the Nicaragua case stands out – extend the concept of armed attack to states providing material support for aggressors. Furthermore, Security Council Resolution 1368, of September 12, 2001, was unambiguous in characterizing 9/11 as an act of aggression that could legitimately be answered by military force. For these reasons, the Afghan campaign did not raise significant questions as to the “legality” or the “legitimacy” of American use of force.^[xlv] Still, the message conveyed by President Bush was crystalline clear: the rules governing the behaviour of states would be reconsidered in light of the war on terror.

A further clue to President Bush's new outlook was manifest during a June 2002 speech delivered at West Point.^[xlvi] Bush stated that the war on terror was a new type of conflict, requiring new forms of action, including the use of preemptive force. Since the threat to the United States did not originate from a particular state, but from an organization that lacked territory and identifiable combatants, Washington's response to the terrorist threat could not be undertaken in accordance with the rules structuring relations between states. In other words, the unprecedented nature of the war on terror required unorthodox strategies and methods such a reading of the international security environment led President Bush to affirm that preemptive force was an exigency arising from the novel nature of the strategic threat.

With the publication of the National Security Strategy (NSS), in September 2002, the contours of George Bush's approach to national security were explicitly and coherently expressed.^[xlvii] The document committed Washington to the maintenance of its preponderance of power – “full spectrum dominance” – so as to dissuade other nations from even attempting to launch an arms race to obtain parity with the US. For what strategic outcome was this military primacy designed? The introduction to the NSS affirmed that the US was

committed to the principles of “political and economic freedom, peaceful relations between states and human dignity”.^[xlvi] Power, in other words, was to be used for achieving a “balance favourable to freedom”, a central element of which was the extension of democracy, an aim that also informed Clinton’s strategy of democratic enlargement.

Like the Clinton Doctrine, Bush’s grand strategy was rooted in the democratic peace thesis; that is, the belief that democracies do not engage in war with each other. Following from this conviction was the conclusion that the extension of democracy was synonymous with the extension of the peace. The question of course was how and under what circumstance was democracy to be promoted? To be even clearer, what specific role was reserved for military force in the promotion of democratic governance? The answer contained in the Bush Doctrine echoes Anthony Lake’s 1992 formulation: force was to be used exceptionally and only when it was in the United States’ interest to do so. Although a strategic goal of American foreign policy, and, in itself, a desirable end, democracy could not be promoted in all places and in all cases. The imperatives of national interest were not to be sacrificed for the sake of a democratic crusade.

Not unlike Clinton, Bush was acutely aware of the limitations placed upon American power, as well as of the need for defining a policy of selective engagement. Promoting democratization was in the national interest of the US, but doing so through the use of military force would be exceptional. In point of fact, the Bush Administration was explicit in acknowledging that regime change through military action was not the model envisioned by the Administration. Addressing this particular issue, the NSS states that, in general, the US would restrict itself to “encouraging change” when such possibilities arose “as was the case in Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991”.^[xli] The comparatively peaceful transition from authoritarian rule verified in Eastern Europe was the generic model for regime change; not the Iraqi invasion of 2003. It is critical to note that the NSS was published in September 2002, months prior to Saddam Hussein’s overthrow. The date is of tremendous import because even if the occupation of Iraq had not encountered substantial obstacles, the NSS suggests

that the coercive overthrow of Saddam Hussein was, in all likelihood, unrepeatable in other contexts. Taken by many of Bush's critics to be paradigmatic of the Administration's views on the use of force, the toppling of Saddam Hussein was a one-shot affair.

According to the NSS, only rogue states that have actually abdicated exercising responsibilities inherent to sovereignty would be subject to forceful removal through preemptive war.^[ii] This qualification is essential since it clearly demonstrates that the doctrine of preemptive force is not open-ended as many of its critics have insistently claimed. What, then, are the responsibilities inherent to state sovereignty sustaining the Bush Administration's justification for preemption? The NSS asserts that states are responsible for what may be termed a "good neighbour" foreign policy; in other words, they cannot disrupt regional and international security through expansionism. Since it mirrors the international consensus as it is presently articulated in the UN Charter, this understanding is uncontroversial. But the Bush Doctrine added that, beyond these responsibilities, governments are obliged to respect the well-being of their citizens; that is, governments that trample their citizens' human rights relinquish their legitimacy. Limited sovereignty approaches such as the one articulated in the NSS certainly collide with the traditional notion that states enjoy a virtual free hand over internal affairs. None the less, the suggestion that governments committing grave human rights abuses lose their legitimacy is not as novel - or as radical - as it may first appear. As a matter of fact, an emergent international consensus over this matter – clearly evinced in Boutros-Boutros Gali's Agenda for Democratization - is clearly detectable.^[iii]

Translating this budding normative agreement regarding the dangers posed by terrorists and rogue states to international security into policy implementation is fraught with tremendous difficulties. For instance, a vast majority of states reject outright the possibility that the evaluation of a regime's legitimacy – much less the decision to proceed with force to remove it – should be undertaken unilaterally. France's Security Council stance during the 2002-03 debate on Iraq exemplifies such an outlook. Considering the preponderance of American capabilities, and its extensive global interests, recognition of the

unilateral right to make such decisions would be tantamount to granting Washington a virtual *carte blanche* over international norms. Lacking a more effective forum, most states therefore maintain that decisions relative to the employment of force require prior United Nations Security Council authorization.

Because states fear assigning to any one power the responsibility for determining the conditions under which regime change may be carried out, the argument for Security Council authorization is a reasonable one. Although cloaked in the language of law and morality, it is, in reality, a political argument calling for checks on American power. But the fundamental point is that the Security Council substitutes decisions by one state for the political preferences of the five permanent members. More specifically, political expediency, great power rivalry and national interest determine the positions assumed by states during Security Council deliberations. For this very reason, no reasonable assurances can be given that a collective decision taken by the Security Council is any less subjective – that is, any less interest-driven - than one taken solely by the United States.

Lest it be suggested that the Bush Doctrine is exempt from strategic constraint unless Security Council deliberations are followed, it is useful to recall that the NSS identifies a number of self-limiting conditions for deciding upon the use of preemptive force. In addition to the two factors listed above – a regime must be expansionist and guilty of gross violations of human rights – a third condition must be present before preemptive military action is undertaken: the regime must possess or be actively pursuing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Said differently, rogue states must have a standing record of aggression, human rights violations and, third, be actively procuring an enhancement of power capabilities threatening regional stability and security.

The qualification is of the utmost relevance for it suggests that the US considers that simple possession of WMD does not make for a rogue regime; indeed, a number of states possess these weapons but clearly do not constitute threats to international security. In contradistinction, procurement of WMD by rogue states is understood to represent a grave threat because past aggression

and expansion will likely be repeated once these states acquire new capabilities. Confronting such a pernicious development, Washington maintains that it must prevent the acquisition of WMD capabilities allowing terrorists to undertake deadly strikes against the United States and its allies. From the Bush Administration's vantage point, regimes that willingly cooperate with terrorists violate accepted norms of international state behaviour, and may therefore be forcibly removed from power. For this reason, the NSS affirms that countries that directly or indirectly sponsor terrorism must be "convinced or compelled to assume their sovereign responsibilities".^[iii] To that end, Washington will "not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise of our right of self-defense by acting preemptively".^[iii]

Rogue states constitute a grave danger to international security for another reason: since they are inherently aggressive and expansionist, these regimes are unlikely to respond to containment and deterrence. This being the case, the Bush Doctrine does not restrict itself to advocating a traditional policy of non-proliferation; it acknowledges that a counter-proliferation strategy is necessary if present dangers are to be diminished. Such a policy is pertinent because two "axis of evil" regimes – North Korea and Iran – are as determined to achieve nuclear power status as the United States is determined to avoid such an outcome. While Washington's policy objective is unambiguous, the means of achieving it are dependent upon concrete political conditions. Since toppling rogue regimes through military means is understood as a last resort, the NSS claims that the United States will encourage non-proliferation through multilateral means. Diplomacy is thus not dispensable, but past treaties that have ceased to correspond to the problems of the post-9/11 world will either be revamped or abandoned. As a result, the issue that needs addressing is how best to pursue an effective counter-proliferation policy. Once all of the qualifications to the Bush Administration's doctrine of preemptive war are considered, the controversy surrounding the NSS loses much of its relevance.

The NSS is also proactive in that it claims that the US will "defend the peace" threatened by terrorists and rogue regimes by "extending the peace" through democratization; that is, "by encouraging free and open societies on every

continent”.^[iv] For all intents and purposes, normal states – even those whose dictatorial governments are widely condemned, such as Byelorussia – do not qualify for regime change through military force. Since such regimes lack one or more of the three preconditions listed above –Byelorussia, for instance, it is not inherently aggressive nor does it seek WMD capabilities -, they do not pose a threat sufficiently robust to challenge regional peace and US national interests. As distasteful as they may be, these tyrannies are not targeted for forceful removal under the Bush Doctrine.

The publication of the National Security Strategy was met with criticism from many quarters. Some suggested that there was no need to make a preemptive doctrine explicit because, under the limited conditions outlined in the document allowing for the use of force, the US would be justified in resorting to anticipatory defence. Colin Powell addressed these observations when he wrote that the inclusion of preemption in the NSS was necessary to “convey to our adversaries that they were in big trouble”.^[v] In other words, the adoption of the policy was meant as a deterrent, making it absolutely clear that Washington refused to allow itself to be hindered when its national security was threatened. While the argument is a forceful one, events transpiring in Iraq, and the fact that the invasion was a one-shot affair not meant to constitute a precedent, weaken considerably the deterrence argument.

In recent months, the two most notorious rogue states – North Korea and Iran – have actually intensified their efforts to obtain nuclear weapons capacity. This response to the downfall of Saddam Hussein and the subsequent occupation illustrate some of the limitations inherent to the Bush Doctrine. It is not at all excessive to posit that the leaderships in Teheran and Pyongyang concluded that their security concerns, particularly the threat posed by the American Administration to the future survival of these regimes, were best served by the rapid acquisition of nuclear weapons. Apparently, the Iraqi invasion was an accelerator rather than an inhibitor to nuclear proliferation. If this is in fact the case, it may be suggested that the Bush Doctrine is counterproductive in that it actually fosters what it ostensibly seeks to impede.

Such a conclusion is premature because the paucity of information regarding the decision making process in these two countries prevents definitive conclusions. Still, a number of speculative propositions may be advanced. First, the regimes were committed to nuclearization at any cost; indeed, their WMD programs precede George W. Bush's first electoral victory. Thus, it is not unrealistic to conclude that the commitment to nuclear weapons is absolute, irrespective of the position espoused by the White House. Second, it may be the case that Tehran and Pyongyang accelerated their nuclearization as a consequence of Washington's apparent failure in Iraq. That is, the unfolding post-invasion situation emboldened these two regimes, leading them to calculate that the US had overextended itself. Although the answers given to these two questions will produce momentous policy choices in the near future, it is, at this point in time, still premature to reach definitive conclusions. Still, it is not unreasonable to posit that the Iraqi invasion and its aftermath produced a window of opportunity for rogue states. First, rogue states capable of securing an ally among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council actually – all else being equal - have very little incentive to fear American preemptive force unless the Administration is fully prepared to pay the political costs that condemnation in the Security Council entail. One of the lessons rogue states derived from the acrimony between Western allies that preceded the Iraqi invasion is that the use of preemptive force would almost certainly and unequivocally splinter the NATO allies.

Critics of the Bush Doctrine also maintained that the explicit adoption of preemptive force created a danger that other nations would be tempted to resort to preventive war. Experience, so far, has demonstrated that that is not the case. Granted, states may resort to preemptive force in the future, but the expectation that such a practice would become widespread as a result of the Iraqi "precedent" has not materialized. Other critics suggested that the use of preemptive force was an example of the unilateral temptation of the Bush Administration. In short, that it was the logical conclusion of an increasingly assertive foreign policy. The criticism was largely unfounded since the NSS was quite empathic on this particular point: unilateral use of force was the last option. Indeed, the text expresses the Administration's commitment to

multilateralism and alliances. None the less, when multilateral action proves impossible, or when alliances are incapable of addressing fundamental strategic preoccupations, the White House refuses to allow itself to be paralyzed. That is to say, multilateralism would not be accepted under all circumstance, particularly when multilateral institutions and consultations proved detrimental to the safeguarding of fundamental national interests. Collective action and decision-making reduce costs, but multilateralism is a means of reaching an objective – greater security. Multilateralism is not an end in itself. To suggest that a nation should continue to adhere to multilateralism when its national security is threatened is therefore quite peculiar.

Still other critics manifested their displeasure with the abandonment of the proven Cold War doctrines of containment and deterrence. Such observations are moot for the simple reason that the Bush Doctrine did not, in fact, abandon these instruments. Containment and deterrence remained effective, workable mechanisms for structuring relations with great power rivals, and, therefore, were not to be abandoned in normal circumstances. The rise of China, India and Russia – all explicitly named in the NSS as future potential strategic rivals – accentuated the need for a continued reliance on these Cold War pillars of balancing. What was novel in the Administration's view was that rogue states, and some non-state actors such as terrorists organizations, were simply not deterable or containable. This being the case, the preemptive use of force was an option that could not be excluded from the list of available options.

To argue that terrorist organizations in the mould of Al-Qaeda are not susceptible to deterrence and containment seems quite obvious. Indeed, the unlimited objectives sought by Islamic fundamentalists, in conjugation with a willingness to seek martyrdom in the pursuit of those same objectives, makes for a particularly ferocious enemy. And since terrorists do not control territory, the threat of retaliation that underlies deterrence and containment is simply nonsensical. Deterrence and containment are mechanisms used in relations with states, not in attempting to neutralize the catastrophic terrorism associated with Al-Qaeda and similar groups.

But the Bush Doctrine goes one step further by also claiming that deterrence and containment are ineffective against rogue states. While the thesis relative to the unworkability of containment and deterrence appears to be reasonable when applied to terrorist groups, the same thesis when applied to rogue states is not necessarily accurate in all cases. There are certainly a number of examples of rogue states that have been deterred and contained: for instance, Libya, in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion, abandoned its WMD programs. Tripoli is being contained and deterred, but it also may be the case that we are dealing with the exception rather than the rule. As for Syria, it may be argued that its retreat from Lebanon results from a new post-Iraq vulnerability to American power. That is, its compliance in the region is a consequence of the deterrence effect produced by the invasion of Iraq. Yet, it remains too early to be certain that this is indeed the causal relationship explaining the Lebanese extrication.

Conclusions

American foreign policy has faced – and continues to face - tremendous challenges in the post-Cold War world marked by unipolarity and new security threats. As Washington attempted to maintain order in a post-bipolar international system, the question of the use of force could not but arise. The use of military force was constrained by the norms and institutional limitations imposed by the Cold War era, particularly the United Nations and the rules established in the Charter regarding the legitimate use of force. But as Bill Clinton's Administration became involved in a number of new wars in Africa and the Balkans, it became apparent that the rules regulating the use of force hindered the advancement of American national interests and security concerns. At the same time, humanitarian concerns stymied intervention designed to halt atrocities such as the Rwandan genocide. Power and principle seemed to suggest the urgency of defining a new set of rules that could resolve such conundrums.

Buoyed by its military primacy, the Clinton Administration initiated a movement toward unilateral action, and the preemptive use of military force in places such as Kosovo. The trend was accentuated after 9/11 as the Bush

Administration, through its National Security Strategy, sought to forge policy instruments capable of meeting the threats of the Global War on Terror. That document stated that the preemptive use of force had become a legitimated policy option in certain cases. However, critics of the Bush Doctrine have overemphasized the issue of preemptive force, virtually reducing the NSS to the adoption of a preemption doctrine. To avoid analytical inaccuracy resulting from such reductionism, the question of military preemption must be contextualized, and seen in the light of a document that emphasized cooperation and multilateral action. Understood as an exceptional instrument, preemptive war is not conceived by the Bush White House as a normal mechanism for attaining foreign policy goals.

Irrespective of the positions adopted relative to the issues elaborated in this paper and, in particular, the answers provided by the Bush Administration to the post-9/11 security environment, the fact remains that the international order created in the aftermath of World War II has ceased to correspond to underlying power correlations. To put the matter simply, the United States sees itself as excessively constrained by the rules governing the use of force. Before the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, those constraints were already being eroded by the Clinton Administration. But 9/11 raised the perception of an existential threat and, therefore, national security became an all-consuming priority that was not readily compatible with established international rules and practices. The United States became, in short, a revisionist power.

Revisionism is however necessary at this juncture. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combined with a particularly violent strain of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, cannot be adequately addressed unless the Cold War rules structuring the use of force are overhauled. The discussion on the merits and demerits of invading Iraq was a reflection of the wider debate surrounding the adequacy of present international rules and norms, which will surely be revisited as the Iranian nuclear program and the need to prevent the nuclearization of that country. This paper has addressed some of those issues, aware that the discussion is now only in its infancy.

November 2005

Notes:

[i] For example, Fred Halliday. Two Hours That Shook The World: September 11, 2001: Causes and Consequences. London: Saqi Books, 2001 and Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed. The War on Freedom: How and Why America Was Attacked September 11, 2001. New York: Tree of Life Publications, 2002.

[ii] On the concept of anarchy in international relations, Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism", International Organization, 42 (August), 1988.

[iii] Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma", World Politics, 30, 1978 and Charles L. Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited", World Politics, 50, 1997.

[iv] Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye. Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition. Boston: Little, Brown, 1977 and Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, "Power and Interdependence Revisited", International Organization, 41, 1987.

[v] Robert Jervis. Perception and Misperception in International Politics. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.

[vi] Graham T. Allison. Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971 and John G. Stoessinger. Why Nations Go to War (3rd edition). New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.

[vii] There is a vast literature exploring the positive correlation between democracy and peace. A pioneering work is Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs. Parts 1 and 2", Philosophy and Public Affairs, 12, 1983 and Michael Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics", American Political Science Review, 80, 1986.

[viii] John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War", International Security, 15, 1990 and Vasco Rato, "Mas são mesmo mais pacificas?", Política Internacional, 18, 1998.

[ix] Robert Axelrod. The Evolution of Cooperation. New York: Basic Books, 1984.

[x] John Mueller. Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War. New York: Basic Books, 1989

[xi] Mueller takes up this problem in John Mueller. The Remnants of War. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

[xii] Stephen Van Evera. Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.

[xiii] Robert Gilpin. War and Change in World Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

[xiv] Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment", Foreign Affairs, 70, 1990-91 and Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion", International Security, 17, 1993.

[xv] Kenneth N. Waltz. Theory of International Relations. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979.

[xvi] Mary Kaldor. New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

[xvii] G. John Ikenberry. After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

[lxviii] Richard N. Haas. Intervention: The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold war World. Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 1994, p. 51.

[lxix] Haas, Intervention, p. 52.

[lxx] Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin (eds.). The United States and Coercive Diplomacy. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2003.

[lxxi] Michael B. Oren. Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East. New York: Ballantine Press, 2002.

[lxxii] Christine Gray. International Law and the Use of Force, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, Chapter VII.

[lxxiii] For a critique of collective security, see Inis L. Claude, Jr. Power and International Relations. New York: Random House, 1962, pp. 150- 204. As well, Hans J. Morgenthau. Politics Among Nations, 3rd ed. New York: Knopf, 1960.

[lxxiv] On the Kosovo war, see Ivo Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon. Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo. Washington: Brookings Institution, 2000.

[lxxv] On this issue, "Doctrine of the International Community", speech by Tony Blair to the Economic Club of Chicago, April 22, 1999, available at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/politics/blair.htm>.

[lxxvii] Two books are indispensable for understanding this historical period: John Lewis Gaddis. We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997 and Derek Leebaert. The Fifty Year Wound: How America's Cold War Victory Shapes Our World. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002.

[lxxviii] Bill Clinton, "U.S. Security in a Changing World", speech given at the George Washington University, August 5, 1996, available at <http://www.usconsulate.org.hk/pas/pr/1996/0806b.htm>.

[lxxviiii] Antony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement", September 21, 1993, available at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>. Also, Bill Clinton. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement. White House, February 1996.

[lxxix] Andrew J. Bacevich. American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 100-101.

[lxxx] According to Clinton, "The more people know, the more opinions they're going to have; the more democracy spreads -- and keep in mind, more than half the world now lives under governments of their own choosing -- the more people are going to believe that they should be the masters of their own fate". Speech to the World Economic Forum, January 2000, available at <http://www3.itu.int/mission/us/davos/clinton2.htm>.

[lxxxi] Benjamin R. Barber. Jihad vs. McWorld. New York: Times Books, 1995.

[lxxxii] See the speeches and documents collected in, Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli (eds.). Al-Qaida dans le text. Paris: PUF, 2005.

[lxxxiii] See, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit. Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies. New York: The Penguin Press, 2004.

[lxxxiv] Colin Powell. My American Journey. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996, p. 576.

[lxxxv] Kenneth M. Pollack. The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq. New York: Random House, 2002.

[lxxxvi] Max Boot. The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power. New York: Basic Books, 2002 and John Lewis Gaddis. Surprise, Security, and the American Experience. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Striking First: The Use of Force in Post-Cold War American Foreign Policy
Vasco Rato

[xxxvii] The best work on George Bush's foreign policy remains Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay. America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2003.

[xxxviii] Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest", Foreign Affairs, January/February 2000.

[xxxix] Condoleezza Rice, "A Balance of Power that Favors Freedom", 2002 Wriston Lecture at the Manhattan Institute", available at <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/wl2002.htm>.

[xl] Colin Powell, "A Strategy for Partnerships", Foreign Affairs, January/February 2004, p. 24

[xli] "Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation", available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html>.

[xlii] See, George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People", available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

[xliii] The most complete book on Al Qaeda remains Rohan Gunaratna. Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

[xliv] George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People", available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

[xlv] For a critique of the US post-Taliban management of the situation in Afghanistan, see Anonymous. Imperial Hubris: Why the West is Losing the War on Terror. Washington: Brassey's, 2004.

[xlvi] The speech may be consulted at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>

[xlvii] On the Bush Doctrine, see, *inter alia*, John Lewis Gaddis, "Bush's Security Strategy", Foreign Policy, 133, November/December 2002; Robert Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine", Political Science Quarterly, 118, 3, 2003.

[xlviii] George Bush. The National Security Strategy of the United States. White House, September 2002, p. 1. Text available at www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html.

[xlix] George Bush. The National Security Strategy of the United States, p. 3.

[l] On "rogue states", see Raymond Tanter. Rogue Regimes: Terrorism and Proliferation. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1999. Robert S. Litwak. Rogue States and US Foreign Policy: Containment After the Cold War. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2000 and Alexander T. J. Lennon and Camille Eiss (eds.). Reshaping Rogue States: Preemption, Regime Change, and U.S. Policy Toward Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

[li] The "Agenda for Democratization" is available at <http://www.library.yale.edu/un/un3d3.htm>.

[lii] George Bush. The National Security Strategy of the United States, p. 6.

[liiii] George Bush. The National Security Strategy of the United States, p. 6.

[liiv] George Bush. The National Security Strategy of the United States, Introduction.

[liy] Colin Powell, "A Strategy for Partnerships", p. 24.