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POST-IRAQ WAR WORLD ORDER: AMERICAN SCRIPT, PAX ROMANA OR PAX BRITANNICA?

Abstract

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of former Soviet Union raised new hopes and vision about a new world to be based on more democratisation of the prevailing political and economic order, justice, equity, and judgment of issues on the basis of merit in a dispassionate and objective way quite unfamiliar with the Cold War. Such hopes soon disappeared with the US rising from embers of Cold War with new vigour and strength to enact its own script of world order. The very prophecy about the emergence of a multipolar world or a multilateral approach to international crisis did not come true as America launched an attack on Iraq in 1991 under a façade of UN backing. Fears were raised about the emergence of a unipolar world. But when America launched the second attack on Iraq in 2003 on the pretext of disarming Iraq of its alleged weapons of mass destruction in the face of stiff opposition from almost all quarters of the world including the Security Council, the final denouement of a unipolar world was enacted. America's avowed determination to promote democracy and its own version of economic order in countries ruled by undemocratic and authoritarian regimes by military means has drawn vitriolic attacks from critics and raised a debate on whether

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America is likely to play a more interventionist role in the prevailing and future international scenario.

I. Introduction

Soon after the end of Cold War, the United States, the most powerful player in the international arena, started dictating to the world its own version of what world political and economic order would usher in. The language and idioms, the United States used to spell out its own script of world political and economic order, seem to be largely ingrained in its own domestic democratic and capitalist political and economic structure. This liberal market based polity and economy founded on Hobbes and Locke's possessive individualism aims at ensuring abundant economic growth, wealth production and luxurious, materialistic and commodious living. To this end of exorbitant wealth, production and inordinate lifestyle, science provided the ontological foundation. Newtonian image of particles in motion becomes the guiding metaphor in the emerging mechanistic worldview and liberal conception of possessive and atomistic individualism. Sharing the same foundation with science the political and economic thinking of the US as well as that of the West as a whole constitutes the ideological foundation on which the people legitimise the state authority as a guarantor of individual property rights, wealth production, market relations and inordinate lifestyle. Acting in response to these domestic imperatives and compulsions means arming the state with the capability – the build up of masculine power in terms of conquest of nature and pursuit of pleasures in a competitive world.

Viewed from this perspective, following is an attempt to analyse US foreign policy, probe into its genesis and evaluate its implications for the emerging world order. The paper begins with an

inquiry into the domestic imperatives of American foreign policy. Then it reviews the US march towards supremacy at the global level in the wake of the Cold War. This is followed by an assessment of US foreign policy beliefs. Next, uncertain and indifferent public opinion behind foreign policy is analysed. On the basis of all these, an attempt is made to assess whether the US is moving towards unilateralism or multilateralism. This is followed by an attempt to probe into the dichotomy between democratic within and imperial abroad of the US, while focussing next on the US unilateralism in practice. All these would allow us to understand the role of the United Nations in international arena in the face of US Supremacy. Finally, an attempt would be made to evaluate the implications of all these for the emerging international order.

II. Domestic Imperatives of American Foreign Policy

Following the World War II, the United States embarked upon a massive military build-up which could enable it to have unimpeded access to resources in any part of the globe at a price it likes, and to countervail the forces opposing American world order. Former Soviet Union, the counterbalance to the United States in the post-World War II scenario, posed a challenge to the US world order by its own version of communism – the exact anti-thesis to capitalist liberal market economy. Soviet Union's socialism, state controlled economy, equal distribution of wealth and the principle "from each according to one's ability, to each according to one's needs" came in direct collision with the political and economic order propagated by the United States. Both the superpowers, thus, engaged themselves in an ideological battle each trying to impose on the world its own version of world order as being universal one. Hence, the military build-up and arms race, both conventional and nuclear, resulted in a

Cold War between the two. Whereas the domestic imperatives of wealth production and luxurious lifestyle constitute the bedrock of America's foreign policy behaviour and engagement in various part of the globe, the copingstone of Soviet Union's foreign policy was internationalisation of communism.

The United States' political and military intervention in support of or opposition to the regimes in various parts of the globe during the Cold War or post-Cold War period can be explained only in the backdrop of its domestic concerns as discussed. On the contrary, concerns for indigence of the working class in transcendence of any territorial and geographical confines could swing Soviet Union into intervention. In other words, the domestic concerns for affluence of its people are the idioms with which the United States defines its world order not only during the Cold War, but also during post-Cold War. That means, squeezing the entire globe into its cocoon of concern for affluence and wealth production is what the US christens it as globalisation. Thus, domesticisation of the universe is the other name for the US world order. But the (former) Soviet Union's world order envisaged internationalisation of its universal concern for the poor and downtrodden. Due to compulsion of inner contradictions and other irresistible forces, communism collapsed and the Soviet Union disintegrated giving rise to unipolarism presided over by the United States. The conspicuous missing of this domestic imperative as found distinctively quintessential of American foreign policy, in the Soviet Union, foreign policy was one of the preponderant factors for communism being felled to the ground and Soviet Union crumbled into crumbs. 'The domesticisation of universe' policy of the US means compelling the countries of the South to dedicate themselves to the affluence, production of wealth and extravagant lifestyle of US people.

To achieve this objective, the United States constituted various institutions and structural arrangements for the exploitation of the South. The Western frontier model of economic and trading system, and the concomitant institutional and structural arrangements shaped at Bretton Woods on the indices of neoclassical and liberal market economy are designed to legitimise and protect the monopoly of the US and its Western allies to expropriate the resources of the South. One of its major aspects is to permanently condemn the South to the periphery status in the world economic growth system and make them dependent on economic aid, assistance or loan from the rich industrialised North tied with many conditionalities or strings. The principal-agency acting on behalf of credit institutions in the West is the IMF, which certifies debtor countries' continued credit worthiness. To qualify for loans, countries would have to carry out structural adjustments geared to the requirements of Western economic system. IMF's insistence on deregulation, privatisation of government owned enterprises, elimination of tariff barriers, measures to boost export production, cut in deficit budgeting, devaluation of national currency, removal of subsidies and getting markets to work properly for efficient long run growth, have well been acquiesced in by the South countries in their bid to earn more foreign exchange, by exploiting their environment and adopting economic policies with only short term gains in mind. Similarly, World Bank (WB) continues its traditional lending policies to the South for large capital-intensive projects without considering their impact on the local and regional environment. IMF and WB mostly financed and controlled by the US are to a greater extent determining the economic policies of the developing countries. They are like states of the US within the states of the South, which are already in debt traps. The total debt service and payment by the South has been

so staggering that it led Willy Brandt to opine that resource flows from North to South has been reversed and compared it with “blood transfusion from sick to the healthy”.

The US and its allies are pressing hard in the GATT forums, WTO at Seattle or Doha and other forums for greater protection and enforceability of corporate and private intellectual property rights including, patents over genetic materials, and declining to make commitments to the developing countries on access to biotechnology and other associated technologies on the plea that there is no way that they can interfere with private sector interests.

III. The End of Cold War and American March towards Supremacy

With the demise of Cold War, the challenges from the Soviet Union to the US version of world order vanished forever. The eclipse of the Cold War context in which Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was born, makes NAM redundant impelling the countries of the South to sing in paeans of US economic and political thinking. The end of Cold War is cited as ‘end of history’ and dawn of new world order. All these predictions about new world order did not come true and remained haze and nebulous. What we witness is rather the unchallenged continuance, acceptance and legitimisation of American view of world order as the universal one. The US view of world order comes a full circle with the occupation of the space left by the former Soviet Union. Information technology, Internet or personal computer (PC) may have brought about ‘death of distance’ or ‘end of geography’ but it also enables the US to clamp over the entire globe with greater celerity and success to initiate the nations around the globe into its political and economic thinking. In the

name of globalisation and New World Order, the US has through trans-national corporations (TNCs) and multi-national corporations (MNCs) succeeded in carrying out the economic practices and political values distinctive of the US capitalist system to the reach of every nook and cranny of the universe.

Does this portray the glimpses of a New World Order? Is it different from the US view of world that prevailed during the Cold War period? In the backdrop of the above analysis, it can be said with a degree of certainty that the New World Order dreamt of after the end of Cold War, is nothing but an extension, continuance and perpetuation of US version of world order shaped on its domestic imperatives. Globalisation, a camouflage for American world order, has not yet facilitated democratisation of world economic and trading system, equity in participation and access to resources, equality of sovereign states, collective security, decision making on the consensus of all members, dismantling of centre-periphery status, sweeping away of barriers, and protectionist attitude. All pomp and fanfare associated with the end of Cold War and the apocalypse of New World Order fade away into a religious acquiescence in things as they are, or still worse, into a slavish adulation of the US versed world order. With the exit of Soviet Union from the scene, a unilinear occupation of space and time becomes complete by the US. The entire globe gets crammed into a US world order without any challenge and an externalisation of its scripted world order takes place as universal, dedication and total surrender to which is considered as the only standard of being called civilised. Huntington's clash of civilisation is another expedient metaphor for earlier imperialistic white man's burden to develop the South in the way the US defines development.

To propound, on the one hand, that the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union defined the US foreign policy, often dictating choices at home as well abroad, and, on the other, that there has been a change in US foreign policy beliefs and behaviour after the end of the Cold War, is highly erroneous. It undermines the sub-structural role of US domestic imperatives in the making of its foreign policy. Any asking on America to compromise its political and economic thinking is perceived as a threat and is very likely to create a popular upsurge the backlash of which has a great bearing on its legitimacy to rule. American intervention be it in Vietnam, Nicaragua, Bosnia, Haiti or at present in Afghanistan, Iraq or in WTO or climate negotiation, can be explained only on this background of domestic imperatives. For instance, the United States reneged on its commitment agreed to at Kyoto to reduce emission of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere by 5 per cent on the pretext that it would deleteriously affect its economy and the luxurious lifestyle of its people – the promotion of which is the main objective of US foreign policy. US interventions, military or non-military, are not that of a messiah but of a very possessive individualistic state concerned with its own domestic imperatives. The eclipse of Cold War may have brought some changes in the situation and context, but the substance of American foreign policy remains unchanged and marks a constancy so far as the foundation of its foreign policy is strongly embedded to its domestic urges and imperatives of wealth production, inordinate lifestyle and capitalist liberal political and economic order. The world order, old or new, is an American script; the drama to be played out is purely an American direction, keeping to itself the right to choose the actors, dialogue and the tuning of the play.

IV. Faces of Internationalism: US Foreign Policy Beliefs

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and the war that followed it were a turning point in American foreign policy. Prior to the war, being seemingly protected by the vast oceans that separated the United States from Europe and Asia, the nation designed an isolationist foreign policy strategy. It was designed to protect its security and values by withdrawing from world affairs. After the war, isolation was jettisoned in favour of a globalist foreign policy posture sustained by domestic support for what Richard Gardner has called liberal internationalism. He described it as "the intellectual and political tradition that believes in the necessity of leadership by liberal democracies in the construction of a peaceful world order through multilateral cooperation and effective international organisations."¹

By the end of 1950s, a consensus developed in American foreign policy among elite circles, which implied elements of both cooperation and coercion. The US hinted at a solution of both global and national problems through cooperation with other nations. On the other hand, the US also made it clear that it would not mind intervening in the affairs of others, using force, if and when necessary, to protect its self-defined national interests. After Pearl Harbour and World War II, the Vietnam War reoriented American foreign policy, once again. Concern for cooperation and coercion, which founded the consensus among the people in respect of American foreign policy, now, divided them. The question was not only whether America should be involved in the world, but also how it should be involved. In the wake of Vietnam debacle,

¹ Richard N. Gardner, "The Comeback of Liberal Internationalism", *Washington Quarterly*, No.13, Summer 1990, p.23.

internationalism came to wear two faces – a cooperative one and a militant one.²

During the Cold War, “attitude towards communism, the use of American troops abroad, and relations with the Soviet Union, particularly the wisdom of *détente*, were critical in distinguishing proponents and opponents of the competing faces of internationalism – each of which became laced with partisan and ideological coloration”.³ It was expected that the end of Cold War would usher in a new world order and bring changes in American foreign policy behaviour, as the fear of communism, fear of the Soviet Union and a determination to contain both that gave structure and purpose to post-World War II American foreign policy, disappeared. The developments in the international system and American involvement in Bosnia, Haiti, Afghanistan and Iraq suggest that the core elements underlying the two faces of internationalism remain today as they were two decades ago.

As studied by Wittkopf, the intersection of the two faces of internationalism reveals four clusters of individuals with distinctive foreign policy beliefs in America, which can be described with the labels: internationalists, accommodationists, hard-liners, and isolationists.⁴ Internationalists are willing to cooperate with other nations to solve global and national problems but they are also willing to intervene in the affairs of others to promote and protect

² Eugene R. Wittkopf, *Faces of Internationalism, Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990.

³ Eugene R. Wittkopf, “American Foreign Policy Beliefs and Behaviour at the Water’s Edge”, *International Studies Notes*, Vol.22, No.3, Fall 1997, p.3.

⁴ Eugene R. Wittkopf, “What Americans Really Think about Foreign Policy”, *Washington Quarterly*, No.19, Summer 1996, pp.91-106; See also, Eugene R Wittkopf, “Faces of Internationalism in a Transitional Environment”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, No.38, September 1994, pp.376-401.

American national interests. On the other hand, isolationists reject most if not all forms of global involvement. While internationalists embrace cooperative and militant internationalism, isolationists reject both. Accommodationists and hard-liners are internationalist but selective. They differ about how the US should be involved in world affairs, not whether it should be involved. Accommodationists prefer multilateralism to unilateralism as a means of conflict management and resolution. Hard-liners, on the other hand, keep faith in the utility of coercive diplomacy and prompting the US to the forefront of the global agenda. Making US the sole superpower is a label to be embraced, not to be sidelined.⁵

V. Uncertain and Indifferent Public Opinion behind Foreign Policy

The ease with which Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson enjoyed consensus behind shaping of American foreign policy, could not be available to Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan and Clinton to build coalitions of support for their foreign policy initiatives because of partisan and ideological division. American people are divided about the nation's appropriate world role, but the term isolationism does not capture their mood. "Analysts who assume that America has a discernible national interest whose defense should determine its relations with other nations are unable to explain the persistent failure to achieve domestic consensus on international objectives".⁶ This was no less evident in the 1990s when, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US emerged as the unparallel global military, economic and cultural power. The

⁵ Eugene R. Wittkopf, (1997), *op.cit*, p.5.

⁶ Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the national interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, p.12.

American easy victory in two Gulf wars against Iraq, and another one in Afghanistan, bombardment of Serbia without suffering a single causality and ever growing economy and booming stock market served as a testimony to show that "the United States resembled Britain in its mid-Victorian glory, but with even greater global reach".⁷

Countering Soviet Union provided the impetus for American foreign policy during the Cold War. In the post-Cold War period, the public in America is indifferent and quite uncertain about how to shape its foreign policy to guide this power. Polls showed that the American public is focussing more on domestic affairs and paying little attention to the rest of the world. In 1992 Presidential Elections, domestic affairs dominated the election campaign. Clinton's victory depended on the irrelevance of foreign policy. It is striking to note, for example, that among the eight per cent of voters who said foreign policy determined their choice; George Bush outpolled Bill Clinton by a whopping 11 to 1 ratio.⁸ Similarly, in the 2000 Presidential Elections, foreign affairs played little role. Between 1989 and 2000, the television networks closed foreign bureaus and cut their foreign news content by two-thirds. With the majority of American people being indifferent and uncertain about international affairs, the making of foreign policy has been left to those few who take keen interest in foreign affairs.

The result is a very narrow definition of national interest. Though a majority an Americans were in favour of United Nations,

⁷ Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The American national interest and global public goods", *International Affairs*, Vol.78, No. 2, April 2002.

⁸ William Schneider, "The New Isolationism", in Robert J. Lieber (ed.), *Eagle Adrift: American Foreign Policy at the End of the Century*, New York: Longman, 1997, p.30.

America refused to pay its UN dues. It was the intensity of preferences of minority that Congress heard in shaping American interest.⁹ American unrivalled rise to supremacy is not in response to what majority of its people wants. As Henry Kissinger pointed out, "What is presented by foreign critics as America's quest for domination is very frequently a response to domestic pressure groups". The cumulative effect "drives American foreign policy towards unilateral and bullying conduct".¹⁰ As the German commentator Joseph Joffe warns, "To the extent that the United States turns unilateralism into a habit or cuts its contribution to the production of public goods, others will feel the sting of American power more strongly. And the incentive to discipline Mr. Big will grow."¹¹

Attitudes towards globalisation of American people is often more fragile than it appears. A wide range of public opinion surveys report that a majority of US people opposes policies aimed at further liberalisation of trade, immigration and foreign direct investment. These attitudes reflect not simply ignorance of the benefits but a feeling that costs of economic insecurity may be more important.¹²

VI. America towards Unilateralism or Multilateralism?

Defining national interest after the end of Cold War became anomalous, problematic and uncertain. But in the wake of 11

⁹ Steven Kull, "What the Public knows that Washington does not", *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1995-96, p.114.

¹⁰ Henry Kissinger, "America at the apex", *The National Interest*, Summer 2001, p.15.

¹¹ Joseph Joffe, "Who's afraid of Mr. Big", *The National Interest*, Summer 2001, p.52.

¹² Kenneth F. Scheve and Matthew J. Slaughter, *Globalisation and the Perception of American Workers*, Washington DC.: Institute for International Economics, 2001.

September 2001, countering terrorism injected a new energy and focus to American foreign policy. Some critics see the successful campaign of America in Afghanistan as evidence that unilateralism works, and warn against entangling coalitions.¹³ Many observers at home and abroad believe that the United States still pursues a narrow and arrogant conception of its national interest. Some in the current foreign policy debates look at the US preponderance in power and see a modern empire. Self-styled 'neo Reaganites' advocate a foreign policy of benign American hegemony. Since American 'values are good' and 'we have the military power', we should not feel restrained by others. According to them, "Americans should understand that their support of American pre-eminence is as much a boost for international justice as any people is capable of giving. It is also a boon for American interests and for what might be called the American spirit".¹⁴

But according to many conservative realists and liberals, such a pre-eminence of power alienates others and goes against what the Declaration of Independence expresses in terms of "a decent respect for the opinion of mankind. According a substantial voice to others could mean we are acting truly not only in the interests of others but also in our interests. By doing so, we end up embracing some form of multilateralism".¹⁵

¹³ See, Charles Krauthammer, "Unilateral? Yes indeed", *Washington Post*, 14 December 2001, p.A45; Richard Perle's comments in "Sept.11: a conversation", *The National Interest*, Special Issue, Thanksgiving 2001, pp.82-95.

¹⁴ Robert Kagan and William Kristol, "The present danger", *The National Interest*, Spring 2000, pp.58, 64,67.

¹⁵ Robert W. Tucker, "American power – for what?", *Commentary*, No.109, January 2000, p.46.

Americans are divided over how to be involved with the rest of the world. The current debate is taking place not only between isolationists and internationalists, but also between unilateralists and internationalists or what Wittkoph describes as between accommodationists and hard-liners. Isolationists, who advocate Monroe doctrine to buttress their point that America can avoid vulnerability to terrorism, fail to grasp the global realities and importance of a global information age resulting in what telecommunication specialists call the death of distance. On the other hand, "the new unilateralists who urge us unashamedly to use American dominance of the information economy on behalf of self defined global ends are offering a recipe for undermining America's soft power – the power of attraction that is associated with ideals, cultures, and policies – and encouraging others to create the coalitions that will eventually limit our hard power".¹⁶

Lawrence F. Kaplan and William Kristol, in their book *The War Over Iraq*, argue that this invasion is just the beginning of a new era in American foreign policy. They are predictably critical of Clintonian liberalism but also deride Reagan and Bush Sr. for being narrow realists. Instead, they extol activist idealism – America sallying forth to make the world safer for democracy, actively following a policy of pre-emption against those who oppose its most cherished values. Instead of persisting with its historical isolationism, it must adopt a distinctly American internationalism.¹⁷

As enunciated in America's national security strategy, this distinctive internationalism aims at creating a balance of power that

¹⁶ Joseph S. Nye Jr. (2002), *op.cit.*

¹⁷ Quoted in, Vikas Singh, "Bush's Men-o-War: Ideologues of Neo-Imperialism", *Times of India*, April 17, 2003.

favours human freedom and makes the globalised world a safer and better place. Richard L. Kugler of National Defense University has pointed out that while most countries address mainly own regions, the US strategy covers virtually the entire world.

VII. Democratic Within and Imperial Abroad

America's behaviour follows the classical pattern of imperialistic powers as history stands a witness to this. The Greeks were developing and practicing democracy even as they sustained slavery as indeed happened in the US too. The Romans who laid the foundation of rule of law practiced slavery and created a vast empire, the loot from which enriched Rome. The Americans became the first democracy with a written constitution emphasising human rights but extended their territory to the pacific coast through the genocide of native Americans.

The British were evolving into a democracy as their empire expanded to cover the whole globe. So did the French. America preaches rule of law, equity and rights as eternal universal values within the country. However, it denies the same in the international arena. This dichotomy between the two is partly explained by the fact that the international system lacks rule of law and is viewed as being anarchic. However, the central point, in this regard, is the fact that such a contradictory approach towards internal and external policies is required by the US for the promotion of its exorbitant lifestyle, wealth production and commodious living.

Motivated by the domestic imperatives, as discussed, the US is determined to have unimpeded access to resources, if necessary, through the use of military force. For this, it is ready to bully those 'recalcitrant, rouge or evil nations' into accepting American terms. It

this regard, the imperatives of domestic policy remain the sheet anchor of its foreign policy. While sub-structural content of both domestic and external policies of the United States remains the same, in the application of its foreign policy, the United States makes an aberration from its domestic field. While consensus, tolerance, respect for others' rights and freedom are found in the domestic field, in the external field, it believes in the application of force as the only way of having access to resources found anywhere in the world. This dichotomous and paradoxical stand has been the centre of criticism and opposition from around the globe.

America's invasion of Iraq bypassing the UN Security Council and in the face of stiff opposition from France, Germany and Russia is a testimony to the US belief in the use of military force as a resort to protect its values and interests abroad. American foreign policy is based on Machiavellian double standard. It is far from recognising that democracy can be implemented by democratic means alone.

However, the new conservative school in the US advocates the removal of anti-democratic and authoritarian regimes from power, if and when necessary, through the use of force to protect American interests and values. In other words, the Monroe doctrine has been expanded to transform the entire world onto a US sphere of influence. The real poster boy of the neo-conservatives is military historian, classic scholar, author and columnist Victor Davis Hanson. At the centre of the Hansonian thesis is a belief that deterrence, backed by a credible show of strength is the only way to ensure lasting peace. In his words, "those who are the most educated, the most removed from the often humiliating rat race of daily life and the most inexperienced with thugs and bullies, are the likeliest to advocate utopian solution and to ridicule those who would remind

them of the tragic nature of mankind and the timeless nature of war.”¹⁸

The British, a democracy at home, justified their colonialism as a civilising mission, a white man’s burden, or what Lodquard says a double mandate – civilising the uncivilised and promoting the economic interests of the mentors. In a similar tone, Washington is talking of democratising West Asian regimes. Such a thesis was acceptable to the British people then, as it would satisfy their economic interests, profligate lifestyle and wealth production on the basis of which they have given legitimacy to the state. Similarly US assertion of its right to reconstitute West Asian politics is to the liking of American people on the same ground.

VIII. Unilateralism in Practice: Supremacy of the US, not the United Nations

Today, US foreign policy stands exposed in all its Neanderthal crudity. It has invaded Iraq without any resolution on the part of the UN Security Council. A similar policy is being pursued by the US on almost all the issues of global significance even outside the politico-strategic sphere. In the existing political climate, for instance, it is impossible to talk about global rights to common property resources, or equity or social justice. The genuine claims of developing countries – addressing urgent problems like, poverty, or the creation and sustenance of global democratic institutions – are simply not on the global agenda. The United States rejected the Kyoto protocol in early 2002, a few months after Bush became President. This move could benefit US industry in the short term but at great cost to poor countries. With the biggest emitter of green house gases ducking out,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the chances of dealing effectively with climate change are reduced considerably. The vulnerable least developed countries in Asia and Africa are sure to pay a heftier bill for unmitigated climate change exacerbating their scourge of poverty.

While the US vouchsafes for a complete surrender to market liberalisation at every global forum, yet continues to erect barriers that make it impossible for developing countries to compete in sectors such as agriculture and textiles. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that US farm subsidies alone cost developing countries about US\$50 billion a year in lost agricultural exports.¹⁹ To earn more foreign exchange, the poorest countries rely mostly on the export of primary commodities that deplete their natural resource base. High import duties on processed goods in industrialised countries keep developing countries out of the more lucrative market for processed goods. As global trade policies do not take into account social and environmental costs, the poor and their environment in developing countries end up bearing the ecological cost of consumption in rich countries.

The poor communities in developing countries are also deprived of the opportunity of benefiting from biotic wealth. A crude estimate of the global annual market for products derived from genetic resources lies between US\$500 and 800 billion. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognises the rights of local communities to their biological diversity. But this does not happen, primarily because the US – home to a majority of corporations, using genetic resources from the poor countries – has not ratified the convention. In a renegade fashion, the US upholds the WTO's Agreement on Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS),

¹⁹ *Down to Earth*, Vol.11, No.23, April 30, 2003, p.28.

which only recognises the rights of corporations, and not developing poor communities. All attempts at addressing the anomaly between the CBD and TRIPS have failed due to opposition on the part of the US and its allies.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in September 2002 and the climate changes conference that followed in New Delhi in October the same year, the US was blatant in its effort at encouraging other countries to desert the UN process and to form a 'coalitions of the willing' instead. At the WSSD, Paula Dobriansky, head of the US delegation, accused other governments of focusing too much on text. These words cannot save the earth, she said in a press conference. Instead, she called on governments to focus on voluntary partnerships between governments, regional groups, local authorities, non-governmental actors, international institutions or private sector actors. In the climate negotiations, the US disparaged the Kyoto Protocol as just a piece of paper while calling on countries to go with US, and sign bilateral deals instead.

As stated by Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, American supremacy today is unparalleled in history. The US spends as much on military research and development as the next six powers combined. The US economy is twice as large as its closest rival Japan. California's economy alone is the fifth largest in the world, ahead of France and just behind the UK. It is also the world's leading technological power. US expenditures on R&D in the 1990s equalled those of the next seven richest countries combined. The US has no rival in any critical dimension of power, as stated by them, "the recent tendency to equate unipolarity with the ability to achieve desired outcomes single-handedly on all issues only reinforces this

point; in no previous international system would it have occurred to anyone to apply such a yardstick.²⁰

IX. Preaching Democracy and Human Rights: Chimerical

The sincerity and genuineness of US commitment to human rights, democracy and building a new and safer world order are under serious doubt. The *casus belli* or *raison detre* for military intervention in Iraq is being, now, scrutinised carefully. Numerous reports are showing how CIA intelligence reports were deliberately distorted, monitored and exaggerated to prove Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and its links with *Al-Qaeda*.²¹ This has embarrassed even the Defence Intelligence Agency, the CIA and MI-6. Richard Butler, an unabashed war supporter and former UN Weapons Inspector had to recognise, "Clearly a decision had been taken to pump up the case against Iraq".²² It has been reported that the Blair government had ran a dirty tricks operation designed specially to produce misleading intelligence to give Britain an "excuse to wage war".²³ US failure to produce even a slightest evidence of the presence of WMD in Iraq exposes the invidious design of the US to carve out a world according to its own script with the ability to use force anywhere in the world. After Iraq, it could be the turns of Syria and Korea to face the same fate, where Americans feel its self defined national interests are threatened or likely to be threatened. In this regard, as mentioned earlier, US emphasis on human rights and democracy may serve as *raison detre* for using force against countries that it considers as evil.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.29.

²¹ *Times of India*, 24 March 2003.

²² Praful Bidwai, "Great power delusions", *Hindustan Times*, 15 June 2003.

²³ *Sunday Herald* (United Kingdom), June 8, 2003.

In this regards, the so-called “coalitions of the willing” could be a long-standing phenomenon. In view of the unwillingness of France, Germany, Russia and China to toe the American furrow in Iraq War and the opposition on part of world public opinion, the US will be forced to seek out particular countries as allies and reward them with its protection. Recently signed two agreements – one between the US and Singapore and the other between the US and Chile – could be seen as models, in this regard.

X. Move to Redefine National Interest in New Planetary Terms

During the 2000 election campaign, Condoleezza Rice, now the US National Security Adviser, wrote that we should “proceed from the firm ground of the national interest and not from the interest of an illusory international community”. What disrupts its European allies was “the assumption that a conflict between the pursuit of national interest and commitment to the interests of a far from illusory international community necessarily exists”.²⁴ It is in the interest of the US to preserve its pre-eminent position. How to deal with other global issues, such as, terrorism which is a threat to all societies, international trade which will benefit both US and others, global warming which will raise sea level along American coasts as well as those of other countries, spread of infectious diseases by ship or plane and financial instability which will hurt all? It was considered that all such issues could be incorporated into a broad and far-sighted concept of national interest.²⁵

²⁴ Peter Ludlow, “Wanted: A Global Partner”, *Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2001, p.167.

²⁵ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *op.cit.*

As a study shows, many Americans want global values to be incorporated into national interest. Seventy three per cent agreed with the poll statement: "I regard myself as a citizen of the world as well as a citizen of the United States, and 44 per cent agreed strongly".²⁶ But the traditionalists bring out a distinction between foreign policy based on values and a foreign policy based on interest. They describe as vital those interests that would directly affect their safety and, thus, deserve the use of force in their defence. These include, for example, prevention of any attack on the US, prevention of the emergence of hostile hegemonies in Asia or Europe or prevention of hostile powers on US borders or in control of the seas and to ensure the survival of US allies.²⁷

No doubt national strategic interests are vital and important for survival and need priority. That does not, however, mean that broader humanitarian and global interests are to be sidelined. These are more important and vital to the US and its foreign policy. What America preaches at its home, in terms of democracy, human rights and justice, which provide America a sense of identity and righteousness, should be translated into concrete reality at the global level. This would certainly make America exemplary and righteous before others meriting respect from them. In practice, however, the dichotomy between what the US preaches at home and practices abroad are becoming more and more evident.

²⁶ *Americans on globalization; a study of US public attitudes*, Program on International Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland, 1999, p.8.

²⁷ *America's national interests: a report from the Commission on America's National Interests*, Coauthors: Robert Ellworth, Andrew Good Pasteur and Rita Hauser, 1996, p.13.

According to the Living Planet Report 2000, America is one of the three highest over consumers. Are the Americans prepared to live at the level of Cubans? Undoubtedly not, the American lifestyle, said the US President Senior Bush at Rio, "is not subject to negotiation". American exorbitant lifestyle and pattern of development defined in terms of fossil fuel consumption have been a threat to the survival of mankind and integrity of the planet. Is there a new mode of thinking among the majority of Americans that emphasise on compassion for the poor of the developing societies, for the plants, species and for the future generations? The answer is no.

Humanity cannot live at the North American level on prevailing technology. It would take many planets to sustain this. A kind of rethinking of American lifestyle, pattern of development and consumption is a *sine qua non* for building a new world based on values, such as, democracy, human rights, equity and justice. However, the US people remain far from being prepared to embark upon such a radical way of thinking, not to speak about making it the basis of US foreign policy. In international forums, like, WTO, Environment and Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity, the US has even refrained from recognising its due share of burden. Instead, it has made persistent attempts to reinforce its self-defined national interests at the cost of others.

XI. New World Order and the US Strategy: Some Propositions

The world order as visualised by the US is not going to usher in any new vision or hopes. As it is evident, the euphoria about the advent of a new world order that followed the end of the Cold War has, by now, evaporated. The Iraq War stands as a witness to the

enthronement of the US in the international system as the world policeman. All talks about multilateralism, democratisation, and new economic order based on justice and equity remained mere texts. One cannot but agree with what historian Robert Tucker said, the US “did not go from unilateralism to multilateralism but from a position of isolation to the unilateralism of a position of undisputed leadership over a global alliance”.²⁸ Nobody will dispute the fact that America is likely to remain the most powerful country well into this century. The focus on unipolarity and hegemony does not mean that the United States is able to get the outcomes it wants in a changing world. There are limits to its power. According to Joseph Nye Jr., power structure in the world is like a three dimensional chess game, “The top military board is unipolar with the United States far outstripping all other states, but the middle economic board is multipolar, with the United States, Europe and Japan accounting for two-thirds of world product and the bottom board of transnational relation that cross borders outside the control of government”.²⁹ America is not equally great in economic and transnational dimension. Many transnational and global common issues such as global warming, climate change and AIDS, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, drugs, trade, ecological stability cannot be resolved without cooperation of others. If collective action and cooperation is a necessary part of what the world wants for its survival, then America is bound to share.

Many events that may occur around the globe over which the US has no or little control may affect it significantly. Take the case of September 11. A very poor and remote country could pose a severe

²⁸ Quoted in Jacques Fomerand, “Has American Multilateralism a future?”, *UNU nexions*, December 2002, p.1.

²⁹ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *op.cit.*

threat to the US. Therefore, the US concept of world order should go beyond its border and narrow national interest. It is time that the US pursues a legitimate national interest that is in any case congruent with the greater good of the entire humanity. It is not the military supremacy but its exemplary lead on various global issues that will bring legitimacy to its role in restructuring the world order. International order is a public good – something everyone can consume without diminishing its availability to others.³⁰ Defining public good in terms of one's own narrow self-interests results in self-serving ideology for the powerful. If the United States being the largest beneficiary of a public good does not take lead in directing disproportionate resources out of its over-consumption towards its provision, the smaller beneficiaries and the deprived, are unlikely to produce the public good.

To promote a new international order, the US should reconsider its development strategy and lifestyle. Instead of consumption, modesty, altruism and other humanitarian concerns should be the basis of development strategy. The consumption of fossil fuel should be reduced drastically, while efforts at devising alternatives should be intensified. Promoting an international economic system and openness of global market is a necessary step that will benefit both America and other poor countries. Bringing down walls of protectionism at home with democratisation of world economic organisations on the basis of equity and justice is more likely to foster stable and democratic societies in other countries.

³⁰ Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg and Marc A. Stern (eds.), *Global public goods: International cooperation in the 21st century*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Apart from democratising world economy and rethinking its economy, lifestyle and over-consumption, top priority should be given to international development, which is an important public good. Flow of large-scale financial, scientific and technological assistance to the developing, particularly, the least developed countries who are simmering in poverty, disease and political instability, will help wipe out the squalor of poverty from the face of the earth. It will be beneficial to both the United States and other countries receiving the aid. As Harvard economist Jeffery Sachs has argued, "because even remote countries become outposts of disorder for the rest of the world".³¹ But America's record in this case is very dismal. Its foreign aid during these years has plummeted to 0.1 per cent of America's GNP, roughly one third of European levels. Protectionist trade measures often hurt poor countries most. The American public opinion favours an increase say 15 to 20 times more on it than America is at present doing. Not only aid, openness of market, strengthening accountable institutions and discouraging corruption are even more important for American policy makers to eke out a new international order – a public good of which every one wants to have a legitimate share.³²

³¹ Jeffrey Sachs, "What is good for the poor is the good for America", *The Economist*, 14 July 2001, pp.32-33.

³² William Easterly, "The failure of development", *Financial Times*, 4 July 2001, p.32; Dani Rodrik, *The new global economy and developing countries: making openness work*, Washington DC.: Overseas Development Council, 1999.

XII. Conclusion

The key reason why none of the major powers is able to form a coalition against the US, whether in the context of Bush's preventive strategy or global trade and environmental issues, is the fact that they have been closely allied with the US for decades and have derived substantial benefits. They fear that they will have to forgo these benefits if they take on US. "The one entity with the capacity to challenge the United States in the near future is the European Union, if it were to become a right federation with major military capabilities and if relations across the Atlantic were allowed to sour".³³ The diminished utility of military power in a global information age places European Union in an advantageous position to challenge the US on the economic fronts. The world is changing so fast that US cannot be able to achieve its objectives without taking into confidence other nations and world public opinion. As put by the French critic Dominique Moisi, "The global age has not changed the fact that nothing in the world can be done without the United States. And the multiplicity of new actors mean that there is very little the United States can achieve alone".³⁴

The surge of public opinion in the world rising against the US is suggestive of the fact that the US cannot make the whole world play according to its tune. A public opinion poll conducted for the World Economic Forum released in January this year reveals that people are being increasingly disenchanted with the direction in which the world is moving. A future challenge will be in ensuring that the public does not just stop short at demanding changes, but has the

³³ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *op.cit.*

³⁴ Dominique Moisi, "The real crisis over the Atlantic", *Foreign Affairs*, July-August 2001, p.153.

information to define the nature of this change as well. Enlightened global public intervention, coupled with increased democracy in countries across the world so that leaders are held accountable to the people, can play a major role in countering US unilateralism.³⁵ Nongovernmental organisations particularly those who work in the global arena have not succeeded in raising public debate on the role of the US in ensuring global democracy. On the positive side, a large number of grass-root organisations in the US are demanding significant changes in the local and state level legislation. These organisations are also displaying a greater degree of sensitivity to the voices outside the US on the issues of war and peace, global trade, environmental negotiation and the likes. Greater engagement of the US public in these issues is of crucial importance. In course of time, they will have to reassert their democracy in the face of global criticism that the US functions like a business plutocracy.

Ultimately, however, the future world order will depend a lot on the foresight of US leadership. The US bears a large part of the responsibility for the current strains in international relations. Its leadership needs to understand that notwithstanding super power status, the country still needs the rest of the world. If the country's leaders are indeed interested in global peace and security, they have to lead by example, first of all, by changing domestic policies to match what they have been demanding of the other countries and then strengthening multilateralism. In this regard, the ability of US public opinion to guide the leadership of the country in a positive direction would be of paramount importance. An Austrian analyst may be right in her view that if the United States plays its card well and acts not as a soloist but, as the leader of a concert of nations, the

³⁵ Down to Earth, *op.cit.*, p.33.

Pax Americana, in terms of its duration might become more like the *Pax Romana* than the *Pax Britannica*.³⁶

³⁶ Coral Bell, "American ascendancy and the pretense of concert", *The National Interest*, Fall 1999, p.60.