A STRATEGY FOR MAINTAINING THE HEGEMONY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Abstract. *As the conditions of the global power structure modify, so should the approaches of states that wish to maintain their position internationally. The United States of America has been a global hegemon since the end of the Cold War, but to remain so, it needs to apply a maintenance strategy which takes into account the new challenges and challengers that have arisen. Our paper tries to identify a solution for keeping the hegemony of the US afloat, by tackling the most stringent problems faced by the said country: state failure and criminal states, the current contestation of international rules and norms, rising powers and nuclear proliferation. Thus, what we have called the empowering method offers synoptic solutions, which embed the usage of diplomatic means, identifying new patterns of military power usage, providing civilian assistance and trying to reshape the global governance system.*

Introduction

Time has revealed that, in the global system, hegemonic power shifts from a group of actors to the other, as one superpower cannot keep operating at full parameters indefinitely. The said shifts are cyclical, but supremacy seldom returns to countries that have lost it in the past. With that being said, it can be argued that the United States of America has been the hegemon of the system since the USSR has been dismantled and bipolarity came to an end, but while mild critics argue that this will not be the case forever, the most ardent consider that it will not even be the case for long.

The main challenge faced by the United States in terms of strategy is finding a way to revitalize the system as a whole, so that the nation might amplify its strength. The alternative implies standing by idly whilst witnessing a decrease in its power and influence - as the global environment provides new challenge(r)s. The US has overwhelmingly received the most out of the international system's prolonged stability; thus to keep its position intact, it must again assume control, embrace its leadership role and try to adapt this system as to provide greater security and a source of stability in the times to come.

The interstate system is governed by international rules and institutions that cover a vast array of fields such as politics, economy or security – to name but a few. The system is put under stress in its entirety due to the forever changing nature of both actors' identities and interests; given that transnational entities, states and processes constantly undermine the general wellbeing - specifically in matters of individual and state security. Changes are constant, but it seems that the system is lagging behind and has been

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outpaced by the challenges that have arisen. Consequently, a plethora of queries about the legitimacy and relevance of rules and institutions of the international environment has surfaced. The so called "erosion" of state and supra-statal (interstate) capacity to deal with the above-mentioned challenges is a broad phenomenon that undermines US security in both a direct and an indirect manner.

The accurate functioning of the interstate system has been for a long period a central theme of US strategy, but after the victory obtained in World War II, its importance has decreased and it has gradually devolved from a main aim to a mere expectation. With the deepening of globalization, a paradox was allowed to come to fruition: while globalization, as a process, aided the US greatly in terms of economic development and soft power insurance, its consequences include a gradual weakening of the international system, which, in turn, has led to a problem of security. Scholars too numerous to name warn about this later fact in unison, but the public and policy makers seem not to grasp the full array of implications a weak system entices. Moreover, some US policies created with the main goal pf addressing separate challenges have led to the exacerbation of latent structural problems, inherent to some parts of the system, but affecting it in its entirety.

This security problem ultimately affects the individual. In order to provide US citizens with a climate in which they can continue to pursue happiness and prosperity, a strategy of conservation must be established. But, while aiming to preserve stability, the vast processes of the international system and its rules must be adapted to encompass new state-powers and the challenges they bring to the table. US national security should thus stress a series of objectives, of which two vital. The first: the states need to augment basic/primary governance (with an emphasis on the security sector) on their own territories, as to ensure the security of the system as a whole - and second: collective approaches must be revitalized and enhanced through rules and institutions, in order to allow for an effective response cross-border threats – be them security centered, economic or of another type. The states themselves can no longer attend to these objectives by themselves –as we no longer live in a realist (form the standpoint of the theory of International Relations) type of world - so this strategy requires the cooperation of non-state entities and the development of new tools and mechanisms for dealing with issues such as terrorism and environmental threats.

Systemic changes are a priority and an end, but we have to remember that the US faces complementary stringent security challenges. Nonetheless, if one cures the source of a disease, the spillover and, subsequently, contagion should be limited. With this, we advocate, in simple terms that while the present is not to be neglected by policy makers, their focus must always be towards ensuring future stability.

The strategy of maintaining power or conserving it needs alternative means for objectives to be attained. With deeply entrenched and diffuse sources, both state and systemic weaknesses require a number of multifaceted solutions which must be enacted perennially. Solutions cannot be advertised and later enforced entirely by the US, despite the federation's continued military and economic supremacy and an inclination towards unilateralism. By definition, the modernization of international governance requires that consensus be reached within the international community, as one focal actor needs the active support of the majority of its peers. Accordingly, our proposed strategy advertises methods that defy the conventional majority which has taken the limelight of the US's contemporary national security debate and practice. For the best part of their history, the United States has been a unilateralist federation; however, the source of such individualism within the global arena of politics will not be discussed herein.

This paper aims to analyze one major component of US strategy that we have decided to call the **empowering method**. In turn, it is complemented by another, namely: planned pliability**,** on which we will only delve shortly for it will be the subject of another paper**.** Planned pliability is made up of a series of policies created for the purpose of maintaining US power and aiding in the shaping of an ever-evolving security environment. For the policies that enable planned pliability to work, update is critical, granted that economic, political and security assumptions that once were the premises of foreign policy have been either partially or totally annulled. The world in no longer split between two ideological camps with the hammer of war and destruction resting above one or another, and while the threat of armed war between superpowers still lingers, it has been drastically reduced. With this being said, one can argue that America's belief system, particularly regarding the world and the way in which the protection of US interests should unravel have only scarcely changed since the days of the Cold War. America's unipolar vision is, however, in mid-process of being overshadowed by a diverse type of global characters possessing the capacity to enhance or threat US security. We need to stress that the United States still retain the position of hegemon in many areas – admittedly, in the vast majority of such areas – however, the anticipated longer-term economic and demographic development of some states and the transfer amongst clusters of nations suggest an emerging shift of global power. The world is involved in a perennial interlinking process, especially in domains of common interest. Thus, the United States must revisit its deeply engrained habits of uni-polarity and sole engagement, in order to be allowed freedom of action and to be granted legitimacy and wiggle-room. With this freedom of action it can protect its interests on the global stage of politics. Moreover, if in the past America succeeded to band-wagon other powers of the world and ensure the backing of its decisions – the War on Terror being a prime example – the role of the leader has quite a different description in the present.

If planned pliability is a condition for ensuring the adaptation to changing global spider-webs of power, the empowering approach is hinged in realist view about the relationship of US power with the demands of a maintenance strategy that preserves the current power of states and the status quo of the international system. The empowering approach relies on working predominantly with and through other actors to achieve US strategic goals. Maneuvering in such a way is essential for burden sharing to take place and the achievement of US ends. Even if the United States would have a recipe for strengthening all the states, it lacks the resources to do so, and in many cases it would indubitably be unwelcomed.

Furthermore, the United States cannot act alone in such endeavors, as it is not strong enough, nor does it have legitimacy to construct a revised contract among states and the other actors of the system of International Relations (IR). One can hardly deny the fact that legitimacy and strength come from collective support and collective action, thereby consent is a *sine qua non* condition for the reshaping of the entire global system. Thus, a strategy of conservation that takes into account all the elements briefly presented above is in direct dissent with US foreign policy traditions and the federation's historical preference for self-reliance. We need only to go back a few years to observe the direction given by policy makers. If one would analyze the US before Obama it could be noted that The Bush doctrine sought to universalize US values and establish hegemony through primacy. Admittedly, the tendencies of the G. W. Bush Jr. administration, during the president's two-terms, could even be deemed imperialistic. The Obama administration provided but a frail reversal of such policies in practice, despite an admitted preference for multilateral approaches. With Donald J. Trump as acting president, however, there is an

evident will to undo as many policies of the past cabinet as possible. This tendency to reverse policies that pertain to the national and international stages alike could prove perilous, for steps have been taken to make the US more appealing to international partners and to reshape the country's image into that of a benign leader. Trump's slogan: "Make America great again!", is based on the supposition that the power of the US has decayed, which is arguably true, but we are unsure if the methods to achieve greatness promoted by the acting president are the way to re-establish a the federation's primacy on the stage of IR.

The paper is divided into two main parts, one deriving from the other logically. The first, shorter part, briefly delves on some of the main challenges that have arisen in time for the United States, such as state failure, criminal states and the dangerous actors on their territories, the current contestation of rules and norms, rising powers and nuclear proliferation.

The second part focuses on how these problems can be solved, through a strategy of maintenance or conservation. The main element of the advertised strategy is what we have chosen to call *the empowering method*.

Methodologically, research has been used to both identify the current threats and find synoptic means of containing them, as to further American hegemony within the system.

1. Current Challenges To Us Interests

While identifying the central sources of American power may prove elusive, we argue that it is the freedoms of its citizens that have enabled this particular federation to develop military, technological and economic strength, which in turn has enabled it to rise to pressing internal and international challenges. The United States' unity has been sustained by its citizens and its power has been developed through policymakers since its founding, and it is precisely these citizens that are invaluable for future progress.

In the country's early times, Americans vested all their energies inward. As they benefited from a geographical position that sheltered them from external threats, the early settlers advanced across the entire continent, making use of the vast internal resources and commerce. Subsequently, these settlers and their heirs managed to establish national political relations. With time, the nation extended its reach overseas, securing resources that were unavailable within the geographic spread by building international commercial and political relationships. In the nearer past; namely in the aftermath of World War II, the United States consciously focused again inwards, reshaped itself, and took upon itself to be recognized as the hegemon of the entire international system. American strategists pursued the promotion of an environment of global economic growth conducive to stability, so that the nation's citizens could preserve their way of life and continue to thrive.

It is true to say that for the most part, the United States was one of the fathers of the modern nation-state system, but we have to take into account that it also was a primary beneficiary. Putting national interest in the forefront of their internationalist approach, the US drew up rules, processes and institutions that would aid them in their domination of the system. This newly constructed *status quo* did not only benefit the US, but benefited their allies and, in some instances, allowed their enemies to participate in such a construction and profit alongside favored/favorable nations. Amongst the fundaments of this new system, three characteristics stand out: international financial institutions that encouraged economic growth were created, rules and legislation to regularize behaviors in the international arena were enacted, and collective security arrangements were instilled - to deter from conflict and mediate major discord, if the latter should arise. Nevertheless, it

would be unfair to only reiterate these developments, as the US has had a normative approach that affected the behavior of states towards citizens. The US participated as a leader in the creation of norms, such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights or the International Criminal Court. To reiterate, the system did not only work for the United States, but it generally worked for others. Participation within this system provided significant incentives for other state actors and, especially after the Cold War, it was perceived as something benign even by state governments that had once openly accused the said construction - such as Russia or China. Other entities, notwithstanding, still blame the evolution of this system and regard their inability to obtain power as a fault of the system itself and, subsequently, of its promoters.

A weakening international system might not seem the most alarming problem that the US faces, as global terrorist networks thrive, young nuclear powers arise and China's economic expansion or Russia's territorial one are no longer novelties, to name just a few stringent priorities. Of course, other issues such as the instability in predominantly Muslim countries, the depletion of resources, environmental threats, *etc.* are also to be labelled sources of dissolution of the legitimacy (and capacity) of states and/or supranational actors.

We have identified two major ways in which the state can achieve (self)reinforcement: directly or by shaping the international system in way in which the state can manage challenges coming from transnational or non-state actors – because, while nations reside at the core of the system, the other said actors are gaining in importance and in the level of control they can exercise.

Admittedly, the United States still retains enough strength in numerous IR-related domains; nevertheless one can perceive a nascent probability that emerging powers could become its direct opponents, and the nation's efforts, particularly vested in shaping the world, will be further complicated. Thus the US needs to (re)align its vision of the global system with the interests and expectations of other key players.

It a well-known fact that globalization both creates and destroys. Transnational financial actors such as corporations are gaining terrain inside the system, markets are becoming increasingly interconnected, capital now moves with the speed of a mouse-click/ screen tap, and technology –in its entirety- is developing at a rapid pace – all the previous providing efficiency, whilst taking from the control that states have over market-based economies. The diminishing power to control outcomes is especially troublesome for weaker states, as it creates the image of vulnerability in front of external forces. Although these serious threats are visible, there is no perceptible intent from the members of the international sphere to create some kind of safety net as to aid weakening states. Reduced state power, in turn, gives birth to a series of new challenges that span far beyond economics, environmental degradation, disease and armed conflict.

State monopoly on violence (Ferguson, 2009) is no longer a given on the territory of some states, the social contract is not instilled in others, border control is problematic in others, populists are gaining momentum in some and the list could go on. States are failing to work for the betterment of social conditions and this fact instills a security problem that affects the entire state-run system.

Furthermore, non-state actors such as global extremists function against the state-system. The fight against terrorism received much attention in the last Bush Jr. mandate, and has remained a national priority for the US since, but while al-Qaida was severely crippled, other terrorist organizations have evolved into regional threats. Globalization aided a series of such actors to escape isolation and create networks, leading to a serious threat to global security.

With the end of the Cold War, an opportunity arose to reduce the interest of countries in acquiring nuclear weapons. Oddly enough, a chain of small and insecure states opted for the exact opposite, enlarging or extending their nuclear capabilities. States' reasons for such decisions of arming themselves stem from perceived threats from their neighbors, from the need to protect a frail regime which is in contradiction with some general principles of a system moving towards a unanimous democracy, or from a combination of both reasons.

A new security dilemma thus comes to play, granted the direct threat that states with nuclear capabilities pose. Allowing them to develop freely becomes a problem for the United States, which translates into a challenge for international politics. In the absence of continued international efforts to put nuclear proliferation to a standstill (and to tackle security slippages and deficits more broadly), the number of states with nuclear capabilities will grow – bringing forth waves of insecurity for other state and non-state actors across the globe.

An equally worth mentioning set of challenges comes from states and secondary actors, which seek to either exploit to the fullest or counter the system's present power structure. Whether these subversive forces target civilians or seek to obtain and then use weapons of mass destruction, they do so in rejection of majority-accepted rules, such as non-proliferation regimes. To counter the said subversive or illegal actions, the U.S has sometimes acted in violation of the same rules. Methods such as torture (Guantanamo), target killing (the most relevant example being the assassination of Osama Bin Laden in 2011) and preemptive use of force (Iraq) are just some examples.

At times when the system's chief powers take reactionary measures that starkly resemble those of the subversives, the system itself starts to function in an ambiguous way. For example questions such as "*what is legitimate in a state of war and to what extent is the war on terror actual warfare?*" remain unanswered, thus norms and rules for such situations become a matter of interpretation. In these circumstances, the modern system of states risks losing the normative pillars which keep the structure afloat. As such, we observe that the main challenge is to embrace the changing circumstances and to tailor rules and norms accordingly.

US planners are experts when it comes to crafting strategy against a specific state - considered America's adversary. At the moment China and Russia appear to be the main contesters of US hegemony, taking on the role of the defunct Soviet Union, and we must recognize that the power of these (and other) states shows signs of rapid growth and further possible acceleration of that growth, and current trends – if allowed to come to fruition - will yield a significantly more multi-polar world than that the present one. As such, we must emphasize that the United States' position of sole power-center is unlikely to remain a permanent trait of global politics.

International stability relies on the rising-star states, which will be the pillars of stability, but in the same time serious threats to US interests. States such Russia, China, India, Brazil and South Africa (bearing the infamous BRICS acronym), seem, for diverse reasons (geopolitical interests, economic ones, etc), very likely to enter into clashes with the United States in the future. Emerging regional powers such as those mentioned beforehand present the UN Security Council, which is still dominated by the former the colonial powers, with a new challenge. Here again, the powers with a legacy need to accommodate new states, in order to keep the latter latched to international norms and discourage them from becoming regional hegemons, with interests limited to one particular region.

The particular diseases of globalization are also threats to the security of the system and consequently to that of states, but issues such as genocide, climate change, nuclear proliferation or free trade have been discussed in national-governmental forums or agencies, and have lost the front of international debate.

The United States has shown reluctance in understanding the evident linkage between their homeland security and systemic weakness. The failure to grasp this very clear connection and to include what has been enumerated before in their security strategy in the post-Cold War era will be addressed by the maintenance strategy.

2. **The Overall Strategy**

The central goal of any state's security strategy is to allow citizens to continue to prosper without any threats, both internal and international. Thus, for the US to attain this objective in the decades to come, the federation should try to reform the international system and threatening states within this system, whilst aiding weak(ening) states conserve their structures. We can identify a number of immediate objectives to be taken into account, drawing information from what was written earlier in the paper, but if we were to synthesize, three issues seem the most acute.

First, the expansion of potentially malign behaviors, which attack the wellbeing of the system, must be deterred and up-to-date rules and organisms in charge with the prevention of new threats must be created. Second, the US should proceed in such a manner, that every state is held accountable for its actions, and that the territory on which no accountability could be identified greatly diminishes. In other words, the US needs to enhance the capacity of other states to ensure national and regional security. And last, emerging powers must be pushed toward stable, system-reinforcing behaviors, through the permanent restructuring of international institutions. International expectations must be met, and this can only be achieved through institution revisal, so that institutions become not only more transparent, but also genuinely democratic.

There is no identifiable logical reason why objectives as those stipulated above should not fall into place with the interests of an overwhelming majority of regimes, but we have to take into consideration that the system is still widely anarchic, and tensions are one of its defining traits. But for any strategy of maintenance to work, the given condition of the system must be that of peace and the interests of the majority of states must be common. A stable international environment, governed effectively and efficiently, would benefit all states - both strong and weak.

Breaking rules and norms has great destabilizing consequences, thus the phenomenon must be contained, as to aid stability and a normative flow that could become a public good at a global level. In the short term, eluding international norms might grant one advantages, but in the long run, only stability will protect US interests, even as global power is shifting from one state to another and eventually beyond the states. To maintain its hegemonic position, the US must permanently be prepared to adapt to change and promote case-specific continuity.

The specific policies that need to be shaped, re-shaped or put into practice derive from the ambitions to maintain its current control over the inter-state system. To further this control, the system itself must be stabilized, but stabilizing it falls far out of the reach of any single state actor, and arguably, it cannot come as a result of the use of armament. The US should do whatever stands in its power to demonstrate the benign character of its position as a global leader, by stressing its interest in achieving sustainable stability and illustrating that its interests coincide – even if only partially – with the vast array of other states, particularly long-term allies, great powers and powers on the rise.

International institutions, other states, rules and norms and even non-state actors are invaluable for this strategy to work, and for it to be perceived as non-threatening and legitimate. An empowering approach is also needed in many aspects, and greater strategic and even political flexibility is required, because different paths and partners will be pursued. Admittedly, the US will find its prime partner in the European Union, and the further normalization of relations with the latter is needed, as both entities function on the same basic principles of liberal democracy and their goals are overwhelmingly convergent in the international system. The heavy reliance on military and economic power is sometimes counterproductive, thus diplomacy must act as key to all future strategies. Besides being counterproductive, we claim that military and economic measures will prove insufficient.

One has to keep in mind that this paper (and the strategy presented within) is not trying to reinvent the wheel, as some classical approaches are vital for the strategy to function: alliances are still very important, as is the conservation of military and technological superiority. Nuclear deterrence should also be pursued. The difference with what has been employed in the past resides in the fact that greater flexibility must be attained, and new, innovative policies created. Working within partnerships is also strongly advertised for the achievement of shared common goals.

If this strategy is ever to be carried out, it is vital to find a way of restoring legitimacy to the United States. Simple steps can be taken immediately and their impact could be seen in record time. Controversial practices, such as imposing high tariffs, withdrawals from environment accords, to name but two examples are especially counterproductive, and what is seen as particularly menacing towards other key actors has to be halted. Authority is needed to insure that there will be efficiency in dealing with the main issue at hand: reshaping or strengthening the institutions of the international arena and finding viable solutions to global problems.

As noted, we will not discuss planned pliability any further, rather we will briefly explain what the empowering method, as an indirect strategical approach entails.

2.1. The empowering method

It is our firm belief that levering US power by the introduction of other actors (including institutions) to more effectively assist the pursuit of shared goals and to support the creation and usage non-military tools is impervious for any plan of consolidating power that the US should draft. Continuing military preeminence (although the main source of power for America) is simply not cutting it anymore in the international arena. As it has been mentioned before, America struggles with legitimacy in many domains, be them military, environmental, security related or financial. When US legitimacy and resources are depleted, the federation needs to find a sustainable, long term strategy, reliant less on the power of the fist, and more on that of non-threatening gestures and inflictions of its voice. While we consider that military strength is still essential to an indirect approach, we argue that it has its limitations, and in order to attain its goals, America must take into consideration such issues as economic assistance, diplomacy and global governance. These will be presented shortly in what follows.

2.1.1. Using Diplomatic Means

As "diplomacy allows weak powers to counter strong ones" (Ferguson, 2009), it is indubitably it may aid hegemons consolidate their status. Washington officials, in an attempt to reinforce international stability, should revive traditional partnerships with old allies. With Europeans, contrary to the current US' focus, the goal should be the increase of non-military initiatives, even within NATO, and not advertising further military

capabilities. Moreover, the continued emphasis on budgetary increases from allies and on achieving a true burden-sharing process may be perceived as a legitimate request, as long as the said increases will not be solely directed to armedmilitary operations.

In connection with the Middle East, the US needs to establish itself as a reliable third party, in order to find a peaceful solution between Israelis and Palestinians. The peace process in the Middle East is reliant on a "two-state solution", but neither side is willing to make amends, despite the proportion of Arabs and Jews living in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank is just shy of a 1:1 ratio (favoring the Arab population). Although the US has a great deal of power in the Middle East, it is often left impotent. While pushing for peace in the region, assessments must be made of what is feasible and what should be postponed for the sake of realistic outcomes.

In the broader Middle East, the administration should gradually and carefully aid reform. Some of the more prominent reformers in the Arab World should be identified and encouraged, but gradually, realizing that existing regimes must not be undermined, and that this process of bringing about reform will be lengthy and tumultuous (Ross, Makowsky, 2009: 61-64). To provide an example of how this has been done in the past – arguably for the worst – we only need to refer to Bush's insistence that Palestinian elections should take place, fact which granted Hamas some sort of quasi-democratic legitimacy.

With NATO allies, the poignant question is not what can be done to expand national military commitments and subsequently capabilities, but how non-military initiatives can be encouraged. In the fields of international police work, intelligence, trade concessions and foreign assistance there is much work to be done, and a positive outlook seems graspable, as long as there is little insistence on growing the number of people they enroll and the number of guns each servant owns. Furthermore, states should be accommodated politically and invited to accept leadership roles in international institutions, roles fitting for both their current power and their ambitions.

China, Russia or India (and other regional powers) must be approached, and the relationships must be normalized, not only in the U.N, but also in economic and environmental domains. This reengagement must come because there is a clear disproportionate interest in matters of geopolitical stability in these states' regions. In the near future, the United States will presumably have a limited capacity of shaping stringent geopolitical affairs; thus it needs the aid of regional power centers. New nuclear states and terrorist organizations can only be deterred by stressing the roles of rising powers within the UN. Other global organizations and interstate actors need to become more transparent and new rules need to be implemented, but this can only be done by allowing all willing and capable states to join in the global governance system.

Although the G7 was later stretched to encompass eight, then twenty states, the forum itself needs to expand its focus and deepen its initiatives (Hajnal, 2007: 112-118). Only by these means can the banking system be reformed and stabilized. The Third Basel accord has come to place and be applied, as its main regulations have been postponed to 2019.

Moderate Muslim governments should be encouraged openly, as they are no threat to the question of security, but could become so if not taken into account in various international fora. If in the past, theoreticians have advertised giving incentives for the European Union to embrace Turkey, due to the recent turmoil in the state, reasons to doubt governmental moderation when it comes to human rights have arisen. If for the moment, Turkey is a delicate matter, other states must be pursued to open their ruling

regimes to political opponents; and by it, to further the widening of democratic spaces in states with frail such traditions.

At home, facilitating the success of Muslim populations could prove very productive, as a policy with international implications. Cooperation between religions must be advertised, and states from the European Union must be encouraged to follow the same path. David Hollinger is arguably correct when he sais that "*religious ideas offered as justifications for public policy should be open to critical debate and no longer given a pass*" (Hollinger, 2008: 18-19). It can be easily validated that religious actors in the public square often seem to assume that pandering on the idea of faith is no longer sufficient. Religion, when it involves itself in the public square, needs to provide a stronger account of itself, something far beyond any cliché of the past. The role played by religion in the large arena of American politics is a serious matter of concern for all involved, and this phenomenon should be watched very closely. Cimino and Lattin argue that political activism from religious groups is something which will only increase in the near future (Cimino, Lattin, 2002: 72-73). As religious debate becomes stronger, the capacity to propose a dialogue between faiths becomes greater, and a framework to advertise such dialogue should be created. Thus the religious divide that can be felt in several geographic areas can later be tackled with legitimacy, after an efficient model of cooperation is found within the nation.

Cooperation in other fields should be prompted with key actors, such as states and international organizations. Paradigm changing initiatives in the fields of climate change, economic development and alternative energy will not only be beneficial for America, but will have a positive impact on the wider community. Issuing public goods, will make America develop not only through the use of those goods, but it will facilitate maintaining legitimacy, leadership and subsequently power in the system.

2.1.2. *New Patterns of Military Power Usage*

Since we have relied to a great extent on the use of soft power, the following passage, which advertizes the use of military power, might seem counterintuitive. Nonetheless US military power is a fundamental component of American strength – especially if it becomes a hybrid, of both soft and hard capabilities. It is an essential factor which can aid the peaceful co-opting of other states and non-state actors into a system of shared norms and common objectives. The reliance on military preeminence must stop, and the system needs transformation.

Funding should be directed towards human resources and technological R&D, as intelligence offices (which are a part of the military apparatus) do a great job in avoiding conflict. Attacks can be prevented by simply modernizing both institutions that deal with intelligence and finding new and fitting methods for their staffs. Intelligence is mainly invaluable because it can detect and interrupt the acquisition of weapons and planned attacks against the US.

The current reforms of the military apparatus are clearly insufficient, but we have to keep in mind that another reorganization, done bureaucratically is out of the question, due to economic and time costs. The focus should thus be shifted towards head-hunting, especially targeting mid-level personnel, where series of consecutive waves of retirement have left jobs vacant. Here the planned pliability meets the indirect method because having relevant intelligence and analysis allows policy makers to draft good policies. Decision making thus goes hand in hand with military power of the sort discussed here.

US soldiers should be deployed in regions struck by natural disasters, as their unique capacity to relocate rapidly and respond with efficiency is valuable. This means

can also be employed to demonstrate why America is a strong leader, being both capable and concerned. Furthermore soldiers can be used to aid the training of others in regional peacekeeping operations. Material support is also essential, as the United States army has the newest technologies and the people that can teach others how they can be used. UN operations could benefit enormously from the expertise of army officials. The US strives to provide a professional military structure for NATO, but it is our recommendation that the same effort should be vested in regional peacekeeping initiatives.

Officials must learn how to separate counterterrorism missions from preventive, stability or relief operations. As a consequence, not only will the chain of command be clearer, but international credibility and success will be ensured. Bringing together missions which often compete against each other in terms of subject and needed approaches is surely counterproductive in the long run. This blurred line between several types of missions has clearly complicated the intervention in Afghanistan, and there is a strong possibility that this will become a problem in other areas of interest, unless a way to clearly segregate humanitarian intervention from the political one, and both said types from efforts related to counterterrorism.

The only place in which we consider the presence of an American army to be something beneficial is on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as a stabilizing (for the region and especially for Afghanistan) and containing method (for terrorist organizations). As forces have been pulled out from Iraq, a gradual expansion of troop numbers is needed in contested regions or areas of the globe (Berger, 2010: 76-92). Reconciliation with Taliban leaders willing to enter political structures is something that needs to be done by joining forces with other nations. In the same way, generous economic assistance should be issued for Afghanistan, which has been the beneficiary of some, albeit insufficient aid. To reduce the possibility being seen as radicals, US officials must renounce to the idea of maintaining permanent bases in Muslim countries, following a model that was used, with more or less success, in the case of Iraq.

Preventing conflict in other regions and, at the same time, insuring that any possible attack on the United States is dealt with accordingly represents a true priority, but it is also an enormous challenge. Enemies should thus be divided through targeted actions, rather than dealing with every opponent at the same time. Since several countries share the US's interest for a stable international environment, some responsibilities should be delegated to actors strong enough to deal with regional issues. In the years to come, it is vital for the US to promote systemic stability through the strengthening of foreign forces. There is often an expectancy of grand gestures when it comes to the US army, but such conceptions must be reevaluated and the US forces need to learn to keep a lower profile and decentralize operations whenever this is possible. In international relations, the leader must come from the situation, as certain states hold advantages when dealing with others.

Moreover, developing energy independence, cyber security and the development of new technologies must be on the primary expenditure lists when it comes to the military budget, because although the US faces no conventional peer competitor, they are not in the clear as recent internal scandals have shown. Sometimes a hand of people can destabilize entire countries by using computers; thus, creating weapons with more firing power does not cut it anymore, as the nature of conflict has changed immensely.

2.1.3.   *Providing Civilian Assistance*

Civilian assistance (comprising, but not limited to economic aid) is another core element of the indirect approach that has the purpose of obtaining long-term global security. In high-risk environments, a civilian corps should be deployed to aid stability

operations. This corpse should be comprised of people from outside the military, capable of aiding the peace process in post-conflict zones. Furthermore, the corps should enlist culturally aware personnel that can tolerate risk. While we do not advertise that United States attempt to create a parallel structure to its military capability, we observe that but a civilian operational component would prove to be an invaluable element of U.S. humanitarian, post-conflict or counterinsurgency efforts.

Initiatives would thus focus less on bilateral assistance, rather multilateral initiatives would be employed. Democratization is an important challenge for the whole of the system, but it pales in comparison to the need of improving the results of governance so that citizens' security and wellbeing are ensured to a greater degree. Although it should prove difficult to balance this stabilization approach with current and future political efforts to promote incremental reform in geopolitical strategic areas -and in other partnering countries – it is not far-fetched, nor naive.

Furthermore, the US should establish a global pool for covering national risk (Chaturvedi et al.: 94-97), something in the shape of a subsidized insurance fund, to make states suffering from natural disasters or terrorist attacks more resilient in the face of such tragedies.

America should become a leader of other allied developed nations, by making trade concessions, rather than waging trade wars and applying high tariffs on imports. The US should further tryto reinvigorate the Doha Round of trade negotiations (which was shelved in 2008 and had small bits unearthed in December 2013 - to only be buried again since) and thereby restore confidence in large-scale international economic agreements and in the possible trade partnership with the EU.

Yet another thing America could do is encourage Muslim states to create youth development programs, so that peaceful alternatives to Jihadist youth movements would exist. Through these programs, the primary beneficiaries would prove to be a safety net and a potential economic catalyst. This would also be a means of encouraging economic and social security and general wellbeing within Muslim countries.

2.1.4. Reshaping the Global Governance System

Stability and growth cannot come without an improved system that relies on new, innovative and democratic patterns of governance. Improvements to the system should come constantly, because as realities change, policy-makers always seem to be caught one step behind.

As mentioned before, the problem of failing nuclear states is one of the toughest challenges America faces, and in order to resolve it efficiently, it must ultimately develop multilateral support and rally a collection of states on its side. The UN can be used as the framework for the creation of a coalition that has the sole scope of identifying risk awareness and risk management systems, which could sound the alarm in case one nuclear state or another is failing. A unilateral approach would surely prove to be destabilizing, but assuming leadership in this domain could prove laudatory. A failing nuclear power implicates the whole system and demands aggregated response, because it transcends the geographic boundaries of one state and all citizens face a certain risk. The Atomic Energy Agency needs to be granted more authority as to oversee the safe dismantling of nuclear weapons in cases of intervention in an unstable nuclear state.

A new method for dealing with failed states (or regions within states) could aid the international community in reducing the risk of such areas becoming general security threats. Sovereignty entails one's responsibility of controlling activities within own borders but in some cases sensitive matters such as sovereignty must be left aside. When a

government fails to fulfill their responsibility, the vast array of other states must intervene in order to avoid a partial systemic threat or even failure. When a state lacks the capacity to deal with threats, they usually call in other states - the most recent example being Libya, where the political power sought the aid of Russia and one part of the contesters that of the United States. But while gathering traditional allies is effective, assistance through an international forum could prove not only more acceptable, but more sustainable. The UN and other regional organizations should create response capabilities that go beyond peacekeeping - to even include governorship for the amount of time needed until power can be instilled in the hands of those that hold legitimacy.

There is a need to modernize the decision-making process, as to incorporate the new powers of the system. The UN risks becoming irrelevant, unless the organization's decisions, especially those that require the Security Council's approval, come to reflect the reality of our time and to accommodate all powers. European powers now hold roles that countries like India or Brazil do not, and this may prove to be problematic for the future of the institution. Reform within the UN should be pursued together with the development of complementary decision-making processes, which may push further reformation. Informal consultative methods can be used, and although these lack transparency, it is clear that they can bring about a certain reforms.

In the same way, non-state actors need to be taken into account in decision-making processes. No one disputes the primal importance of states in the international arena, but the realities of our time tend to demonstrate that other entities have become increasingly important. In some cases, non-state entities hold power inside failed states and even in armed conflicts, thus they must be accommodated in the political sphere. Issues such as terrorism, cybersecurity or pandemics of all sorts affect non-state actors such as NGOs and corporations to the same extent as they affect states, and sometimes they can aid in addressing these problems.

Integrating non-state actors won't be easy; it is a lengthy process that involves creating incentives to ensure cooperation on issues of common concern, and making these actors realize their responsibilities, not only their rights in the international system . The United States should advertise a method of creating new consultative frameworks which integrate non-state actors into official international debates and action plans.

Conclusions

Maintaining power has never been facile for any state throughout history and the strategy proposed does not claim to have identified all systemic requirements and all implications that derive from such a goal, however, it provides a series of broadly-exposed talking points, which could constitute the basis for a more comprehensive approach.

We have argued throughout this paper that any maintenance strategy must take into account the wider implications that American power has on the system and vice-versa. Accordingly, we claim that the interstate system must be modernized, so that it can actively promote stability. Safety and freedom can only be preserved on US soil with such systemic changes being proposed and implemented from below, to later overflow from above. The further strategy argues that unilateral actions and military power can no longer protect American interests, rather common understandings of threats must be developed, and collective action is impervious in order to mitigate the threats identified.

The strategy aims to be a far-stretching solution, one that, if applied, would enable other states to protect their borders and contain internal threats, impeding them from spilling regionally/globally. Maintenance requires the aid of others, being by no means a unilateral struggle, especially considering that the US does not have the resources nor all

the required tools to carry out such a plan by itself. Thus, other states, non-state actors and international institutions are to be co-opted in aiding regimes that are ineffective in ensuring internal security. All the above mentioned must also be included in the process of creating a modern global governance system. For this, the US needs to be aware of the interests of others and try to preserve its own legitimacy in the international arena.

We have further argued that democracies are slow in observing developing problems, and often rise up only when acute crises are already deep inside the system. As the Cold War ended, America's primary concern became securing a peace dividend, rather than reexamining the requirements of international leadership. Chronic problems of eroding states and international institutions have thus remained unaddressed. When crises could no longer be ignored, the US government applied "quick-fixes", without investing in sustainable sets of solutions. The United States chose not to create a strong UN peacekeeping capacity and dreamt of nonproliferation agreements and institutions that are lacking in capabilities. While states worked together to create new international rules and institutions that meet collective responsibilities, in particular fields related to justice or the environment, the United States did nothing, but observe, and continue to do so.

It is impossible to cast the blame solely on the United States for all the failures of the system, but one must recognize that for over one decade –during the 1990's – it stood as the single pole of power globally, with its position uncontested. Thus, many of the system's weaknesses, that gradually festered, have come during America's slumber. This inability to take the necessary actions and strengthen the system has left the United States with less effective, and certainly less attractive options for resolving challenges brought about by terrorism, weakening states and the processes of globalization.

Tension will always arise between what can be done to strengthen the system and the immediate, particular interests of America. We claim that there is undeniable conflict between short-term and long-term benefits and, most often, the first win. The starting point of the strategy of maintenance presented herein is the "revelation" that America has a significant degree of national interest in the efficiency of the international system. Failing to observe this interest leads to policies such as those adopted and implemented until recently.

Investing into a stable system is what boosts national security; of course others will benefit, but there are sufficient arguments to show that United States tend to benefit the most.

The paper offers a line of action and policy making, congruent with the clear interest of the US of maintaining its hegemonic position well into the 21st century and beyond. Both internal and international issues have been addressed, and a couple of solutions have been given, time will only tell if any of these solutions resonate with American grand strategy and if any will develop into working principles of the global system.

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