Change and Continuity in American Grand Strategy: A Comparative Analysis of the Clinton and Bush Foreign Policy Doctrines

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INTRODUCTION

Background and context

The foreign policy pursued by President George W. Bush since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 has attracted much controversy and condemnation. He has been accused of presiding over a revolution in American grand strategy, but is this really the case?

Two broad themes frame academic debate on the Bush doctrine: whether the doctrine is a departure from past U.S. foreign policy, or consistent with past practice; and whether the doctrine represents a coherent strategic response to 9/11, or an ineffective, even dangerous, reaction to the terrorist attacks.

Many commentators claim that the Bush doctrine marks a fundamental rupture with past American grand strategy. Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay argue that the Bush administration's response to 9/11 "discarded or redefined many of the key principles governing the way the United States should act overseas", rejecting international law and the policies of containment and deterrence in favour of "the unilateral exercise of American power" and "a proactive doctrine of preemption".[1] James Mann agrees that the Bush national security team has transformed U.S. foreign relations: "the Vulcans managed to set down an entire new set of ideas and principles. They were deliberately choosing to create a new conception of American foreign policy, just as the Truman

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[1] Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 2.

administration had constructed a new framework of ideas and institutions at the beginning of the cold war."[2]

Others have attempted to place the Bush doctrine in historical context. John Lewis Gaddis offers the most cogent attempt to find continuity, suggesting that the concepts of "pre-emption, unilateralism and hegemony" were crucial to past American grand strategies and that they are "surprisingly relevant" again.[3] Similarly, Melvyn Leffler argues that there is "more continuity than change" in the Bush doctrine, and that the president's "rhetoric and actions have deep roots in the history of American foreign policy."[4]

Argument overview

The central argument advanced in this dissertation is that the Bush doctrine is not only consistent with past American grand strategy but also, in both a conceptual and practical sense, a logical strategic response to 9/11. In subsequent chapters, I compare each component of the Bush doctrine (democracy promotion, prevention, unilateralism, and hegemony) with U.S. grand strategy under President Bill Clinton and, in a broader context, Cold War American foreign policy, thereby placing the Bush administration's national security strategy in historical perspective. Ultimately, I contend that the Bush doctrine should be interpreted as a grand strategy that embodies far more continuity than change.

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[2] James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 330.

[3] John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 13.

[4] Melvyn P. Leffler, "9/11 and American Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 3 (June 2005): 395.

<center>**Chapter outline**</center>

Chapter 1 defines the terms *grand strategy* and *presidential doctrine*. It also defines the Clinton and Bush doctrines, thereby providing a conceptual framework for subsequent analysis.

Chapter 2 argues that Bush's policy of democracy promotion should be understood as a rational strategic reaction to 9/11 that is entirely consistent with past American foreign policy. I contend that the Clinton and Bush democracy promotion strategies demonstrate the enduring influence of American nationalism on U.S. foreign policy.

Chapter 3 reasons that Bush's critics have overstated the centrality and scope of prevention in current American grand strategy. I explore examples of preventive logic in U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War and Clinton years, thus placing Bush's strategy of prevention in context, before arguing for the inevitability of the 2003 Iraq war.

Chapter 4 asserts that charges of unilateralism levelled at the Bush administration are largely false. U.S. grand strategy is rarely entirely unilateral or multilateral; instead, American presidents must blend both in a manner that advances U.S. interests. In recognising the utility of collective action, while placing American interests ahead of multilateral procedure, Bush does not depart from past practice.

Chapter 5 argues that, in asserting American hegemony, the Bush administration seeks security, not empire. As a strategy founded on the notion that American

interests are advanced through the expansion of U.S. power overseas, the Bush

doctrine conforms to American foreign policy since the beginning of the Cold War.

CHAPTER 1

PRESIDENTIAL DOCTRINES AND AMERICAN GRAND STRATEGY

1.1 Grand Strategy

Interpretations of the term *grand strategy* vary. For John Mearsheimer, the term refers purely to a state's *military* capacity to combat national security threats.[5] Barry Posen and Andrew Ross endorse a wider definition that includes the *military*, *political*, and *economic* means utilised by a state to counter security threats.[6] Both definitions recognise that a grand strategy is a calculated response to a specific threat; they differ, however, on the range of instruments of statecraft that should be included within the sphere of grand strategy. The danger of employing too broad a definition, as Colin Dueck notes, "is that it leaves the term without any distinct meaning or utility."[7] Equally, however, too narrow a definition will offer an incomplete illustration of American national security strategy. President Bush, for example, has not used exclusively military means to combat the threat of international terrorism; instead, Bush, like his immediate predecessor, has invoked American diplomatic and economic, as well as military, power to meet security threats.

A broad definition of grand strategy will provide a more accurate narrative of continuity and change in American foreign policy since 9/11. Robert Lieber offers a comprehensive definition, reasoning that the term explains "how a country will employ the various tools it possesses – military, economic, political, technological, ideological, and cultural – to protect its overall security, values, and national

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[5] John J. Mearsheimer, *Liddell Hart and the Weight of History* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988), 17.

[6] Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1996-1997): 5-53.

[7] Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 10.

interests."[8] Essentially, therefore, a grand strategy is a state-level attempt to balance the relationship between means and ends in the realm of foreign relations.

It is useful to consider typologies for change in grand strategy. Charles Kupchan differentiates between "accommodationist," "defensive," and "expansionist" strategies.[9] It is doubtful, however, that American grand strategy can be characterised in such rigid terms. Dueck's concept of "strategic adjustment," defined as a process of dramatic expansion or contraction in "overall strategic capabilities and commitments," offers a more practical framework within which to analyse change and continuity in grand strategy.[10] It is this study's central proposition that there has been minimal "strategic adjustment" in American national security strategy since 9/11; instead, the core tenets of the Bush doctrine were evident in Clinton's grand strategy and, in a broader historical context, American foreign policy during the Cold War.

1.2 Presidential Doctrines

A *presidential doctrine* is a succinct statement of grand strategy. As H. W. Brands puts it, "the greatest effect of presidential doctrines is to summarize policies in a few words."[11] In this respect, the Bush doctrine does not set a precedent: from James Monroe to Ronald Reagan, presidential doctrines have conveyed the fundamental guiding principles of United States foreign policy.

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[8] Robert J. Lieber, *The American Era: Power and Strategy for the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 40.
[9] Charles Kupchan, *Vulnerability of Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 67-68.
[10] Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, 12.
[11] H. W. Brands, "Presidential Doctrines: An Introduction," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March 2006): 3.

Presidential doctrines serve a dual purpose: they allow policymakers to rationalise the strategic decision-making process; and they express the foreign policy intentions of a specific U.S. administration, both to the American public and Congress and governments abroad. However, they also encourage simplistic, often caricatured, narratives of American grand strategy; a tendency that is evident in much of the academic and journalistic analysis of the Bush administration's foreign policy. For instance, the Bush doctrine is often equated with preventive war and unilateralism; yet many of Bush's critics overstate the centrality of these concepts to current American security policy. As Stanley Renshon points out, the doctrine "is much wider in scope than any of the singular elements for which it is criticized."[12] The Bush doctrine should instead be interpreted as a comprehensive "conceptual and strategic response to a set of important national security issues that the United States faces in the post-9/11 world."[13]

1.3 The Clinton Doctrine

President Clinton is often criticised for failing to define a clear threat around which to formulate post-Cold War American grand strategy. Charles Krauthammer has labelled the 1990s a "holiday from history" in which the dangers posed by rogue states and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation "grew more acute" while the Clinton administration failed to act.[14] Henry Kissinger has echoed these sentiments: "For a decade, the democracies had progressively fallen prey to the illusion that

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[12] Stanley A. Renshon, "The Bush Doctrine Considered," in *Understanding the Bush Doctrine: Psychology and Strategy in an Age of Terrorism*, ed. Stanley A. Renshon and Peter Suedfeld (New York: Routledge, 2007), 2.
[13] Ibid. 2
[14] Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," *National Interest*, 70 (Winter 2002/2003): 6.

threats from abroad had virtually disappeared; that dangers, if any, were primarily psychological or sociological in origin".[15]

It is important to acknowledge the unique international context in which Clinton occupied the White House. The collapse of the Soviet Union signified the disappearance of the *raison d'etre* for American overseas engagement during the previous fifty years; consequently, despite its overwhelming preponderance of power, there was little intellectual consensus on how America should engage with the rest of the world. Stephen Walt terms this situation the "paradox of unipolarity".[16] The lack of a clear and present danger to American national security immediately after the Cold War undermined Clinton's attempts to enunciate a logical purpose for American power. As John Dumbrell notes, the "confusion and strategic uncertainty" of the 1990s were not "conducive to presidential grand theorizing."[17]

Nonetheless, considerable blame for the lack of vision in American grand strategy during the 1990s must be apportioned to the Clinton administration itself. A failure to clearly define the U.S. national interest has led Michael Mandelbaum to characterise American foreign policy during the Clinton presidency as "social work,"[18] while Joshua Muravchik has condemned Clinton's chronic vacillation, accusing the former president of "carrying a small stick."[19] William Hyland provides a particularly cogent summation of the foreign policy-making process during the Clinton years: "In the

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[15] Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (London: The Free Press, 2002), 289.
[16] Stephen Walt, "Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 2 (March/April 2000): 65.
[17] John Dumbrell, "Was There a Clinton Doctrine? President Clinton's Foreign Policy Reconsidered," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 13, no. 2 (June 2002): 45.
[18] Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (January/February 1996): 16-32.
[19] Joshua Muravchik, "Carrying a Small Stick," *National Review* 48, no. 16 (September 2 1996): 57-61.

absence of an overall perspective, most issues were bound to degenerate into tactical manipulations, some successful some not. Clinton stumbled from crisis to crisis, trying to figure out…what choices would pose the lowest risk to his presidency."[20] As the identification of an unambiguous strategic threat is a fundamental component of any grand strategy, it could be argued that Clinton failed to articulate a substantive foreign policy doctrine. Dumbrell's attempt to locate a Clinton doctrine, and in the process identifying five possible candidates, seems to support this conclusion.[21]

However, strategic inconsistencies do not necessarily preclude the existence of a Clinton doctrine; as Brands notes, it is possible for a doctrine to be one "in name rather than in fact."[22] Optimistic appraisals of Clinton's foreign policy identify two plausible candidates for the title of Clinton doctrine: the policy of "democratic enlargement" and the strategic desire to nullify the threats posed by rogue states to American interests.[23] Although Gaddis Smith quipped that the concept was "banality on stilts,"[24] "democratic enlargement" probably represents the most convincing characterisation of Clinton's grand strategy. For Douglas Brinkley, the concept endorses "the notion that as free states grew in number and strength the international order would become both more prosperous and more secure."[25] Despite the short-lived relevance of the label itself, the underlying rationale behind "democratic enlargement" is a logical progression from Cold War containment and continues to inform American foreign policy under George W. Bush.

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[20] William Hyland, *Clinton's World: Remaking American Foreign Policy* (London: Praeger, 1999), 203.
[21] Dumbrell, "Was There a Clinton Doctrine?" 43-56.
[22] Brands, "Presidential Doctrines," 1.
[23] Douglas Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine," *Foreign Policy*, no. 106 (Spring 1997): 110-127; Dumbrell, "Was There a Clinton Doctrine?" 43-56.
[24] Gaddis Smith quoted in "Clinton's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy*, no. 121 (November/December 2000): 18.
[25] Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement," 116.

The Clinton administration's rogue state policy has also been suggested as a feasible Clinton doctrine. Dumbrell makes the compelling point that a rogue state doctrine is the most credible candidate because it delineates a clear strategic threat to American security, a vital feature of any grand strategy.[26] Thus, in proposing a Clinton doctrine, this study will unite two objectives of Clinton's national security strategy: the dissemination of democratic values abroad; and the eradication of the dangers posed by rogue regimes to U.S. security. Whether the Clinton doctrine was successfully implemented will not be dealt with here; instead, the aim of this study is to expose the striking degree of thematic continuity between the Clinton and Bush national security strategies.

1.4 The Bush Doctrine

President Bush has proposed a comparatively consistent vision for American grand strategy. For Gaddis, there is "a coherence in the Bush strategy that the Clinton national security team…never achieved."[27] Consequently, defining the Bush doctrine is a somewhat simpler task.

The Bush administration does not publicly endorse the term *Bush doctrine*, so its content is open to interpretation. Peter Dombrowski and Rodger Payne contend that the doctrine refers exclusively to the right to employ preemptive military force against rogue regimes that sponsor terrorism and seek to obtain WMD.[28] However, such a limited definition offers an incomplete portrayal of Bush's national security policy.

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[26] Dumbrell, "Was There a Clinton Doctrine?" 54.

[27] John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy*, no. 133 (November/December 2002): 54.

[28] Peter Dombrowski and Rodger A. Payne, "Global Debate and the Limits of the Bush Doctrine," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 4 (November 2003): 395-408.

As Renshon points out, preemption "is an option, but not a doctrine by itself."[29] Instead, the Bush doctrine should be understood as a broad strategic response to the threats posed to American national security by the combination of international terrorism, rogue states, and WMD proliferation. A broader definition is therefore required.

This study will employ Robert Jervis' definition of the Bush doctrine because it incorporates the most salient features of post-9/11 American foreign policy. For Jervis, the doctrine consists of four key elements:

> "A strong belief in the importance of a state's domestic regime in determining its foreign policy and the related judgment that this is an opportune time to transform international politics; the perception of great threats that can be defeated only by new and vigorous policies, most notably preventive war; a willingness to act unilaterally when necessary; and, as both a cause and a summary of these beliefs, an overriding sense that peace and stability require the United States to assert its primacy in world politics."[30]

Bush's detractors from both Left and Right contend that the emergence of the Bush doctrine can be attributed to the influence of a "cabal" of neoconservatives on the Bush administration. Conservatives Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke allege "the neo-conservatives have taken American international relations on an unfortunate detour, veering away from the balanced, consensus-building, and resource-husbanding approach that has characterized traditional Republican internationalism."[31] Liberal internationalist Michael Lind claims the doctrine is a discredited "neoconservative fantasy of unilateral global hegemony" that will fade

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[29] Renshon, "The Bush Doctrine Considered," 2.
[30] Robert Jervis, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," *Political Science Quarterly* 118, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 365.
[31] Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *American Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9.

away when Bush leaves office.[32] More recently, it has been erroneously argued that the neoconservatives form one component of a powerful "Israel lobby" that has manipulated American foreign policy in the Middle East to such an extent as to jeopardise U.S. national interests.[33]

This dissertation rejects the notion that current American grand strategy is a neoconservative aberration. The Bush doctrine can more accurately be understood as a typically American blend of ideals and interests. Robert Singh appropriately characterises the doctrine as "an intellectually coherent amalgam of traditional 'realist' approaches to international relations and an expansively muscular Wilsonianism."[34] Consequently, the Bush administration has not revolutionised U.S. foreign policy; rather, it has merely reaffirmed the principles that motivated past American grand strategy. As Robert Kagan puts it, "America did not change on September 11. It only became more itself."[35]

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[32] Michael Lind, "The world after Bush," *Prospect* (November 2006): 36-40.
[33] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London: Allen Lane, 2007).
[34] Robert Singh, "The Bush Doctrine," in *The Bush Doctrine and the War on Terrorism: Global Responses, Global Consequences*, ed. Mary Buckley and Robert Singh (London: Routledge, 2006), 13.
[35] Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 85.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

2.1 9/11 and the Middle East

The promotion of democracy in the Middle East is a central component of the Bush doctrine. This policy is not attributable to the alleged neoconservative influence on the Bush administration. Neoconservatism is not a cohesive political movement; accordingly, as Timothy Lynch notes, there is not a uniform set of neoconservative prescriptions for American policy in the Middle East.[36] Bush's efforts to spread democracy in that region should instead be recognised as a logical strategic response to 9/11. As Max Boot suggests, Bush adopted a policy of democracy promotion "not because of the impact of the neocons but because of the impact of the four airplanes hijacked on September 11, 2001."[37]

There is a compelling rationale to Bush's democratisation agenda. Following the terrorist attacks, the Bush administration reasoned that the Islamic radicalism manifested on September 11 was caused by the dominance of authoritarianism in the Middle East. "As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish," Bush argued, "it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export."[38] Bush consequently endorsed a strategy of democracy promotion designed to ultimately transform the political composition of the Middle East. The Bush administration, as Norman Podhoretz puts it, aims to "drain the swamps" of

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[36] Timothy J. Lynch, "Kristol Balls: Neoconservative Visions of Islam and the Middle East," *International Politics* 45, no. 4 (July 2008): 192.
[37] Max Boot, "Neocons," *Foreign Policy*, no. 140 (January/February 2004): 21.
[38] George W. Bush, "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East," November 6, 2003, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html (accessed June 2, 2008).

tyranny throughout the region.[39] Fundamental therefore to Bush's analysis of the Middle East is the postulation that American security interests are advanced through the spread of democratic values overseas. For Bush, "As in Europe, as in Asia, as in every region of the world, the advance of freedom leads to peace."[40]

This vision is entirely consistent with past American foreign policy. As Leffler argues, "Bush's goals of sustaining a democratic peace and disseminating America's core values resonate with the most traditional themes in U.S. history."[41] During the Cold War, democracy promotion remained a key theme in United States grand strategy. Joseph Nye, for example, characterises democracy promotion as the "default option" of American diplomacy during the twentieth century.[42] NSC-68, the document that shaped U.S. Cold War policy, recognised the importance of democratic values in the struggle against the Soviet Union: "It is only by practical affirmation, abroad as well as at home, of our essential values, that we can preserve our own integrity."[43] In seeking "to create a balance of power that favors human freedom,"[44] the Bush doctrine invokes the traditional objective of furthering U.S. security interests through the promotion of democracy beyond American borders.

2.2 American National Identity and Democracy Promotion

The tradition of democracy promotion is rooted in the American sense of national identity. According to Paul T. McCartney, American nationalism is founded on two

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[39] Paul Berman *et al*. "Defending and Advancing Freedom: A Symposium," *Commentary* 120, no. 4 (November 2005): 56.
[40] Bush, "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East."
[41] Melvyn P. Leffler, "Bush's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy*, no. 144 (September/October 2004): 22.
[42] Leslie H. Gelb *et al*. "The Freedom Crusade, Revisited," *The National Interest* 82 (Winter 2005/2006): 15.
[43] NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, April 7, 1950, http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm (accessed June 4, 2008); hereafter, NSC-68.
[44] The National Security Strategy of the United States, September 17, 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf (accessed June 2, 2008); hereafter, 2002 NSS.

concepts: universalism and exceptionalism.[45] The notion of universalism implies that American nationalism is distinctly ideological. As Robert Kagan notes, American nationalism is not, like most nationalisms, "rooted in blood and soil" but in a "common allegiance to the liberal republican ideology."[46] U.S. nationalism is therefore distinguished by a universalistic commitment to liberal values and the belief that those values are "rooted in qualities and capacities shared by all people, everywhere."[47] As Jeane Kirkpatrick observed, "no idea holds greater sway in the mind of educated Americans than the belief that it is possible to democratize governments, anytime, anywhere, under any circumstances."[48]

This ideological universalism gives rise to a sense of American exceptionalism, a term defined as the "perception that the United States differs qualitatively from other developed nations, because of its unique origins, national credo, historical evolution, and distinctive political and religious institutions."[49] For McCartney, American exceptionalism demonstrates an "element of superiority," as it implies that the U.S. is both "qualitatively different from – and better than – other states."[50] This perceived ideological preeminence engenders a "crusading mentality," whereby Americans are motivated by a sense of mission to spread their political values abroad.[51] Thus, U.S. nationalism is informed by two themes: an ideological universalism in which

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[45] Paul T. McCartney, "American Nationalism and U.S. Foreign Policy from September 11 to the Iraq War," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 3 (2004): 402-406.
[46] Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: American and the World, 1600-1898* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 42.
[47] McCartney, "American Nationalism," 402.
[48] Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary* 68, no. 5 (November 1979): 37.
[49] Harold Hongju Koh, "Foreword: On American Exceptionalism," *Stanford Law Review*, 55 (2002-2003): 1481n.
[50] McCartney, "American Nationalism," 403.
[51] Ibid., 403.

American values are perceived to be applicable across the world; and a sense of duty to spread those values overseas.

Historically, American national identity has had a profound impact in shaping U.S. foreign relations. As Kagan notes, an entrenched commitment to an ideological universalism does not complement the traditional European, and distinctly non-ideological, idea of the national interest: "Americans from the beginning were interested not only in protecting and advancing their material well-being; they also believed their own fate was in some way tied to the cause of liberalism and republicanism both within and beyond their borders."[52] For Samuel Huntington, most Americans believe that "foreign policy goals should reflect not only the security interests of the nation…but also the political values and principles that define American identity."[53] Therefore, U.S. foreign policy is guided not only by an ideological universalism, but also by the conviction that America has an exceptional role in promoting its values beyond its borders.

2.3 Clinton, Bush, and the "End of History"

The influence of American nationalism is evident in the democracy promotion strategies of both post-Cold War presidents. The notion of promoting democratic ideals abroad did not therefore suddenly emerge after 9/11; instead, an assertive and moralistic desire to spread liberal ideals, a tendency Kagan terms a "messianic

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[52] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, 42.
[53] Samuel P. Huntington, "American Ideals versus American Institutions," *Political Science Quarterly* 97, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 19.

impulse,"[54] is both a defining feature of the American national character and a central component of the Bush doctrine.

Following the breakdown of Soviet communism, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed the "end of history" in the sense that liberal democracy represented the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution" and the "final form of human government".[55] The perceived victory of the liberal democratic ideal, as expressed by Fukuyama, has informed American grand strategy during the Clinton and Bush presidencies. Anthony Lake, Clinton's National Security Advisor, reasoned in 1993 that "billions of people on every continent are simply concluding, based on decades of their own hard experience, that democracy and markets are the most productive and liberating ways to organize their lives."[56] The Bush administration's 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) also affirms the superiority of the liberal democratic model: "The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise."[57]

In regarding democratic ideals as both superior and universally applicable, the Clinton and Bush doctrines subscribe to the ideological universalism that is intrinsic to U.S. national identity. The tradition of American exceptionalism is equally apparent in the Clinton and Bush grand strategies. It was, of course, Clinton's Secretary of State who declared America the "indispensable nation". In his first inaugural address, President

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[54] Robert Kagan, "Neocon Nation: Neoconservatism, c. 1776," *World Affairs* 170, no. 4 (Spring 2008): 22.
[55] Francis Fukuyama, introduction to *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), xi.
[56] Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," September 21, 1993, http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html (accessed June 3, 2008).
[57] 2002 NSS.

Clinton defined the United States' unique role in spreading democracy: "Our hopes, our hearts, our hands are with those on every continent who are building democracy and freedom. Their cause is America's cause."[58] Similarly, President Bush invoked U.S. exceptionalism when he declared that America "will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the globe."[59]

The American desire to spread democracy is not motivated purely by altruism; rather, the United States seeks to encourage political liberalisation abroad because it enhances American security. The strategic rationale for a policy of democracy promotion is entirely persuasive. As Robert Kaufman contends, promoting democracy is "tried and true and based on one of the few robust theories of international politics for which there is abundant empirical confirmation: stable, liberal democracies do not go to war with one another."[60] The conviction that the spread of democracy makes America safer is fundamental to both the Clinton and Bush doctrines. Clinton's 1995 National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, for example, supports democracy promotion on the grounds that "democratic states are less likely to threaten our interests and more likely to cooperate with the U.S. to meet security threats".[61] Equally, Bush's 2006 National Security Strategy posits that, "because free nations tend toward peace, the advance of liberty will make America more secure."[62]

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[58] Bill Clinton, "First Inaugural Address," January 20, 1993, http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3434 (accessed June 3, 2008).
[59] 2002 NSS.
[60] Robert G. Kaufman, *In Defense of the Bush Doctrine* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 129.
[61] A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, February 1995, http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nss/nss-95.pdf (accessed June 3, 2008); hereafter, 1995 NSS.
[62] The National Security Strategy of the United States, March 2006, http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf (accessed June 2, 2008); hereafter, 2006 NSS.

Critics argue that the Bush doctrine is different because of its supposed reliance on military force to achieve its objectives. David Hendrickson and Robert Tucker contend that the doctrine is insupportable because of the "junction it postulates between freedom and force."[63] However, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq signify the persistence of an interventionist trend in American foreign policy. The United States, as Robert Kagan notes, has launched no less than nine major military interventions overseas during the past two decades.[64] Indeed, it can be reasonably argued that Bush has employed American military power with more caution than did his immediate predecessor. As Andrew Bacevich puts it, during the Clinton years "U.S. military forces marched hither and yon, intervening in a wider variety of places, for a wider variety of purposes than at any time in our history."[65]

Ultimately, the Clinton and Bush doctrines both demonstrate the enduring influence of American nationalism on United States foreign policy. Both consider American democratic ideals to be universally applicable and both believe that America has an exceptional role in promoting those ideals abroad. In seeking to spread democracy, Clinton and Bush therefore appeal to one of the oldest traditions in American foreign policy. As Clinton himself put it, "A pro-democracy foreign policy is neither liberal nor conservative; neither Democrat nor Republican; it is a deep American tradition."[66]

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[63] David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, "The Freedom Crusade," *The National Interest* 81 (Fall 2005): 21.

[64] Robert Kagan, "Skewed views of 'Bush doctrine'," *Christian Science Monitor* 96, no. 219 (10/6/2004): 9.

[65] Andrew J. Bacevich, "Bush's Grand Strategy," *The American Conservative* (November 4, 2002).

[66] Bill Clinton, "American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal," *Orbis* 37, no. 4 (Fall 1993): 651-660.

CHAPTER 3

PREVENTIVE WAR

3.1 Prevention and Preemption

It is important to clarify the distinction between the concepts of *prevention* and *preemption*. In articulating America's response to 9/11, the Bush administration employed the two terms on an almost interchangeable basis, while much of the ensuing scholarly analysis of the Bush doctrine is also guilty of conflating the terms; consequently, the distinction between prevention and preemption has been distorted and is worth reiterating. The U.S. Department of Defense defines preemption as "an attack initiated on the basis of incontrovertible evidence that an enemy attack is imminent."[67] Conversely, preventive action is "initiated in the belief that military conflict, while not imminent, is inevitable, and that to delay would involve great risk."[68]

The paradigmatic examples of preemptive and preventive military force are the Six-Day War of 1967 and the 1981 Israeli attack on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor.[69] The Six-Day War is an example of preemption because Israel's actions were in response to "an imminent threat – most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack."[70] In contrast, Israel's strike on Iraqi nuclear facilities in 1981, and for that matter its more recent attack on Syria's clandestine nuclear programme, are illustrations of preventive force because they were intended to

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[67] U.S. Department of Defense, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington: Department of Defense, April 12 2001; amended May 30 2008), http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf (accessed June 8, 2008).
[68] Ibid.
[69] Francois Heisbourg, "A Work in Progress: The Bush Doctrine and its Consequences," *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 78-79.
[70] 2002 NSS.

eradicate more distant threats. In affirming that the United States "will act against…emerging threats before they are fully formed,"[71] the Bush administration evidently supports a policy of prevention.

3.2 The Logic of Prevention

This tenet of the Bush doctrine should be interpreted as a strategic response to the potential interaction between three agents: international terrorism, rogue states, and WMD proliferation; what Timothy Lynch and Robert Singh term the "three Ts nexus" of terrorism, tyranny, and technology.[72] President Bush outlined the nature of this threat in his 2003 State of the Union address: "Today, the gravest danger…facing America and the world is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies".[73] The Bush administration posits that the gravity of this threat necessitates a proactive strategic approach. For Bush, "the only path to safety is the path of action."[74]

The dangers present at the "perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology"[75] did not suddenly emerge on 9/11; rather, the threat had steadily escalated throughout the 1990s. Indeed it was President Clinton who originally warned of the threats posed by the three Ts nexus. The Clinton administration's 1998 National Security Strategy for a New Century, for example, reasoned that WMD proliferation is the "greatest potential threat to global stability and security" because it "threatens to provide rogue states,

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Timothy J. Lynch and Robert S. Singh, *After Bush: The Case for Continuity in American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2008), 125-130.

[73] George W. Bush, "President Delivers State of the Union," January 28, 2003, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html (accessed June 2, 2008).

[74] George W. Bush, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point," June 1, 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html (accessed June 2, 2008).

[75] Ibid.

terrorists and international crime organizations the means to inflict terrible damage on the United States".[76]

It required an event of the magnitude of September 11, however, to expose the inadequacy of a reactive approach. The terrorist attacks, as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice put it, "crystallized" American vulnerability.[77] The Bush administration contends that deterrence will not work "against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend"[78], while containment may fail "when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies."[79] Accordingly, Bush sanctions a strategy of "anticipatory self-defense"[80] whereby America "must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge."[81] The logic of prevention is delineated in the 2002 NSS: "The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack."[82] Ultimately, the Bush doctrine validates a strategy of prevention on the basis that America faces an "imminent, multifaceted, undeterrable, and potentially calamitous threat".[83]

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[76] A National Security Strategy for a New Century, October 1998, http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nssr-98.pdf (accessed June 3, 2008); hereafter, 1998 NSS.

[77] Condoleezza Rice, "A Balance of Power That Favors Freedom," Wriston Lecture, Manhattan Institute, October 1, 2002, http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/wl2002.htm (accessed June 2, 2008).

[78] Bush, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point."

[79] Ibid.

[80] Donald Rumsfeld quoted in Jeffrey Record, "The Bush Doctrine and War with Iraq," *Parameters* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 7.

[81] Bush, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point."

[82] 2002 NSS.

[83] Record, "The Bush Doctrine," 6.

Some would argue that prevention has replaced containment and deterrence as the focal point of American grand strategy, thus denoting a fundamental rupture with past practice. Schlesinger argued that the Bush doctrine signifies a "revolutionary change" in American strategic thinking because it supposedly postulates that war, rather than being a "matter of last resort", is now a "matter of presidential choice."[84] Similarly, Arnold Offner characterises preventive war as an "extremely radical and dangerous departure from acceptable norms"[85], while Daalder and Lindsay contend that Bush has "abandoned a decades-long consensus that put deterrence and containment at the heart of American foreign policy."[86]

This overstates the centrality of preventive war in current American grand strategy. The policy of prevention does not replace the established policies of deterrence and containment; it supplements them in order to meet a new threat. As Condoleezza Rice reasoned, the Bush doctrine does not "overturn five decades of doctrine and jettison either containment or deterrence."[87] Indeed prevention serves as a "higher form of deterrence" because it aims to "deter states not from using weapons of mass destruction but from acquiring them in the first place."[88] Prevention is therefore an extension, rather than a rejection, of containment and deterrence.

Bush's critics also exaggerate the scope of preventive war in current American foreign policy. As Colin Powell noted, discussion of prevention "takes up just two

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[84] Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *War and the American Presidency* (London: W. W. Norton, 2004), 21.
[85] Arnold A. Offner, "Rogue President, Rogue Nation: Bush and U.S. National Security," *Diplomatic History* 29, no. 3 (June 2005): 433.
[86] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 124.
[87] Rice, "A Balance of Power That Favors Freedom."
[88] Charles Krauthammer, "The Obsolescence of Deterrence," *The Weekly Standard* 8, no. 13, December 9, 2002.

sentences"[89] in the eight sections of the 2002 NSS. Despite claims that prevention is now the "centerpiece of U.S. national-security policy"[90], the 2003 Iraq war remains the Bush administration's only practical application of preventive war, while containment and deterrence continue to dictate American strategy toward Pyongyang and Tehran. As Gerard Alexander argues, the Bush doctrine "does not suggest that all, most, or even many threats should be dealt with preventively."[91] In fact, the Bush administration is clear that preventive military action is a last resort. The 2006 NSS states that America "will not resort to force in all cases to preempt emerging threats. Our preference is that nonmilitary actions succeed."[92] Prevention should therefore be recognised as a policy of limited scope intended to complement existing strategies.

3.3 Prevention in Historical Perspective

Jack Levy succinctly defines the strategic rationale of prevention as "better now than later."[93] Despite the furore over the Iraq invasion, military conflicts initiated on these grounds are not a recent development. As Paul Schroeder argues, "preventive wars…are not extreme anomalies in politics…They are a normal, even common, tool of statecraft."[94] Preventive logic has been strikingly influential in shaping past U.S. grand strategy. For Marc Trachtenberg, concerns about "what might happen if nothing were done"[95] have informed American policy since the beginning of the Cold War.

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[89] Colin Powell, "A Strategy of Partnerships," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 1 (January/February 2004): 24.
[90] Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: Norton, 2005), 225.
[91] Gerard Alexander, "International Relations Theory Meets World Politics: The Neoconservative vs. Realism Debate," in *Understanding the Bush Doctrine* ed. Renshon and Suedfeld, 46.
[92] 2006 NSS.
[93] Jack S. Levy, "Preventive War and the Bush Doctrine: Theoretical Logic and Historical Roots," in *Understanding the Bush Doctrine* ed. Renshon and Suedfeld, 176.
[94] Paul W. Schroeder quoted in Ibid., 176.
[95] Marc Trachtenberg, "Preventive War and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 16, no. 1 (January 2007): 29.

Thus, in affirming that the United States will act preventively if necessary, Bush was "echoing an old tradition rather than establishing a new one."[96]

The clearest example of preventive strategic logic in Cold War American foreign policy is the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Kennedy administration's naval blockade strategy was in essence a preventive measure because its objective was to forestall a balance of power shift in favour of the Soviet Union, rather than avert an imminent attack on American soil. As President John F. Kennedy put it on October 22 1962: "We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril. Nuclear weapons are so destructive and ballistic missiles are so swift that any substantially increased possibility of their use…may well be regarded as a definite threat to peace."[97] Kennedy's remarks effectively capture the logic of prevention that informs the Bush doctrine: specifically that, in a nuclear age, the United States must act before threats emerge and escalate.

The concept of prevention reappeared during the Ronald Reagan years. While direct preventive action against the Soviet Union was justifiably deemed impractical, the Reagan administration contemplated a proactive approach toward fighting terrorism following the 1983 terrorist attacks on the U.S. embassy and army barracks in Beirut. On June 24 1984, President Reagan's Secretary of State George Shultz declared, "It is time to think long, hard, and seriously about active means of defense – about defense

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[96] Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*, 22.
[97] John F. Kennedy quoted in Danielle Pletka, "The Jefferson-Kennedy-Bush Doctrine," *Jerusalem Post*, March 30, 2003.

through appropriate 'preventive or preemptive actions' against terrorists before they strike."[98]

Shultz's premise – that the United States must be proactive in defeating terrorism - has shaped American grand strategy during the Clinton and Bush years. In June 1995, Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 39, a document that endorses America's right to use preemptive and preventive action against terrorist groups. It states that the U.S. will "give the highest priority to developing effective capabilities to detect, prevent, defeat, and manage the consequences of nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) materials or weapons use by terrorists. The acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by a terrorist group, through theft or manufacture, is unacceptable. There is no higher priority than preventing the acquisition of this capability from terrorist groups potentially opposed to the U.S."[99] PDD-39 also declares that the United States shall "pursue vigorously efforts to deter and preempt"[100] terrorist attacks.

The Clinton administration restated a policy of anticipatory self-defence in 2000: "As long as terrorists continue to target American citizens, we reserve the right to act in self-defense by striking at their bases and those who sponsor, assist, or actively support them, as we have done over the years in different countries."[101] Furthermore, the Democratic Party's 2000 presidential platform proclaimed a strategy of preventive military intervention, euphemistically entitled 'forward engagement," in which the

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[98] George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner's, 1993), 647.
[99] Presidential Decision Directive 39, "U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism," June 21, 1995, http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd39.htm (accessed June 4, 2008).
[100] Ibid.
[101] A National Security Strategy for a Global Age, December 2000, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/national/nss-0012.pdf (accessed June 3, 2008).

United States should address "problems early in their development before they become crises".[102]

Clinton's commitment to preventive action was almost put into practice during the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, when the Clinton administration formulated plans to launch preventive strikes against North Korean military facilities after diplomatic efforts failed to deter Pyongyang's nuclear aspirations.[103] While Clinton avoided conflict with North Korea, the 1994 Agreed Framework accord was, as Keir Lieber and Robert Lieber contend, negotiated under the threat of American military force.[104] These examples of preventive logic in past U.S. security policy illustrate the considerable degree of thematic continuity, not only between Bush and Clinton, but also Bush and the broader traditions of American strategic thinking.

3.4 The Case of Iraq

The 2003 Iraq war, as the Bush administration's first, and thus far only, practical application of preventive military force, is central to any discussion of the Bush doctrine. Some critics of the war suggest that the decision to depose Saddam Hussein is attributable to the neoconservative influence on the Bush administration. Halper and Clarke argue that the neoconservatives manipulated the events of 9/11 in order to fulfil a "preexisting agenda" of attacking Iraq.[105] Others contend that the war was unnecessary because containment and deterrence remained effective instruments for managing Saddam's regime. For instance, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt claim

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[102] The 2000 Democratic National Platform: Prosperity, Progress, and Peace, August 15, 2000, http://www.democrats.org/pdfs/2000platform.pdf (accessed June 4, 2008).
[103] Levy, "Preventive War and the Bush Doctrine," 188-189.
[104] Keir A. Lieber and Robert J. Lieber, "The Bush National Security Strategy," *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda* 7, no. 4 (December 2002): 33.
[105] Halper and Clarke, *America Alone*, 203.

that the war lacked a "compelling strategic rationale" because past American-Iraqi relations indicate that Saddam Hussein was "eminently deterrable."[106]

An examination of U.S. Iraq policy since the Gulf War, however, reveals the inevitability of the Bush administration's decision to remove Saddam from power. The 1990s witnessed the gradual erosion and eventual collapse of the American containment strategy.[107] By the end of the decade, the sanctions regime had, as Arthur Herman notes, "become a joke, proving less of a liability to Saddam than an asset in rebuilding his power."[108] Consequently, Washington was presented with two options: deterrence or regime change.[109] President Clinton, in signing the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, opted for the latter. As Kenneth Pollack argues, Clinton "concluded that the only solution to the problem posed by Saddam Hussein was to topple his regime."[110] Martin Indyk, Clinton's principal advisor on Iraq, outlined the administration's commitment to regime change: "Our purpose is deliberate: it is to establish clearly and unequivocally that the current regime in Iraq is a criminal regime, beyond the pale of international society and, in our judgement, irredeemable."[111]

America was therefore obligated to seek regime change in Iraq *before* Bush entered the White House. Both Clinton and Bush agreed that the removal of Saddam was the only solution to what Hyland terms the "perpetual state of belligerency"[112] between Washington and Baghdad. Crucially, 9/11 compelled the Bush administration to move

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[106] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, no. 134 (January/February 2003): 50-59.
[107] Robert J. Lieber, "The Folly of Containment," *Commentary* 115, no. 4 (April 2003): 15-21.
[108] Arthur Herman, "Why Iraq Was Inevitable," *Commentary* 126, no. 1 (July/August 2008): 32.
[109] Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York, Random House, 2002), 243.
[110] Ibid., 94.
[111] Martin Indyk quoted in Lawrence F. Kaplan and William Kristol, *The War Over Iraq: Saddam's Tyranny and America's Mission* (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2003), 50.
[112] Hyland, *Clinton's World*, 176.

beyond a rhetorical commitment to regime change. Donald Rumsfeld detailed the rationale for war when he reasoned that America "did not act in Iraq because we had discovered dramatic new evidence of Iraq's pursuit of WMD; we acted because we saw the existing evidence in a new light – through the prism of our experience on 9/11."[113]

Thus, Bush did not invade Iraq because Saddam posed an imminent threat to America; rather, he acted because 9/11 magnified a potentially catastrophic threat that already existed. The Bush administration's mindset prior to war was illustrated by Vice President Dick Cheney's comment that the "risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action."[114] What if Saddam acquired a nuclear weapon and cooperated with a terrorist group to attack the United States? This essentially preventive logic explicates the Bush administration's decision to effect regime change in Iraq.

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[113] Donald Rumsfeld quoted in Lynch and Singh, *After Bush*, 127.
[114] Dick Cheney, "Vice President Speaks at VFW 103rd National Convention," August 26, 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html (accessed June 2, 2008).

CHAPTER 4

UNILATERALISM

4.1 Multilateralism or Unilateralism: A False Dichotomy

President Bush avows that he "will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary,"[115] to prevent terrorist attacks against the United States: "All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attacks…Yet the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others. Whatever action is required, whenever action is necessary, I will defend the freedom and security of the American people."[116] Thus, the Bush administration asserts that, while it will seek the support of allies, it will not permit others to hinder its capacity to protect American interests.

Some argue that Bush's firm rhetoric on collective action constitutes the emergence of a unilateralist grand strategy. For Jean-Marc Coicaud, the Bush doctrine signifies a dramatic shift from the "international solidarity" of the 1990s to an "unabashed embrace of a unilateralist foreign policy".[117] Similarly, G. John Ikenberry accuses Bush of a "sharp unilateral turn" in American security policy: "A half century of U.S. leadership in constructing an international order around multilateral institutions, rule-based agreements, and alliance partnerships seems to be giving way to a new assertive – even defiant – unilateralism."[118]

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[115] 2002 NSS.
[116] Bush, "President Delivers State of the Union".
[117] Jean-Marc Coicaud, *Beyond the National Interest: The Future of UN Peacekeeping and Multilateralism in an Era of U.S. Primacy* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 3.
[118] G. John Ikenberry, "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 3 (September 2003): 533.

These arguments are flawed in two respects: they overstate past American commitment to multilateral procedure, and they misinterpret the current administration's willingness to act alone as a *preference* for unilateralism. As Podhoretz notes, in articulating America's response to 9/11, Bush "did not say…that he would act unilaterally, or that he would pay no attention to the opinions or our allies, or that he would ignore the UN."[119] Indeed the Bush administration clearly recognises that collective action furthers American interests: "We are…guided by the conviction that no nation can build a safer, better world alone. Alliances and multilateral institutions can multiply the strength of freedom-loving nations."[120]

The Iraq war is often cited as evidence of American unilateralism. Stanley Hoffman characterises the invasion as a "unilateral action" that has weakened "established international principles of deterrence, nonintervention and international authorization of military action".[121] For Dombrowski and Payne, Bush presents a "serious threat to ongoing multilateralism" by "acting alone and against the wishes of the international community" in Iraq.[122] However, is the Iraq war truly an example of U.S. unilateralism? If one employs the established definition of multilateralism as the "cooperation of three or more states in a given area of international relations,"[123] then the 2003 invasion, supported by a coalition of around forty nations, is patently an illustration of collective action.

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[119] Norman Podhoretz, "Is the Bush Doctrine Dead?" *Commentary* 122, no. 2 (September 2006): 18.
[120] 2002 NSS.
[121] Stanley Hoffman, "The High and the Mighty: Bush's national-security strategy and the new American hubris," *The American Prospect*, January 13, 2003.
[122] Dombrowski and Payne, "Global Debate," 406.
[123] David M. Malone and Yuen Foong Khong, "Unilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: International Perspectives," in *Unilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: International Perspectives*, ed. David M. Malone and Yuen Foong Khong (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 2.

Indeed, the conduct of Saddam Hussein can more accurately be described as unilateral. As *The Economist* noted in 2002, the Iraqi dictator, by consistently flouting multilateral procedure for decades, was a flagrant unilateralist.[124] By bringing about regime change in Baghdad, Bush was acting upon Iraqi non-compliance with a raft of UN Security Council resolutions; and so arguably defending the principles of international law that the president's doubters claim he has irrevocably weakened. Ironically, by persistently overlooking Saddam's contempt for international law, nations such as France and Germany undermined the system of multilateral diplomacy they purport to uphold. As Pollack argues, "members of the international community who bleat about the importance of collective security, multilateral diplomacy, and international law…gravely weakened all three…by allowing Iraq to flout them".[125]

The debate over Iraq exposes the false dichotomy between "unilateralism" and "multilateralism". Characterisations of the Bush doctrine as unilateral ignore the complex nature of the U.S. foreign policy-making process. As Philip Zelikow argues, "The cartoon version of America's international policy dilemma poses a choice between unilateralism versus multilateralism, the wild cowboy versus the cooperative diplomat. This depiction is false."[126] Crude caricatures of "cowboy diplomacy"[127] imply that an American president must adopt an exclusively multilateral or unilateral approach; rather, U.S. grand strategy invariably amalgamates both in a manner that best advances American interests. "The choice is not between unilateralism and

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[124] "Saddam and his sort," *The Economist*, June 27, 2002.

[125] Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*, 413.

[126] Philip Zelikow, "The Transformation of National Security: Five Redefinitions," *National Interest*, 71 (Spring 2003): 24.

[127] Mike Allen and Romesh Ratnesar, "The End of Cowboy Diplomacy," *Time*, July 9, 2006, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1211578,00.html (accessed June 10, 2008).

multilateralism," argues Stewart Patrick, "but among variants of the latter."[128] In accepting the need for multilateral diplomacy, while prohibiting others from encumbering American freedom of action, Bush's approach is entirely congruous with past U.S. foreign policy.

4.2 Selective Multilateralism

Despite protestations over the Bush doctrine, unilateralism is not a novel concept in American foreign policy. For Gaddis, the notion that America "could not rely upon the goodwill of others to secure its safety, and therefore should be prepared to act on its own," shaped U.S. foreign relations during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[129] Accordingly, in proclaiming the United States' right to act alone, Bush's strategy signals a "return to an old position, not the emergence of a new one."[130]

Some suggest that Bush has renounced the multilateral world order that emerged after the Second World War. Hendrickson and Tucker argue that Bush has abandoned the commitment to "consensual modes of decision-making" that supposedly characterised U.S. foreign policy throughout the second half of the twentieth century.[131] However, unilateralist strategies were not discarded during the Cold War. Certainly the United States was instrumental in the formation of multilateral institutions such as the UN and NATO; yet this did not prevent successive American presidents bypassing the will of the "international community" when U.S. interests were at stake. As Robert Kagan puts it, "the notion that Washington tried hard to abide by the UN Charter and

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[128] Stewart Patrick, "Multilateralism and Its Discontents: The Causes and Consequences of U.S. Ambivalence," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, ed. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 2.
[129] Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*, 22.
[130] Ibid., 26.
[131] David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, "The Sources of American Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 6 (November/December 2004): 18-32.

"pledged" its power "to international law" is ahistorical, even fanciful."[132] U.S. State Department records indicate that, during the Eisenhower years, it was determined that America should "act independently of its major allies when the advantage of achieving U.S. objectives by such action clearly outweighs the danger of lasting damage to its alliances."[133] This statement encapsulates the American Cold War attitude toward multilateralism: specifically, that the United States values international alliances, unless they conflict with U.S. interests.

The Bush doctrine, in placing American interests ahead of multilateral procedure, is consistent with U.S. Cold War strategy. Others suggest Bush's approach departs from American policy during the Clinton years. Judis argues that Bush has rejected the "Wilsonian internationalism" of the 1990s in favour of a unilateral imperialism, citing the administration's withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty and its rejection of the Kyoto Protocol as evidence of this strategic shift.[134] However, Judis' analysis fails to recognise that Bush's repudiation of these international agreements is rooted in the actions of his immediate predecessor. As Renshon points out, few critics acknowledge that it was Clinton who initiated the ABM treaty withdrawal process, or that Clinton deliberately failed to submit the Kyoto accords for Senate ratification.[135]

Despite an early rhetorical commitment to a policy of "assertive multilateralism," Clinton did not deviate markedly from the pragmatic approach to collective action that typified Cold War American foreign policy. The 1993 Somalia intervention led to

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[132] Robert Kagan, "A Matter of Record," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 1 (January/February 2005): 170-173.
[133] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (Washington, DC, 2003), quoted in Leffler, "9/11 and American Foreign Policy," 399.
[134] John B. Judis, *The Folly of Empire: What George W. Bush Could Learn from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 165.
[135] Renshon, "The Bush Doctrine Considered," 10.

the release of Presidential Decision Directive 25 in May 1994; a document that, as Robert DiPrizio notes, signalled the Clinton administration's retreat from its previous support for multilateral UN peacekeeping operations.[136] Clinton's stance on multilateralism, as enunciated in PDD-25, is remarkably similar to the practical approach adopted by Bush: "The U.S. will maintain the capability to act unilaterally or in coalitions when our most significant interests…are at stake. Multilateral peace operations must, therefore, be placed in proper perspective among the instruments of U.S. foreign policy."[137]

During his second term, Clinton maintained America's right to act unilaterally. The 1998 NSS declared that the United States "must always be prepared to act alone when that is our most advantageous course."[138] Clinton's final NSS, released in 2000, reiterated his willingness to act independent of America's allies: "We act in alliance or partnership when others share our interests, but will act unilaterally when compelling national interests so demand."[139] Thus, like Bush, Clinton recognised the value of collective action in promoting American aims, but did not renounce the right to act alone if U.S. interests were at risk. Walt offers an accurate assessment of Clinton's approach to multilateralism when he writes that the president "acted precisely as one would expect from the leader of the world's largest power – relying on international institutions when they suit U.S. purposes but criticizing or ignoring them when they do not."[140]

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[136] Robert C. DiPrizio, *Armed Interventions: U.S. Interventions from Northern Iraq to Kosovo* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 4.
[137] Presidential Decision Directive 25, "Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations," May 5, 1994, http://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd25.htm (accessed June 5, 2008).
[138] 1998 NSS.
[139] 2000 NSS.
[140] Walt, "Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy," 77.

The accusations levelled at Bush of a radical unilateralism are, in the words of Bacevich, "largely fanciful."[141] There is significant continuity between Clinton and Bush on the issue of multilateral diplomacy: both understood the importance of collective action in furthering U.S. goals; while neither relinquished the right to act unilaterally if it was in America's interests to do so. Ultimately, Madeline Albright's dictum of "multilateral when you can, unilateral when you must" most accurately characterises grand strategy under Clinton and Bush. Moreover, this selective approach to multilateralism – what Richard Haass terms "multilateralism à la carte"[142] – is wholly consistent with American foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

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[141] Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 213.
[142] Richard N. Haass, "The Age of Nonpolarity," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May/June 2008): 56.

CHAPTER 5

AMERICAN HEGEMONY

5.1 Hegemony or Empire?

The final tenet, and overarching objective, of the Bush doctrine is the consolidation of U.S. global preeminence: "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenge – thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace."[143] Thus, the Bush administration posits that the security of the United States is contingent upon a stable and open international order sustained by American leadership. As Condoleezza Rice declared, "Dissuading military competition can prevent potential conflict and costly global arms races."[144]

Some argue that the quest to strengthen U.S. hegemony denotes the existence of an American empire. Shortly after 9/11, Boot argued that the attacks were attributable to "insufficient American involvement and ambition" overseas; consequently, for Boot, the solution was for America to "embrace its imperial role" and pursue a more "expansive" and "assertive" foreign policy.[145] Others are less sympathetic to the notion of an American empire. Noam Chomsky believes that the Bush doctrine is an "imperial grand strategy" designed to secure "unilateral world domination through absolute moral superiority"[146]. For Patrick Buchanan, Bush has embraced a "neo-

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[143] Bush, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point."
[144] Rice, "A Balance of Power That Favors Freedom."
[145] Max Boot, "The Case for American Empire," *The Weekly Standard* 7, no. 5, October 15, 2001.
[146] Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

imperial foreign policy that would have been seen by the Founding Fathers as a breach of faith."[147]

While Boot, Chomsky, and Buchanan differ wildly in their interpretations of American foreign policy, they are each equally mistaken in applying the term *empire* to the United States. The use of this term in the context of American foreign relations is, as Mandelbaum argues, both inaccurate and pejorative.[148] Instead, the term *hegemon* more appropriately describes America's current status in the international order. For Niall Ferguson, this label is "merely a euphemism for *empire*"[149]. However, the difference between the two terms is "no simple semantic distinction".[150] Paul Schroeder reasons that "empire means political control exercised by one organized political unit over another unit separate from and alien to it. Many factors enter into empire…but the essential core is political: the possession of final authority by one entity over the vital political decisions of another."[151] In contrast, hegemony refers to "clear, acknowledged leadership and dominant influence by one unit within a community of units not under a single authority. A hegemon is first among equals; an imperial power rules over subordinates."[152]

Thus, hegemony and empire are not synonymous terms; rather, they reflect two fundamentally different types of inter-state relationship. While the U.S. is the world's

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[147] Patrick J. Buchanan, *Where the Right Went Wrong: How Neoconservatives Subverted the Reagan Revolution and Hijacked the Bush Presidency* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2005), 8.
[148] Michael Mandelbaum, *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 1-6.
[149] Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 8.
[150] Robert Kagan, "America as Global Hegemon," *The National Interest*, July 23, 2003, http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=18532 (accessed June 12, 2008).
[151] Paul Schroeder, "Is the U.S. an Empire?" *History News Network*, February 3, 2003, http://hnn.us/articles/1237.html (accessed June 12, 2008).
[152] Ibid.

most powerful nation, it does not possess final political authority over other states. America, as Zelikow reasons, "is central in world politics today, not omnipotent."[153] The term *empire* is therefore not applicable to the United States. As Krauthammer suggests, "It is absurd to apply the word to a people whose first instinct upon arriving on anyone's soil is to demand an exit strategy."[154] Others argue that America is a unique empire, qualitatively different from past imperial powers but an empire nonetheless. Schlesinger, for instance, asked, "Who can doubt that there is an American empire? – an 'informal' empire, not colonial in polity, but still richly equipped with imperial paraphernalia".[155] This argument is unconvincing: the United States is either an imperial power or it is not. As Gary Schmitt notes, the fact that America "is not an empire in the traditional sense seems to suggest that the country is not, in fact, an empire."[156]

The Bush doctrine does not call for the construction of an American imperium. When Bush stated that the United States "has no empire to extend or utopia to establish,"[157] the president offered an accurate and honest portrayal of American strategic intent: specifically, that a liberal international order maintained by U.S. leadership is conducive to American interests. By asserting U.S. primacy, the Bush administration seeks *security*, not empire: "The Bush doctrine was not proposed to support a *pax America*. It was not proposed to acquire an empire. It was proposed to protect the

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[153] Zelikow, "The Transformation of National Security," 19.

[154] Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World* (Washington DC: The AEI Press, 2004), 2.

[155] Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (London: Deutsch, 1987), 141.

[156] Gary J. Schmitt, "To Be, or Not to Be…an Empire," *American Enterprise Institute*, June 22, 2007, http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.26387/pub_detail.asp (accessed June 12, 2008).

[157] Bush, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point."

United States from leaders and groups who would like to inflict catastrophic harm on this country, and had already demonstrated the desire, intention, and will to do so."[158]

5.2 The Pursuit of American Hegemony

Critics argue that Bush's strategy of "dissuading potential competitors"[159] through the preservation of American hegemony deviates from past American policy. Daalder and Lindsay assert that Bush has "rejected many of the assumptions that had guided Washington's approach to foreign affairs for more than half a century" by employing a "hegemonist" foreign policy informed by the belief that "America's immense power and the willingness to wield it…is the key to securing America's interests in the world."[160] For Mann, the Bush doctrine signifies "an epochal change, the flowering of a new view of America's status and role in the world" in which the United States is able to pursue its objectives without making "compromises or accommodations" due to its vast military power.[161]

However, the notion that American security is enhanced by the expansion of U.S. power overseas has been an elemental theme in America's foreign policy since the nation's formative years. For Boot, U.S. foreign engagement during the nineteenth century was driven by an expansionist desire to extend American continental hegemony.[162] Similarly, Gaddis argues that the United States has always favoured a "preponderance of power" over a "balance of power", suggesting that, "had John Quincy Adams lived to see the end of the Cold War, he would not have found the

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[158] Renshon, "The Bush Doctrine Considered," 16.
[159] 2006 NSS.
[160] Daalder and Lindsay, *America Unbound*, 40.
[161] Mann, Introduction to *Rise of the Vulcans*, xii.
[162] Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

position of the United States within the international system an unfamiliar one."[163] Thus, in seeking to augment American hegemony, the Bush doctrine restates an established trend in U.S. grand strategy.

The pursuit of security through expansion was fundamental to Cold War American foreign policy. In 1950, Paul Nitze, the archetypal Cold Warrior, wrote that the "United States and the Soviet Union are engaged in a struggle for preponderant power…[T]o seek less than preponderant power would be to opt for defeat. Preponderant power must be the objective of U.S. policy."[164] NSC-68 also recognised the imperative of American global engagement: "In a shrinking world…it is not an adequate objective merely to seek to check the Kremlin design, for the absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable. This fact imposes on us, in our own interests, the responsibility of world leadership."[165] The Bush doctrine, as a strategy informed by the idea that American security "is tightly bound up with the security of the broader international system,"[166] represents a continuation of the internationalist consensus evident in American foreign policy since the early 1940s.

American strategic objectives did not change dramatically after the Cold War. Indeed the collapse of the Soviet Union provided U.S. policymakers with the opportunity to expand American power further. "By removing the only real check on U.S. power," argues Christopher Layne, "the Soviet Union's demise presented the United States with the opportunity to use its capabilities to exert more control over – to "shape" –

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[163] Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*, 30.
[164] Paul Nitze quoted in Leffler, "9/11 and American Foreign Policy," 402.
[165] NSC-68.
[166] U.S. Department of Defense, "National Defense Strategy," June 2008, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/2008%20National%20Defense%20Strategy.pdf (accessed July 15, 2008).

the international political system and simultaneously to increase its power."[167] The desire to protect U.S. hegemony has therefore informed American grand strategy since the end of the Cold War. As Bacevich notes, American strategic thinking during the 1990s dictated that Washington acquire not "military strength" but "military supremacy," whereby America possesses "military capabilities enabling it to prevail over any conceivable combination of adversaries."[168]

Consequently, the Bush administration inherited this tenet of the Bush doctrine from its immediate predecessor. In 1992, the U.S. Defense Department drafted the Defense Planning Guidance (DPG), which stated that America's post-Cold War mission must be to convince "potential competitors that they need not aspire to a greater role or pursue a more aggressive posture to protect their legitimate interests."[169] While the hard-nosed rhetoric was moderated in subsequent drafts, the Clinton administration, as Lieber and Lieber note, did not discard the concept of preserving American preeminence.[170] Clinton's 1995 NSS acknowledged the importance of American global leadership, stating that, "as the world's premier economic and military power, and with the strength of our democratic values, the U.S. is indispensable to the forging of stable political relations and open trade."[171] Equally, the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review endorsed the consolidation of U.S. hegemony, declaring that the United States must "sustain American global leadership" by denying the emergence of potential rival powers.[172]

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[167] Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.
[168] Bacevich, *American Empire*, 126.
[169] Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop," *New York Times*, March 8, 1992.
[170] Lieber and Lieber, "The Bush National Security Strategy," 34.
[171] 1995 NSS.
[172] William S. Cohen, "Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review," Summer 1997, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/0516pgs.pdf (accessed June 10, 2008).

Certainly the Bush administration has been uncompromising in its foreign policy rhetoric since 9/11. However, this indicates more a change in style than substance. President Clinton did not deny the fact of American preeminence, and nor did he reject the premise that American global leadership is conducive to a stable world order. As Suedfeld notes, "The real source of acrimony, both in the U.S. and abroad, seems to be that President Bush is unapologetic and straightforward" about the assertion of American hegemony.[173] However, Bush has essentially maintained the strategic approach of the previous administration. As Bacevich argues, "although the rhetoric changed, the overarching grand strategy – aimed at creating an open and integrated international order dominated by the United States – emerged from the transfer of power intact."[174]

Crucially, therefore, 9/11 had little impact on the overall direction of American foreign policy. Bush was committed to preserving American preeminence prior to the terrorist attacks: while he spoke of a "humble" foreign policy before September 2001, Bush also outlined a "vision in which no great power, or coalition of great powers, dominates or endangers our friends. In which America encourages stability from a position of strength."[175] The foremost consequence of 9/11 for American foreign policy, therefore, was to simply encourage the Bush administration to pursue more vigorously the approach of its predecessors. The attacks, as Robert Kagan argues,

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[173] Suedfeld, "The Bush Doctrine in Perspective," 320.
[174] Bacevich, *American Empire*, 206.
[175] George W. Bush, "A Distinctly American Internationalism," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, CA, November 19, 1999, http://www.fas.org/news/usa/1999/11/991119-bush-foreignpolicy.htm (accessed June 8, 2008).

"shifted and accelerated but did not fundamentally alter a course the United States was already on."[176]

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[176] Kagan, *Paradise and Power*, 91.

CONCLUSION

It has been reasoned that "we need to invoke the past to make sense of the present and to imagine the future."[177] This statement is particularly pertinent to the study of United States foreign policy since 9/11. Rather than presiding over a revolution in American grand strategy, George W. Bush has merely invoked the policies of the past.

This study demonstrates the significant degree of thematic continuity between the Clinton and Bush doctrines and, in a broader historical context, the Bush doctrine and American grand strategy during the Cold War. Each tenet of Bush's national security strategy has influenced past U.S. foreign policy. For example, the postulation that American security is advanced through the spread of democracy overseas has informed U.S. foreign engagement since the nation's formative years. Furthermore, in considering democratic ideals to be both superior and universally applicable, the Bush doctrine illustrates the continuing influence of the American national identity on U.S. foreign policy.

Nor does Bush's prevention strategy depart from past practice. Although the centrality of this policy to current U.S. foreign policy is often overstated, the logic of prevention – that it is prudent to act sooner rather than later – shaped American strategic thinking before 9/11. Equally, characterisations of the Bush doctrine as "unilateral" are crude and inaccurate. In demonstrating a preference for multilateralism, but also a willingness to act alone if necessary, Bush conforms to past practice.

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[177] Joanne Meyerowitz, "History and September 11: An Introduction," *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 2 (September 2002): 415.

The Bush administration's pursuit of American global hegemony has motivated U.S. foreign policy since the beginning of the Cold War. In subscribing to the view that American global leadership and the expansion of American power overseas are beneficial to U.S. security, Bush has simply reaffirmed the policies of his predecessors. Ultimately, the Bush doctrine, as a grand strategy that seeks to balance American ideals and interests, is wholly consistent with the U.S. strategic tradition.

Moreover, the Bush doctrine's aim of maintaining America's geopolitical preeminence should be encouraged. The editors of *Foreign Policy* succinctly summed up attitudes to U.S. hegemony when they stated, "Either you believe that Uncle Sam is a benevolent bulwark against chaos or you see him as the all-powerful root of evil." [178] Those who subscribe to the latter view should consider the alternatives to assertive American global leadership. It is fashionable to criticise Bush's foreign policy as arrogant and hubristic; yet a return to multipolarity would signify the emergence of a volatile and dangerous international system hostile to democratic values. As a recent *Spectator* editorial put it, a multipolar international order "would not be a Kantian paradise but a Hobbesian jungle." [179] Resolute American leadership was essential in defeating the two greatest evils of the twentieth century in Nazism and Communism; it will be equally instrumental in managing the threats of this century.

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[178] "Show Me the Hegemony," *Foreign Policy*, no. 131 (July/August 2002): 1.
[179] "Clear and Present Danger," *The Spectator*, August 16, 2008.

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