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Hegemonic Power and the Demise of Multilateralism

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Abstract

It is widely assumed that President George W. Bush embarked on a new unilateralist course aimed at maintaining American hegemonic power after September 11, 2001. This shift in policy was supposedly motivated by the attacks on America's financial and military establishments and the subsequent decision to declare war on terrorism. In this article, however, it is argued that a debate about the virtues of a unipolar system and the need to maintain hegemonic power has in fact been taking place in America ever since the European revolution of 1989. A number of events related to international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are responsible for a major policy change that became visible in 1998. But, with the inauguration of the Bush Administration in 2001, it was clear that those favouring a unilateralist grand strategy of selective engagement, based on a narrow interpretation of national interests, had prevailed. Unfortunately, there are indications that America's new grand strategy will undermine the 'American system', which has contributed to five decades of peace, stability and prosperity in the Western hemisphere. America and Europe are drifting apart and as a result transatlantic 'gaps' are emerging.

1 Introduction

This contribution will discuss the assumption that President George W. Bush embarked on a new unilateralist course aimed at maintaining American hegemonic power following the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001. This shift in policy was supposedly motivated by the attacks on America's financial and military establishments and the subsequent decision to declare war on terrorism. Soon after September 11th, a public debate emerged about the consequences of a unilateralist foreign policy for transatlantic relations, the future of international institutions and international stability in general. In this article I argue that a debate has been taking place among American politicians, officials, commentators and scholars about a international system based on unipolarity and the need to maintain hegemonic power ever since the European revolution of 1989 (Gilpin 1981; Huntington 1993; Ikenberry

1998; Krasner 1982; Layne 1993; Mastanduno 1997; Waltz 1979, 1993; Wohlforth 1999). I will further argue that a number of events, related to international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, are responsible for a major policy change that became visible in 1998. Finally, I will argue that the Europeans, i.e., the European Union (EU), have yet to come to grips with this new reality in international politics.

In actual fact, there are two schools of thought reflecting the traditional debate between idealists and realists. The first school favours a grand strategy of multilateralism. According to them multilateralism brings stability based on cooperative security, and international organizations play key roles. The second school favours a grand strategy based on selective engagement in world politics based on a narrow interpretation of national interests. This second school is often labelled 'unilateralist' or 'confrontationalist'. Multilateralism is usually favoured by American 'liberal' democrats and most European allies, whereas conservative Republicans usually favour the strategy of unilateralism.

There is a direct link between the grand strategy chosen by the United States and the degree of security and stability in international relations perceived by other countries. First, the chosen grand strategy has an influence on perceptions because a unilateralist strategy is aimed – at best – at ad hoc cooperation and provokes negative reactions from other countries. With a strategy that is aimed at institutionalized multilateral engagement this will not be the case or, if it is, then most certainly to a lesser extent. Second, the choice is decisive for the formation of so-called 'regimes' in international relations. These have been defined as a "set of rules, norms of behaviour around which the expectations of actors converge in a certain issue area" (Krasner 1983: 229). A fundamental point of departure of the regime theory is the expectation that each actor plays the game according to the same rules. This reduces the chance of misperceptions and increases the stability of the relations between states. Scholars who study international relations assert that the dominant force provides the impulse toward the formation of regimes because it basically strives for the same interests as less powerful states. These regimes play an important role in international relations and their formation and reinforcement fits perfectly into a grand strategy that is focussed on multilateralism.

2 America's grand strategy choice

From a historical point of view, multilateralism has always been an essential element of American foreign and security policy. Alliances were more than just a means to provide a balance against external powers and threats to the United States; they also stabilized relations among the coalition partners and

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served to bind potentially hostile powers, most notably Japan and Germany.

In the 20th century, it has been unmistakably the United States that initiated changes in the international system after a series of wars and crises. In view of its military and economic potential the United States was in a position to do this in 1919, 1945 and 1989. In 1917, after the war, President Woodrow Wilson addressed the senate and in his speech entitled 'Peace Without Victory' he proposed the establishment of a 'league of nations' as the institutional expression of 'a community of power'. He lost the fight for his league of nations in the senate, because it involved collective security or the obligation to act in unison. The United States did not become a member of the new organization because the Americans, in Wilson's words, did not want to put the lives of their sons at risk "every time a Yugoslav wishes to slap a Czechoslovak in the face" (Krasner 1983: 229).

After the Second World War the United States was the indisputable hegemonic power. Germany and Japan had been beaten; the United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union had been weakened. At the end of the 1940s the American Gross National Product (GNP) amounted to a little less than half the GNP of all other countries in the world. During the war, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt instigated the UN and a liberal economic order in which intergovernmental organizations such as the IMF would play an important role. Contrary to Wilson, Roosevelt did not opt for collective security but for the creation of mechanisms of voluntary cooperative security. But one of the main reasons for establishing the UN was to provide the United States with an instrument with which it could gain influence on matters that might pose a threat to the country. For example, by means of the UN the United States could gain influence on the Soviet Union. John Lewis Gladdis called this the strategy of "containment by integration" (Gladdis 1982: 9).

Multilateralism also played a key role in President Harry Truman's decision to establish an organization for collective defence, the NATO. Truman's decision was not only inspired by the threat of the Soviet Union. The security arrangement was linked to the Marshall plan, which had the requirement that the Europeans would tackle their problems together. In turn, this led to the establishment of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). This approach offered the prospect of a transformation of the old European order, so that Europeans would be better able to take care of themselves, both economically and militarily. As a result, Europe would become more stable and more peaceful, and the chances that America would be involved in European wars would decrease. The OEEC set the process of European integration in motion, and later, from the OEEC, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development came into being.

Multilateralism, aimed at the creation or reinforcement of collective or cooperative security, served the interests of the United States. Common elements in the visions of Presidents Wilson, Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower, with regard to the international system, were: cooperation in security based on comprehensive institutionalized arrangements instead of traditional bilateral alliances; an open world economy with uniform rules for trade and monetary relations and with minimal government influence on economic transactions; and, anti-colonialism based on the right to self-determination, individual human rights and democracy (Ruggie 1997: 108).

After 1989 the United States remained as the only superpower. During the 1990s, America's economic dominance surpassed that of any great power in modern history. Indeed, economic growth laid the foundation for unparalleled military might. Nevertheless, American defence spending today, as a percentage of GNP, is much lower than it was during the Cold War period. Although only 3.5 per cent of its GNP is spent on defence, the American expenditure accounts for nearly forty per cent of global defence expenditures. Brooks and Wohlforth (2001: 21) argue: "If today's American primacy does not constitute unipolarity, then nothing ever will."

Moreover, the United States transformed its armed forces so that it was able to fight its wars during the 1990s with little or no casualties. The Gulf War was a turning point in military history because Iraq suffered a humiliating defeat, while American losses were astonishingly low. Indeed, it was the mother of all future battles, but not the kind of battle Saddam Hussein preferred.

After 1989 a renewed interest in ideas of multilateralism could be noted. President George Bush favoured close cooperation in the Security Council as well as in other institutions. He spoke of a "big idea: a new world order" in his State of the Union address on 29 January 1991 and he invited countries with different backgrounds to work together to fulfil the universal ambitions of mankind: peace, security and a legal order. President Bill Clinton seemed to have a more defined vision of multilateralism, at least on paper. Shortly after he took office he presented the *National Security Strategy of Enlargement and Engagement*. The president initiated the creation of a new pan-European cooperative security order that had broad-based support. In the *Declaration of London* of July 1990 NATO countries extended the 'hand of friendship' to their former opponents (NAVO 1990: par.1&2). With that gesture, the external transformation of NATO had started; from a classic alliance for collective defence to an organization for defence cooperation as part of a cooperative security order (De Wijk 1997; Yost 1998). At the end of 1990, the NATO countries, the Warsaw pact countries and the neutral members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) got together in Paris for a top-level meeting. Optimism about a new European order was

boundless and the participants declared that security was indivisible and that the security of each of their countries was inextricably linked to the security of all of the states that were participating in the CSCE (CSCE 1990). Moreover, democracy and a free market economy were conditions for peaceful and stable relations. In the *Charter for a New Europe*, which was adopted a few days later, the CSCE countries formulated a similar statement.

These early initiatives led to an impressive institutional framework for Europe. The mechanism for an institutionalized relationship between NATO and the Central and Eastern European members of the CSCE became the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which once again was an American initiative. NATO's commitment in 1992 to carry out peace operations where appropriate at the request of the CSCE or UN also conformed to the aim to reinforce the cooperative security order. Subsequently, the CSCE also stated that it was prepared, where appropriate, to request international organizations such as NATO to carry out peacekeeping operations (CSCE 1992: par. 20). The rapprochement among the CSCE member states developed further from 1994 onwards in the form of the Partnership for Peace (PFP), which was applicable to the then sixteen member states of NATO and individual partners. Among other things, the goals of this American initiative were to increase the transparency of the national defence plans, improve democratic control over the military forces, and carry out combined UN and CSCE operations in proportion to military capacity (NACC 1994: par. 4). For some countries the PFP became the gateway to NATO membership. In 1997 the PFP was deepened and acquired a more military-operational nature. Within this framework efforts were made to align the defence planning of Central and Eastern European countries with that of NATO by means of the Planning and Review Process (PARP). This was done in order to increase the interoperability of the forces and to make it possible, therefore, to carry out peace operations more effectively. Incidentally, in 1997 the NACC was subsumed into the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), in which more emphasis was also placed on operational cooperation.

The enlargement, which was actually announced in 1995, was also justified by NATO, based on its efforts to establish a pan-European security construction without dividing lines (NACC 1995: par. 1). By integrating new members in NATO the 'zone of peace' would be expanded. New, potential members were required, therefore, to settle their differences first (*idem*: par. 6). In a number of cases this actually happened. For example, Rumania and Hungary solved their dispute about the rights of the Hungarian minority. It is a clear example of how the prospect of admittance to a security regime can contribute to more peaceful and stable relations.

A separate scheme was developed with Russia, partly in order to make the NATO enlargement palatable. On 27 May 1997 the 'Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation' was signed at the initiative of the United States. The goal was ambitious: consultation, cooperation, joint decision-making and joint action. Incidentally, Russia did not receive the right of veto over NATO actions. Moreover, NATO and Russia committed themselves to reinforce the CSCE. The organization was seen as the most appropriate instrument for the prevention of conflicts and crisis management in Europe. The Founding Act also provided for the creation of a Permanent Joint Council (PJC) where, among other things, consultations would take place if one of the member states thought that there was a threat to 'territorial integrity, political independence, or security'. On paper it looked as if Russia was being integrated into the Western security structure.

To summarize, in the years following the European Revolution of 1989, America's grand strategy was based on what G. John Ikenberry (2001: 23) called the 'American system': an American-centred order organized around layers of security alliances, open markets, multilateral institutions and forums for consultation and governance. According to Ikenberry, it is an order built on common interests and values and it is inherent to both capitalism and democracy, but it is also an engineered order built on American power, institutional relationships and political bargains. Multilateralism and efforts to create and reinforce mechanisms of cooperative security played a central role in the foreign and security policy of the United States. Among other things, this grand strategy seemed to be aimed at creating a security system in which Russia was to be anchored and other former Warsaw Pact countries would be embedded. The durability of this system, which undoubtedly created security, stability and prosperity for its members, revolves around American dominant power, political vision and the will to maintain and strengthen it.

2.1 Lack of strategic vision

There was a crucial problem. There was in fact no guiding vision for foreign and security policy in the United States. Consequently, the American president seemed to act according to the principles of cooperative security, whereas this was actually multilateralism lacking in vision. There are five explanations for the absence of a strategic vision. First, almost everyone was surprised by the collapse of the communist world. Contrary to presidents Wilson, Roosevelt, and Truman, Bush and Clinton had no time to consider at length a blueprint for the post-Cold War international system. Instead, from one day to the next America lost the orientation that had provided guidance for its policy for decades.

Second, although it is true that the European Revolution began with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the Soviet Union did not fall until two years later. It was a time of great change and uncertainty and because there was no strategic vision, reactions to changes were ad hoc, and the institutional design therefore developed incrementally. Initially, the NACC and the PFP had been empty shells, purely meant as gestures to the countries of the former Warsaw pact. A vague idea of what these initiatives could ultimately lead to was all that existed.

Third, in the midst of all this turbulence, Bush lost the 1992 elections to Clinton, and anyway in the United States an election year is by definition not the time to develop great views about a new world order.

Fourth, domestic issues had come to dominate American politics. Bush was praised for the way he had waged the Gulf War, but he foundered on his domestic policy. The main reason for the preoccupation with domestic politics was the 'democratization' of the American Congress, which was initiated in the 1970s (Zoellick 1999: 26). New members of Congress encroached on the old hierarchical order by decentralizing power. This decentralization resulted in the power of the leadership of Congress, the committees and their chairpersons, being shifted to the individual members, who increasingly started to develop individual initiatives. For this purpose more members were added to their personal staffs. Short-term issues, related to the individual and local interests of the grassroots' support for the senator or congressman or woman concerned, began to dominate the agenda. This happened at the expense of attention for foreign policy. Multilateralism, and thereby concepts such as collective and cooperative security, were discredited. In the eyes of short-term thinkers in Congress these limited the freedom of a superpower that has worldwide interests to act. Congress tended towards the grand strategies of isolationism and selective involvement. What they overlooked was that the post-war American presidents had chosen multilateralism and reinforcement of cooperative security as a guideline for their foreign policy out of enlightened self-interest.

Finally, within successive administrations there had been considerable disappointment about the results of engagement and therefore the engagement strategy failed. There was a growing difference in perception of the importance of a pan-European security order for the United States. Particularly in the American Congress it was feared that this would curb the freedom to act.

In addition, even though an impressive institutional construction was created in Europe, the United States did not have a clear idea of the way in which the Soviet Union, later Russia, could be anchored in it. For the Americans it remained to be seen whether Russia, in view of the fact that this country had a history of almost 300 years as a great power behind it, could be considered as a 'normal' state with which other states could cooperate on an

equal footing. Russia had, of course, been weakened, but for the time being it refused to be reconciled to its new position in the world. On the contrary, as a permanent member of the Security Council, Moscow expected to have its voice heard concerning every important security matter.

3 1998: the post post-Cold War era starts

Despite all the talk about multilateralism, there have always been strong unilateralist tendencies in American foreign policy. Mearsheimer (1990: 46) has argued that the central aim of American foreign policy has traditionally been to dominate the Western hemisphere while ensuring that no other great power is permitted to dominate Europe or Northeast Asia. Consequently, elements of maintaining dominant power and unilateralist behaviour have always been present in American foreign policy. Indeed, a superpower *has* to be unilateralist, for only a superpower claims a role as leader, a defender of interests, a pacifier, a provider of stability or even an imperialist. Especially during the years after the two World Wars and the European Revolution of 1989, the United States possessed hegemonic power, but also after these brief periods of true unipolarity the United States could impose its will on others. Already in the early 1990s the idea prevailed in realist circles that, as long as the United States was the hegemonic power, unipolarity contributed to peace. In a unipolar world the hegemonic power determines the rules of the game, because anarchy in international relations will then decrease and certain functions of a central government can be exercised, such as the deterrence of aggression and the promotion of free trade. According to the theory of hegemonic stability the hegemon creates order.

Most realists supposed that the hegemonic position of the United States was only a temporary one and that, according to the prevailing theory, the great concentration of power leads to other states taking action to restore the balance of power (Krauthammer 1990; Layne 1993). At the beginning of the 1990s, Layne and his colleague Waltz asserted that this would take place within the next ten or twenty years (Layne 1993: 7; Waltz 1993: 50). They, and other realists, expected that an unstable situation would arise if the United States lost its hegemonic position (Mearsheimer 1990). Furthermore, the theory of the transition of power asserts that shifts in the hierarchy produce the greatest chance of conflicts (organiski 1958; Oraganski & Kugler 1980). Interestingly, American literature shows that China in particular was considered to be a potential challenge to the United States.¹ From the viewpoint of the realist school, postponement of that moment is a rational aim. Moreover, in a unipolar world the threats against the United States are minimal, but the freedom to act in foreign policy is maximal.

Within the American government there was growing support for this point of view. This became apparent when, in the early 1990s, the Pentagon worked on a new 'Defence Planning Guidance' aimed at maintaining unipolarity and preventing the appearance of a rival on the world stage (Tyler 1992). At the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993 the Pentagon was working on a new strategic guideline, the 'NSC-68'. The basic assumption in this guideline was that multipolarity was dangerous and that the United States had to preserve its hegemonic position. The problem involved in this line of thinking is that other states will not easily be reconciled to it. According to some critics the preservation of hegemonic power by preventing other countries from developing into rivals would be interpreted as a grand strategy of domination because it could undermine the stability of the international system (Layne 1993: 6-7). President Clinton and his Secretary of State Albright took note of the criticism and refrained from making any further mention of the United States as a hegemonic power and only spoke of their country as a 'leader' and an 'indispensable nation'. However, this did not alter the fact that a trend became noticeable in American foreign and security policy, namely the shift from multilateralism to unilateralism and thereby the preservation of the hegemonic position.

In 1998 a change became visible in American policy as it shifted increasingly towards unilateral acting while multilateralism and the development of a cooperative security order got more and more bogged down. Indeed, 1998 seems to have been a turning point in recent history. In that and the following year a number of events took place that seemed to indicate that the Clinton administration had shifted to a narrower and more selective foreign and security policy of unilateralism and preservation of dominant power:

- In response to the bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam the United States intervened unilaterally in Sudan and Afghanistan in August 1998 and without a Security Council mandate. It was the first time something like this had happened since the end of the Cold War. The goal was to deliver a blow against the alleged terrorist network of the Saudi called Bin Laden.
- In December 1998 operation *Desert Fox* was launched. Together with the United Kingdom the United States carried out bombings on Iraq, which were meant as retribution for Saddam Hussein's obstruction of UNSCOM's inspections of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In 1999 and 2000 the bombings continued, albeit with limited intensity.
- In 1998, after a period of budget cuts, it was decided to increase the defence budget by 5.6 per cent (IISS 2000). Especially investments to improve the expeditionary feature of the American military were said to be necessary. The outcome of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) made this possible.

- In January 1999 President Clinton announced he would ask Congress for 2.8 billion dollars for the battle against chemical and biological terrorism.
- In July 1999 plans for a National Missile Defence (NMD) were presented to protect the American people against limited attacks with ballistic missiles by rogue states. The first phase anticipated the deployment of 100 Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABMs) in Alaska against possible attacks from North Korea. The second phase anticipated the deployment of ABMs against any attacks from the Middle East. The plans demanded a review of the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty of 1972, which allowed for the deployment of a limited number of ABMs for the protection of American and Russian strategic nuclear arms.
- Finally, in October 1999, the American Senate refused to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, by doing so, a general prohibition of conducting nuclear tests was dropped.

Most decisions were motivated by the threat posed by rogue states and terrorists, who might possibly be equipped with WMD. Interestingly enough, Osama bin Laden, whose Al Qaeda network was responsible for the United States embassy bombings in 1998, was the most immediate cause of America's policy shift.

In particular, catastrophic terrorism worried American policy-makers. It emerged during the Clinton presidency: the 1993 World Trade Center bombing; the 1996 Oklahoma City bombing; the 1998 bombing of United States embassies in Africa; the 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Aden; not to mention numerous attacks that did not materialize such as the plot to blow up the Lincoln Tunnel and the 1995 plot to destroy eleven US aircraft over the Pacific (Simon & Benjamin 2002).

The decisions mentioned had far-reaching consequences as Huntington argued with much feeling for drama in *Foreign Affairs* where he stated that in the eyes of allies the United States was developing itself into a 'rogue superpower' (Huntington 1990). Until then, the term 'rogue state' had only been used for countries such as Iraq and North Korea. Obviously, Huntington was exaggerating, but it cannot be denied that the new American policy has consequences for the creation of a certain image, which is so important, as perceptions are often more important than facts in international relations. States will often act on the basis of perceptions, instead of acting on an analysis based on facts.

The emerging 'unilateralist' grand strategy was based on a narrow realist vision of America's interests. It required selective engagement of both Europe and Asia and a domination of world politics with superior armed forces. Multilateral organizations such as NATO and UN should play a reduced role because they would undermine the freedom to act and they would only be used if they served America's interests.

Consequently, the first signs of a rift between the United States and Europe became visible. During the preparation of the NATO summit of April 1999 it turned out that there was no consensus about the legitimacy of non-mandate interventions in sovereign states, even in the case of humanitarian disasters. This explains the unclear text in the alliance's new political strategy (NAVO 1999: par. 11). In addition NATO's much-praised political consultation mechanism turned out to function unsatisfactorily during operation Allied Force, the 1999 war on Kosovo. As a political organization, NATO did not play a role of importance, but it did as a military organization. True, multilateral consultation was not dropped entirely during the crisis. However, it usually took place in small, sometimes informal forums where the United States was in control. The harmonization of policies took place in the Contact Group for the Former Yugoslavia, the Quint (the five NATO members of the Contact Group) and the G-8, the seven largest industrial nations and Russia. Under the leadership of the United States it was possible to settle matters more efficiently than within the institutions that were intended for such situations. Apparently, the latter were discussion clubs with honeyed decision-making processes that were not crisis resistant. As a result, the institutions that had been established for the prevention of conflicts and the management of crises actually became organizations that carried out the decisions of informal directorates. Consequently, many countries, particularly smaller ones, were left out.

Many allies were especially troubled by unilateral actions, such as the NMD, the non-ratification of the CTBT and the improvement of the American armed forces' power to intervene. On June 16, 2000 the *International Herald Tribune* ran an article headlined 'Allies wonder if US really wants arms control'. It expressed a growing fear that American unilateralism would lead to instability of the international system and a decoupling of European and American security. In various European capitals it was feared that the United States was especially concerned with its own security interests and could become an unreliable ally. The Americans seemed to have chosen a grand strategy of selective involvement in the developments in the rest of the world. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, observed that the United States was guilty of neo-unilateralism. Supposedly, the idea had taken root that in American eyes it is "no longer necessary to negotiate, whether they are friends or foes" (NRC 2000). Védrine subsequently called for resistance.

4 Transatlantic consequences

It is only logical that the geopolitical changes of the 1990s would have important implications for transatlantic relations. After the Second World War, European allies had got used to American engagement. However, this engagement was forced upon the Americans by the Cold War, when America's interests in Europe were being threatened and which was an exceptional period in history. After the Cold War, America's interests were more likely to be at stake in the Far East (the Koreas and Taiwan), Central Asia (the oil-rich Caspian Sea region), the oil-rich Persian Gulf Region (Iraq and Iran), the Middle East (Israel and Palestine), and Central and South America (the war on drugs in Colombia). It is only logical that the United States refocused its attention on these regions. Moreover, as Europe was no longer America's number one security priority, the transatlantic security relationship was bound to change. As Europe is a safe place and the EU is economically an equal partner, the United States expects it to take care of its own backyard by means of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). In addition, the Americans expected European support when American interests were being threatened. For the Europeans this required a change from security consumer to security provider, for which they are not equipped mentally, organizationally or militarily. Consequently, the debate on unilateralism is a debate among allies. The Americans put more emphasis on selective engagement in world politics; Europeans label this policy 'unilateralist' as it is at the expense of transatlantic cooperation.

The geopolitical changes of the post-Cold War era made some fundamental differences visible between the United States and its traditional European allies, with the exception of the United Kingdom. First, there are considerable transatlantic differences in threat perception. On the one hand, the measures taken in 1998 and 1999 expressed a growing American fear of the consequences of the proliferation of missiles and WMD, and of the threat of catastrophic terrorism. This fear led to a feeling of vulnerability, which would result in a limiting of the freedom to act in foreign policy and an encroachment upon the hegemonic position. War against the United States was unlikely in the past and will remain so in the future, but United States territory is by no means safe. As far as WMD are concerned, their means of delivery and terrorism are the only applicable threats for the weak, the measures mentioned are logical. Any enemy will not confront the United States head-on, because it can never be a match for its army, navy, air force and marines. Instead, it will exploit the inherent weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the US's open, liberal, democratic and industrialized society through asymmetrical forms of warfare, most notably terrorist attacks on American soil but also on its interests abroad. Thus, for the US, terrorism and missiles

are very real threats, although over the last decades only a small percentage of the total terror-related casualties have been Americans (Cronin 2002: 124).

On the other hand, Europeans have learned to live with a complex security situation. Throughout its history Europe has experienced numerous and disastrous wars as an essential element of a continuous process of nation building. Furthermore, Europeans are not unfamiliar with terrorism and at present it is considered to be the only threat to European societies. Over the last decades Europeans have endured many incidents of terrorism, from the IRA in Northern Ireland, the Baader-Meinhof Group in West Germany, from the Red Brigades in Italy and the ETA in Spain. Moreover, European governments are familiar with rogue states. For example, in 1986 Libya fired a missile at Lampedusa, an uninhabited Italian island. This has been the only direct attack on NATO territory during the existence of the Alliance, but it did not result in a European call for missile defences. In Europe the security risks of WMD and missiles are just not perceived to be great enough to justify the spending of taxpayers' money. Many European policy-makers consider the NMD as a disproportionate measure against a distant threat.

Second, there are transatlantic differences in opinion about how security could be provided. European governments do not underestimate the threats of wars, terrorism and rogue states, they are simply used to managing complex security situations. The problem of terror is managed through a combination of practical measures and political means. For example, Irish separatism was dealt with by the British armed forces by fighting militant IRA members and by political dialogue with Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA. European security management aimed at preventing wars has traditionally been carried out through engagement, i.e., multilateralism and treaties. The emphasis on multilateralism and a loss of sovereignty go hand in hand. As a result of European integration, Europeans have been steadily handing over power to Brussels. Americans do not see any source of democratic legitimacy higher than the constitutional nation state.

This supports the view of Kagan (2002), who argues that the Europeans believe that a peaceful world is one that is governed by law, norms and international agreements. In this world, power politics have become obsolete. Americans, by contrast, believe that power politics is necessary when dealing with Iraq, Al Qaeda and other malign forces. Kagan argues that the Europeans do not understand that their safety is ultimately guaranteed by American military power. To put it over-simply, Europeans like international law and norms because they are weaker than the United States; the latter likes unilateralism because it is the only remaining superpower.

Consequently, European governments seek relative security whereas Americans seek absolute security. Generally speaking, Europeans try to manage the risks and minimize the problems whereas Americans seek military

victory. Europeans put more emphasis on intent; the United States stresses capability. Europe overemphasizes economics whilst the United States overemphasizes political and military issues. As a result, Europeans and Americans differ fundamentally in their methods for dealing with contemporary security threats. Europeans put emphasis on 'soft security', i.e., diplomacy, incentives such as economic aid and peace support operations. Americans emphasize 'hard security', i.e., limited wars of intervention to defend interests and promote regional security. Of course, the Americans have been involved in diplomatic efforts and peace support operations, like those in the Balkans, but in most cases this was because they were asked to by European allies. America's security situation is less complex because, with the exception of the Civil War, no war has taken place on its soil. By definition US armed forces are expeditionary forces for deployment outside the Continental US to defend its interests.

Third, in contrast to most European powers, the United States needs an enemy on which to focus its foreign and security policy. The United States has a problem-solving, materialistic culture and without an enemy there is no problem to solve. American history is full of examples of its unwillingness and inability to organize its policy well until there is a specific threat. Watershed events in American history, such as the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea, the blockade of Berlin, the 1962 Cuba crisis and, most recently, the September 11 attacks have had a catalysing effect on American society which mobilized political will to act decisively. European policy-makers, probably with the exception of the British, underestimate the effects of these events since they tend to interpret American action as 'unilateralist'.

Because of the geopolitical changes mentioned, the EU must strike a new transatlantic bargain, one that is based on a strategic vision of equal partnership. If the Europeans fail to do so, Europe and America will drift further apart, Europe will be marginalized and run the risk of getting entangled in a security competition between Germany, France, the United Kingdom and possibly Italy.

5 Hard-liners prevail

With the inauguration of George W. Bush as President of the United States in 2001, the battle between the multilateralist and confrontationalist policy-makers was won by the latter. Within the first six months of being in office the Bush Administration moved towards a hard-line unilateralist position. It decided to deploy NMD; abrogated the 1972 ABM Treaty; rejected the 1997 Kyoto Protocol; refused to ratify the Rio Pact on biodiversity; opposed the

ban on landmines; withdrew from the Biological Weapons Convention ratified by the United States in 1975; and withdrew from the treaty on the International Criminal Court (ICC), which had been signed by the previous president shortly before leaving office.

On 20 September 2001, Bush declared war on terrorism during a speech to Congress. This speech is considered to be the most important statement on grand strategy since President Truman's speech of March 12, 1947 when the United States declared that it would fight communism worldwide. After September 11, the Administration refused an offer of help from NATO, which had invoked Article 5 (its collective defence clause), for the first time in history. Bush reluctantly accepted British military aid during the war against the Taleban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Next, the American President wanted immunity from the ICC, which had been formed on July 1 2002, for American peacekeeping forces in Bosnia. For that reason, he threatened to block a UN mandate for the continued deployment of the International Police Task Force in the Balkans. This not only put the entire NATO mission in the Balkans at risk, but also led to severe criticism from America's closest allies. In the United States this policy was widely supported, because the ICC was believed to undermine American sovereignty. President Bush also put the nuclear issue on the agenda. He showed renewed interest in nuclear-armed missile interceptors in an NMD and nuclear ground penetrators to destroy hardened underground bunkers and tunnel complexes because conventional means would be less efficient. In this context the Nuclear Posture Review of January 8, 2002 caused much unease among allies because it explicitly called for a capability to destroy "hard and deeply buried targets".²

The real policy change came with the State of the Union address on January 29, 2002. Referring to North Korea, Iran and Iraq, Bush stated, that "States like these, constitute an axis of evil, aiming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic." Elaborating on the 'axes of evil' speech, he announced a major policy shift during the Graduation Speech at West Point on June 1 2002:

For much of the last century, America's defence relied on the Cold War doctrines of deterrence and containment (...). Deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorists with no nation or citizen to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorists (...). Our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for pre-emptive action, when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.³

Thus, a new unilateralist, first strike policy of 'defensive intervention' was announced. Vice-president Dick Cheney underscored the need for such a strategy during a hawkish speech delivered to war veterans on August 26, 2002. He argued that pre-emption against Iraq was necessary because:

There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us. And there is no doubt that his aggressive regional ambitions will lead him into future confrontations with his neighbours.

Quoting former foreign secretary Henry Kissinger, Cheney argued that this produces "an imperative for preventive action." In addition, "our job would be more difficult in the face of a nuclear armed Saddam Hussein".⁴

Key officials, such as Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle and his colleagues of the now influential Defence Policy Board at the Pentagon, and Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, all support this grand strategy. They gained victory over moderate officials who favour an approach based on multilateralism, such as the then Secretary of Defence Colin Powell.

Bush's grand strategy is based on the firm belief that the United States is powerful enough to go it alone if this is in its best interest. Institutions, treaties and rules are merely obstacles to this grand strategy. The events of September 11 reinforced the arguments of those favouring this grand strategy. September 11 was seen as an attack on America and everything it stands for, and, consequently, America's vital interests are at stake. Indeed, this is a very powerful motivation to go alone and to adopt a new doctrine of 'pre-emption' and 'defensive intervention'. For that reason the current administration is reforming its defence apparatus to allow the United States to project force from Continental US, rather than from overseas bases in Europe, Asia and the Middle East and to be able to deal with contemporary challenges, including asymmetrical warfare (Rumsfeld 2002).

6 Balancing of dominant American power

As has been pointed out, realists expect countries or coalitions to counterbalance dominant American power. According to this school of thought coalitions or great powers will try to counterbalance American hegemonic power in order to achieve freedom of action. There have indeed been some attempts to counterbalance American power. In the mid-1990s, the Russian minister of foreign Affairs, Yevgeny Primakov, put forward his theory of 'multipolarity'. He asserted that a counterbalance to the United States was necessary and he emphasized the importance of cooperation with

China, India, Iran, Iraq, Syria and other states that were not kindly disposed towards the West (Antonenko 1999: 128). Primakov believed that cooperating too closely with NATO would impede the formation of a new, multipolar world. By means of an active dialogue with NATO, Russia would have to prevent, however, that the alliance could harm its interests. The decision to agree to the establishment of the Permanent Joint Council should therefore be seen in this context.

Furthermore, the special relationship between Germany and Russia, the 'strategic triangle' of Russia, China and India, and the 'strategic partnership' between Russia and China can all be explained as attempts to counterbalance the United States and to come to grips with the new strategic reality, as can the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which emerged during the 1990s. EU Commissioner Chris Patten argued in an internal paper for the European Commission that the EU has the obligation to contribute to the increase of stability, because the world is one in which the United States increasingly acts without giving any thought to the concerns of others.⁵

So far, all attempts to counterbalance have failed. Moreover, the rise of an international order dominated by American power has not yet triggered a global backlash, and the strategic rivalry and competitive balancing among the great powers is actually quite limited. There are two possible explanations. First, balancing involves economic, military and political costs, which neither Russia, nor China nor the European Union is willing to bear. Both Russia and China lack the necessary resources, whilst the European Union is not willing to spend more on defence to give its ESDP more substance. In addition, the blossoming of the relationship between Russia and the United States was one of the unexpected changes resulting from September 11th. The Americans need the Russians for intelligence gathering and cooperation in other areas; the Russians consider the war on terrorism as a unique opportunity to turn Russia into an indispensable partner for the United States and to gain economically.

Second, unlike Russia or the United Kingdom, the United States is not a traditional imperial power trying to enlarge its territory. America's 'imperialism' is of an ideological nature seeing as the United States considers itself to be the champion of democracy and free market economy, whose values are universal and should be exported all over the world. Nevertheless, for other cultures, most notably the Islamic world, this behaviour could be threatening. This explanation is one of the things that keeps the struggle between the United States and the militant representatives of political Islam alive. Interestingly, in the United States a debate is emerging on American imperialism. Conservative Realists, like Andrew J. Bacevich (forthcoming) argue that the United States should go its own way. It should not have its foreign and security policy

restricted by international law and institutions. Rather, an 'empire of freedom' should be established, one that is ruled by the United States and founded on specific values and norms, such as democracy, free market economy and human rights. Thus a new unipolar order or *Pax Americana* will be created.

Despite the talk about American imperialism, it is unlikely that attempts to counterbalance American power will undermine the stability of the international order. Nevertheless, stability could be undermined. The demise of multilateralism gives rise to an image of an arrogant United States, imposing its will on the rest of the world. This could result in the demise of the 'American system', which has provided peace, security and stability for five decades. Indeed, this very multilateral system, based on cooperative security and engagement, has already been put at risk. In the new grand strategy international institutions play a subordinate role at best. First of all, the Security Council has already been sidelined a number of times, as a result of which the role of the UN was undermined. After the war on Kosovo, the further institutional development of a pan-European security order was frozen. The 1999 OSCE summit in Istanbul was not a great success, despite the adoption of the 'Charter for European Security' in which, among other things, it was declared that the OSCE would get a more operational task in the preservation of peace. In addition, the long-awaited 'Platform for Cooperative Security' was made effective in Istanbul and dealt with the relationship between the OSCE and other institutes. The initiative for the platform was taken at a time when there was an actual prospect of the formation of a system of mutually complementary and reinforcing institutions. With regard to contents, both long-awaited documents hardly offered any new insights. Finally, NATO's much-praised political consultation mechanism turned out to function unsatisfactorily not only during operation of the war on Kosovo, but after September 11th as well. After September 11th, its collective defence clause (Article 5 of the Washington Treaty) was invoked largely for symbolic reasons, thus undermining the credibility of the entire Alliance. Except for some practical measures to support the American war on terrorism, there was no concerted military action under the authority of the North Atlantic Council. In addition, there were no transatlantic consultations on the course to be followed in the war against terrorism and, furthermore, there was widespread disagreement among the European allies about expanding the war to areas outside Afghanistan as well. The possibility of an attack on Iraq gave rise to protest, especially in Germany and France.

7 Conclusion

In 1998 the first changes in America's grand strategy became visible but with the inauguration of the Bush Administration in 2001 it was clear that those favouring a unilateralist grand strategy of selective engagement, based on a narrow interpretation of national interests, had prevailed.

There are indications that the new grand strategy is already undermining the 'American system', which has contributed to five decades of peace, stability and prosperity in the Western hemisphere. America and Europe are drifting apart and as a result various gaps are emerging. First, there is a 'values gap'. Americans and Europeans have different views on arms control, the environment, international order, capital punishment and the treatment of Al Qaeda prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. Second a 'military gap' has emerged. In 2002 the US not only increased its defence spending by as much as the defence budgets of Italy and Germany combined, but it also embarked on a radical transformation of its armed forces. The RMA has clearly contributed to low cost victories in terms of American lives in recent wars. In almost every area of military technology the US has an advantage over its European allies and these advantages have become so big that they can no longer be bridged. This military gap puts NATO at risk, because 'cooperability' between US and European forces will become increasingly difficult.

To be fair, President Bush has reaffirmed some basic aspects of the multilateral economic order and America's position in it. Regarding free trade, the President called for a new round of negotiations, but when security policy is concerned the administration is deeply suspicious about rules and international organizations which could affect its freedom to act in international affairs. Indeed, the Bush administration seems unashamed of using military power against rogue and failed states that support terrorism. There are at least two reasons why this development could have negative consequences for international stability. First, as mentioned earlier, it will undermine the 'American system'. Second, there is probably no military solution for international terrorism since it requires political, economic and military measures. It could well be that the European way of managing complex security issues is more effective in the end. In addition, in order to be able to fight terrorism, the United States needs partners for intelligence sharing, logistical support, joint and combined military operations, and intense cooperation with frontline states.

Indeed, after September 11th the President did not rush to use force but waited while Secretary of State Colin Powell tried to form informal coalitions. However, these coalitions are not durable and do not contribute to peace and stability in the long run. Such peace and stability can only be accomplished by alliances that do more than just provide security. For this reason, the Bush administration should rediscover the virtues of a multinational approach of engagement and put more emphasis on strengthening the 'American system'.

Notes

1. In the past years numerous articles discussing the question of what consequences the rise of China has for American policy have appeared in leading magazines such as *Foreign Affairs* and *International Security*.
2. US Department of Defense, 'Nuclear Posture Review', submitted to Congress on December 31, 2000, pp. 46-47.
3. G.W. Bush, Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy West Point, New York, Washington D.C., June 1, 2002.
4. D. Cheney, Remarks by the Vice President to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention, Washington D.C., August 26, 2002.
5. *International Herald Tribune*, 'The EU counterweight to American influence', June 16, 2000.

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More Women or More Feminists in Politics? Advocacy Coalitions and the Representation of Women in the Netherlands 1967-1992

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Abstract

Since the 1970s women's movements in many democratic countries have argued for policies to enhance the representation of women in politics. In the Scandinavian countries policies have been very successful over the past decades. Southern European countries lag behind, although in some 'parity' and quota have either been adopted or are being discussed seriously. Though the Netherlands was relatively early in institutionalizing equality policy, a specific policy aimed at women's representation was not introduced until rather late in the 1990s, and compulsory measures have never been introduced. Women's representation, however, is on a par with the successful Scandinavian countries. Apparently, the Dutch succeeded in gradually changing selection procedures of political elites despite feminist distrust of politics and cabinets' dislike of tampering with procedures. In this article the development of representation policies in the Netherlands is analysed, using the advocacy coalition approach of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith. This framework facilitates tracing the changes in the ideas of different feminist factions and the convictions of successive cabinets as well as the shifts in coalitions around these sets of ideas.

1 Introduction

Though the Dutch polity is currently in danger of losing its reputation for compromise and gradual change, study of the issue of representation of women still seems to bolster the stereotype. In the past decades, women have entered Dutch politics in greater numbers than ever before. The percentage of female members in the Second Chamber, the main venue of representative democracy, has risen from around ten per cent in 1970, to about a third of the membership now (Keuzenkamp & Oudhof 2000). This spectacular rise in numbers could be achieved without the use of drastic measures such as parity or quotas, which have been adopted recently in France and Belgium (Siim 2000; Meyer 2002). Despite the early institutionalization of equality policy in the Netherlands, there was no direct policy on political representation until the 1990s. This can partly be explained by the distrust of movement activists