Unilateralism, Hegemonism and America’s True Contributions

To a New World Order

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ABSTRACT: With the terrorist attacks in September 11th, the United States long-standing hegemony was clearly questioned, both from non-state and state actors. The answer to those attacks couldn’t have been more peculiar. The American foreign policy executive engendered two wars, Afghanistan and Iraq, and this latter couldn’t be justified by those same principles of international law and international organizations that America itself had helped to shape. Thus, the objective of this article is to analyze the Bush Doctrine and its worldview taking into account the debate about the distribution of power at the international system and how it lead to its opposite goal, which was the consolidation of America’s Hegemony. It concludes that when Bush and his team lost track of what the world actually expected from the United States and sought a foreign policy based on hegemonism they crafted their own country setback in world politics.

Keywords: American foreign policy; Bush Doctrine; Iraq War; Hegemonism.

INTRODUCTION

Whenever one discusses the international scenario at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is mandatory to recognize Washington’s great deal in managing both the construction of an international order based on rational institutions (like the United Nations) and its capacity to rally support over its leadership on many important international issues since the aftermath of the Second World War, and its latter inadequacy to do so. Paradoxically, as Joseph Nye (2012) exposed, America’s power was being questioned into that task, when they had no recognized superpower to challenge them. It is imperative to diagnose that the world politics have gone through changes during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Needless to say, the United States position in this order has been tested, even though it is the greatest military – and also economic1 – power.

The United States’ position was at stake because the American foreign policy executive engendered two wars, Afghanistan and Iraq, and this latter couldn’t be justified by those same principles of international law and international organizations

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1 In this realm they must share power with other growing global economies, in a model similar to what Nye and Keohane exposed back in 1977 of “complex interdependence”.
that America itself had helped to shape. The administration also started seeking a foreign policy strongly based on “Hegemonism”, to use David Wilkinson (1999) concept. This policy was clearly aimed at reaching a hegemonic status, as one country couldn’t hold its positions only through benign international action. This signaled a crisis in a country’s position, because leadership, which was necessary for hegemony, should not be bought or fruit of coercion.

It is henceforth important to question whether the US have lost space in the world political arena and to which extent the Bush Doctrine – the principles and ideas that guided president George W. Bush (2001-2009) foreign policy – were part of this power questioning process. That Doctrine is both an answer to systemic factors and a populist move to control power domestically. It will be argued that its Manichean worldview was simply not compatible with the challenges that both the domestic and international arena expected of the US presidency in the medium term.

To go further with this discussion, one must question the level of analysis that is going to be applied in this study. David Singer (1961) defined two basic levels of analysis, the systemic and the domestic. The first one is recognized by its comprehensiveness, which doesn’t allow much details tending to render a deterministic analysis. The domestic level goes further when it comes to a detailed investigation of a country’s foreign policy. Even though, Singer (1961) had advised that it would be better to pick up only one level of analysis, in this article, as the goal is to analyze the Bush Doctrine and its worldview taking into account the debate about the distribution of power at the international system and how it lead to its opposite goal, which was, the consolidation of America’s Hegemony, it is important to bear them both in mind.

This article is not meant to question the State as an important international actor, but it should be noted that, as Nye (2012) pointed out, there is a game being played at
many levels in the international arena, whether at intra, inter or suprastate positions, and values and ideas are always at stake. To be precise, the author depicts world politics nowadays with what he calls a “three-dimensions chess game”, which comprises military power, with the US at its top; economic power, shared by other countries and regions as Europe, Japan, China (and perhaps, India and Brazil); and a “realm” of transnational relations, where interact hackers, bankers, terrorists, pandemics, climate changes, and others.

What is stated above clearly indicates that neither a single-level analysis nor a simplistic view of international political theory is compatible with our analysis at this article. So as the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (simplistically referring it to the domestic level studies) and of International Politics (as with the same above, but referring to the international system) are bound by the input-output-action scheme, the Bush Doctrine shall be studied and scrutinized by its international background and consequences.

1. THE BUSH DOCTRINE AND ITS CORE VALUES

At its first months at the administration, it seemed that president George W. Bush wanted to gradually disengage from the multilateral and multifaceted world that Mr. Clinton had reluctantly accepted in the 90’. It is important to notice, however, that neither Bush had shown himself particularly interested in foreign policy during the campaign nor he promised to do so: his aim was to focus on the American problems, within the country. What seemed to have called his attention to the greater world agenda was precisely the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks (ALARCON, 2012).
Even though those were not the first terrorist attacks the country was facing (nor the world), and that the threat from Al-Qaida was not new, the challenges imposed by them to a messianic president were mesmerizing (BRZEZINSKI, 2007, p. 136): “The events of 9/11 were an epiphany for Bush”. The subsequent war against Afghanistan helped raise the ideological material to what came to be called the Bush Doctrine, and when the president presented it to the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) in November 2001, he showed resolution and indicated that the time for grievance had passed. Bush urged for action and attention: “these same terrorists are searching for weapons of mass destruction, the tools to turn their hatred into holocaust” (BUSH, 2001).

According to Bruce R. Kuniholm, the Bush Doctrine was enunciated already in September 2001 but was better elaborated for the occasion of the president’s first State of the Union speech, in January 2002. At that time, it consisted of “two great objectives”: “shutting down terrorist camps and bringing terrorist to justice” and “preventing terrorists and regimes who seek weapons of mass destruction from threatening the United States and the world” (KUNIHOLM, 2002, p. 435).

For Robert Jervis (2003), the Doctrine was an ambitious program that sought something similar to an imperium. It is the product of both particular domestic and structural factors (the reason why we argued above to keep them together), and it has four crucial elements: a) a strong belief that a country’s domestic regime interferes in its foreign policy; b) the perception that great threats require new policy to fight them, as were the case of the “preventive wars”; c) a desire to act unilaterally whenever deemed

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2 At the same occasion he stated that: “We're confident, too, that history has an author who fills time and eternity with His purpose. We know that evil is real, but good will prevail against it. This is the teaching of many faiths, and in that assurance we gain strength for a long journey” (BUSH, 2001). This clearly shows how his speeches became embedded in messianic and religious, Manichean language.

3 In its eight occasions addressing the General Assembly, Bush has defended that democracy would stabilize the world. He was actually very convincing at the 2006 speech, when he spoke directly to the Iraqis, Afghans, Lebanese, Iranians, Syrians and Sudanese about the difficulties they faced to have their human dignity preserved in the name of greater freedom and stability (BUSH, 2006).
necessary, what would be called by them as effective leadership because sometimes “real consultation is likely to produce inaction” (JERVIS, 2003, p. 375); d) the core idea that peace and stability needs the US resolve to act. The doctrine lacked, tough, what Kuniholm (2002, p. 435) called attention for: “a greater public recognition of the international community’s role”.

For Daalder and Lindsay (2003), president Bush avowed himself capable of leading a “country in war” and together with his inner circle of foreign policy they managed to use the country’s outstanding military and economic position to finally seek what they considered its national interest (that in a weird equation would be equivalent to changing and reshaping the whole world, so that America could be secure).

For the authors, Bush and his companions considered the world a dangerous place, in which each State sought its own interests. For that reason, power, especially military power, both as capacity and will to use it, was fundamental, since multilateral agreements institutions were neither essentials nor necessary for the US. Daalder and Lindsay (2003) don’t link this vision precisely to the neoconservative group, but with a “hegemonist” view of America and its power in the twenty-first century. We’ll study the consequences of this policy in the next subsection.

1.1 Hegemony and Hegemonism within Unipolarity

For John Ikenberry, Michael Mastanduno and William C. Wolforht (2009) we live in a world of one superpower that has capabilities (military, technological and geographic) that are superior to any other. The concept of unipolarity for them is related precisely with the distribution of these capabilities in the international system, and not with political relations or influence, better represented by the concepts of “hegemony”
or “empire”. For them, “scholars use the term unipolarity to distinguish a system with one extremely capable state from systems with two or more great power (bi-,tri- and multipolarity)” (2009, p. 4). Therefore, studying the polarity in international politics is relevant because it “structures the horizon of states’ probable actions and reactions, narrowing the range of choice and providing subtle incentives and disincentives for certain type of behavior” (2009, p. 5). That means that States may feel compelled to act in a certain way rather than other depending on how the forces are organized in the system. This is important not only to the subsidiary States in the system but mainly to the core State.

According to Robert Jervis (2009), to say that the world is unipolar is neither to aggrandize the American power nor to say that they have established a global imperium. For him, it is a simple fact of one country holding the power in advance of others, which is nonetheless a case difficult of explanation because our theories are still weak to do so. There are, though, some consequences that could already come out of this case: the most important is that “regime and leadership characteristics are likely to matter more in unipolarity than in other systems because of the weakness of external restraints” (JERVIS, 2009, p. 204). This means that, in our case, the Bush Doctrine and the way it dealt with America’s domestic and international questions were relevant, and the “unrestrainment” feeling of the administration was partly the cause for the launching of the Iraq War, which led a worldwide opposition to it.

As we are not considering here the mere concept of unipolarity, since the Bush Doctrine pledged “hegemony” within it, we must move on to discuss this topic. Our basic question is: is hegemony necessarily contained within unipolarity? According to David Wilkinson (1999), at the beginning of the 1990’s, the North-American unipolarity wasn’t related to hegemonic elements. For him, this situation is feasible because
“unipolarity without hegemony is a configuration where the preponderant capability of a single state is not matched by a predominant influence” (WILKINSON, 1999, p. 143). This situation could be demonstrated by the fact that the US hegemony could only be found in relation to small or medium powers, not with the great ones (France, United Kingdom, China and Russia), even though there was considerable pressure.

Thus, it is important to differentiate between “hegemony” and “Hegemonism”. While the first is defined as a relation of influence (that could be coercive, consensual, economic⁴), the second is “a policy seeking or tending toward hegemony, [which] is itself perhaps evidence not of hegemony, but of its absence” (WILKINSON, 1999, p. 145). That is exactly what we envisage as a problem in unipolarity, and that’s why it corrodes: it is not only necessary for a State in such a position to hold relative capabilities, but also the legitimacy to lead.

There are, of course, other conceptions of “hegemony”, but most of them dialogue with what Wilkinson (1999) defined. For instance, for Adam Watson (2004, p. 29), from the English School, hegemony was a situation in which some power or authority in a system could ‘write the laws’ about the system’s operation; in other words, it could determine in some extent the external relations of the member-states, while leaving them entirely independent. Another strand in the International Relations that studies “hegemony” is the Critical Theory. For Robert Cox (2007, p. 118) hegemony is a social, economic and political structure. For him, ideas and material conditions – economic conditions, precisely – walk hand in hand in influencing each other. This is hegemony, which is based both on coercion and cohesion.

Hence, The Iraq War is the example not of the US hegemony, but of a hegemonism policy engendered in the name of ideals exposed by the Bush Doctrine. It

⁴ Here we are considering that these relations could be both forced or even legitimate. We could understand that as the exercise of power as Nye (2012) pointed out, as soft, economic or hard power.
shows that unipolarity as a mode of distribution of power in the system is not necessarily linked to the possibility of exerting greatly that power. The Iraq War will be analyzed in the next section.

2. THE IRAQ WAR

David Wilkinson (1999) had declared prior to the September 11th attacks that international terrorism could be a reason enough for the US to launch policies based on hegemonism: “the inclination to pursue the attackers regardless of borders, to coerce participation in the pursuit, and to punish resistance to it would likely be irresistible, but the process so difficult, drawn out, and intrusive as to alter global power relations in a centralizing way” (p. 155). Perhaps, he had envisaged what would happen a few years later.

It is no secret that part of the foreign policy executive at the Bush Administration had pledged publically during the Clinton’s years for the dismissal of Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. As Bob Woodward (2005) recounts, Paul Wolfowitz, in a meeting only two days after the terrorist attacks in 2001, stated that: “It’s not just simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending states who sponsor terrorism” (p. 60). For Woodward (2005), Wolfowitz (and his chief, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld) started crafting that same day the space to defend the idea of “regime

5 Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Armitage, Richard Perle, Robert Zoellick and other that were involved with the Project for the New American Century, a neoconservative think-tank, pressed directly for the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. For more, see: ALARCON (2012).
change‖, that would be an important part of the Bush Doctrine, right after the invasion of Afghanistan and as an excuse for the occupation of Iraq.\(^6\)

It is easy to understand the use of military power in the case of Afghanistan. The international organizations, the great powers (and even many developing countries), and transnational organizations gathered together to support the right to respond to those attacks. But, the Iraq case was different. It had to be built. And so did the president, right after the invasion of Afghanistan was already on track. At the General Assembly of 2002, Bush was certain of his pledge (and right) to attack Baghdad:

> And our greatest fear is that terrorists will find a shortcut to their mad ambitions when an outlaw regime supplies them with the technologies to kill on a massive scale. In one place—in one regime—we find all these dangers in their most lethal and aggressive forms, exactly the kind of aggressive threat the United Nations was born to confront (…). Saddam Hussein’s regime is a grave and gathering danger (BUSH, 2002).

For the president, the clear message was that even though Saddam Hussein did strictly everything that the Bush administration (and the many Security Council resolutions curbing his power) was requiring (like abandoning all its means of defense, stopping supporting terrorism, ceasing the persecution of minorities, and others), they would seek his removal from power. His fate was only one: to be replaced by a democratic governor, which would be helped not only by the US, but also by those institutions like the UN that Washington had helped create a few decades ago (BUSH, 2002).

It is no secret that the US has been using force in its external relations since the nation was crafted. We should therefore, before continuing our analysis, ask in which circumstances they do so. According to James Meernik (1994, p. 128), “when

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\(^6\) President Bush had, of course, support from some academics. For Bruce R. Kuniholm (2002), it was imperative that the UN inspection mechanisms for the WMD had teeth. If they couldn’t stand for what they meant, the US should be ready to deal with the threats posed by Saddam Hussein. As he pointed out, “Iraqi defectors have drawn attention to Saddam Hussein’s determination to acquire such weapons, while still others (…) have detailed the magnitude of the damage such weapons could do” (KUNIHOLM, 2002, p. 434).
confronted with some international crisis, a president must be concerned with not only how his response will affect the immediate situation, but how it will influence U.S. adversaries’ perceptions of American willingness to take forceful action in the future and allies’ evaluations of American commitments” (p. 128). So, what was considered was that using force was a question of both national interests, because America is the greatest military power in the world, but also with a close attention to what the adversaries consider (not even to mention longtime allies). The war in Iraq doesn’t necessarily break this pattern, but it shows that there was not a perception of reality by American policymakers.

One of the factors pointed by the author for the use of force is president lower popularity. It is known how Bush’s popularity was low prior to the September 11th terrorist attacks. The Afghanistan War ceased the moment and the domestic structure created the right ambiance to give the president even more power to deal with foreign policy. The subsequent move to Iraq, that was already been planned since 2001, was finally turned into an infamous war in March 2003. The president and his team were certain of their move and how they could reshape the world by doing so.

For that reason, Hinnebusch (2006) use the term “war of choice” to refer to the war. The domestic politics, ideologically driven by the oil/armaments interests group and the neo-cons were responsible for even constraining democratic checks and balances in America to wage the war. According to him, “the decisive network [for the war] included ‘identity movements’, Zionists and Christian fundamentalists, with a messianic agenda operating within the domain of peace and war” (p. 453). For that very reason, as Stephen Krasner pointed out (1978 apud HINNESBUSCH, 2003), the fact that the US policy process can be colonized by particular interests shows the hegemons
weakness to hold for a coherent vision of the national interest, and therefore its inability to link itself with the global public goods it is supposed to supply.

This shows what was discussed above about “Hegemonism” and the misperception that was inherent to America by the time: Russia and China opposed to the war; but France and Germany also did. The megalomaniac foreign policy went ahead even after the invasion and occupation of Iraq. The use of force, though, with such strong opposition lead to a wave of anti-Americanism around the world. The consequences are analyzed next.

3. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

After the 2003 occupation of Iraq neither the world split from the US nor the reverse happened. Nonetheless, we saw the US getting more circumscribed and asking for more international coordination on important issues (Bush realized they couldn’t do it all by himself). Besides, a new group of countries, especially in the developing world, got more voice, engendered their own alliances, and curbed US capabilities, as the country didn’t have anymore leverage to exercise freely its power.

There is no straight line from the Iraq invasion to the questioning of US power. In Brazil, for instance, president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva had already been sworn into power (in January 2003). Hugo Chávez was already president in Venezuela. Iran was undergoing political changes that would take to power their own conservatives with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Europe itself was undergoing extreme changes discussing both its Constitutions and its possible failure (which indeed happened). What is important to notice is that those leaders felt themselves freed from international institutions and old fashioned politics that the US themselves had mastered and boosted
to the forefront. They understood, of course, the Security Council wasn’t meant to block a superpower decision, but they expected those rules to be applied. When they weren’t, they lacked legitimacy to keep being followed. Hegemonism, as a clear choice of policy by the US administration during the George W. Bush years, came in a very bad time.

That point is shared by Raymond Hinnesbusch (2006), to whom the Iraq war is a watershed in world politics because it was able to bring to the forefront of the IR discipline theoretical debates and put on a hold American hegemony. First of all, it is important to notice, as the author pointed out, that the structural realist perspective is unhelpful to explain why the US decided to go to war. There was, of course, a systemic permissiveness that allowed the war to happen, as the US were the only superpower capable of waging such an invasion. The other powers decided either to bandwagon with them (like the UK, that supported the war) or to not balance against the US (like France, Germany, Russia and China). That problem is exactly what we discussed above about unipolarity. The unipole didn’t lack clear military (and even economic) advantages. But it wasn’t enough.

Therefore, the war also demonstrated that the hegemon could no longer create, feed and enlarge a “benign form” of hegemony\(^7\), because the US couldn’t anymore be considered predictable, self-restrained and keen to promote multilateralism. This takes us to a second aspect that we have already discussed, and we repeat here the quote from Robert Jervis (2009, p. 204): “regime and leadership characteristics are likely to matter more in unipolarity than in other systems because of the weakness of external restraints”. A foreign policy executive keen to hegemonism would obviously act each and every time more similarly to an imperium. That’s what the world resented.

For Zbigniew Brzezinski (2007), the war had three major costs:

\(^7\) The author refers himself to the Hegemonic Stability Theory (HINNESBUCH, 2006).
1) According to the author, “the war has caused calamitous damage to America’s global standing” (BRZEZINSKI, 2007, p. 146). President Bush (and prime minister Tony Blair from the UK) lied about the core reason to go to war. Iraq was devastated, and the balance of power at the region dramatically changed.

2) Geopolitically, it was a disaster: it not only diverted attention from the true threat terrorist posed to America but it also drove efforts from Afghanistan to Iraq. The subsequent consequence was a growing insurgence in that country (that continues challenging the elected governments up to this date).

3) The occupation of Iraq actually increased the threat of terrorist attacks to the USA: as the author notes, “the peculiar definition of both the war on terror in general and the war in Iraq specifically was rejected from the start by the overwhelming majority of world public opinion” (BRZEZINSKI, 2007, p. 150). The lies behind the war, the ill-defined objective, the messianic rhetoric, it all accounted for diminishing, not augmenting American power at the Middle East, not even to say the world.

To be accurate, Bush’s rhetoric considerably changed from the 2003 General Assembly on. The occupation had already taken place, Sergio Vieira de Melo (high representative of the UN to Iraq) have already been killed in a terrorist attack in Baghdad, and the US started to understand they had two major worries and that they needed true international cooperation to succeed: the president pledged help for the reconstruction of Iraq (and Afghanistan, in a second place, as NATO was already doing the job there),

8 To go even further, Brzezinski (2007, p 147) also clarifies that: “Distrust also undermined America’s international legitimacy, an important source of nation’s ‘soft power’. (…) America’s moral standing in the world, an important aspect of legitimacy, was also compromised by the prisons at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo”.
and against the spread of weapons of mass destruction (they are for themselves a problem and the world never stopped worrying about their proliferation) (BUSH, 2003).

The difference, as stated above, is in the tone of the speech: in 2003, sentences beginning with “I urge” appeared three times, while they didn’t appear in 2002. Those were the circumstances: “I urge other nations to continue contributing to this important cause [reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq]”; “I urge other nations to help us meet this danger [in relation to the proliferation of WMDs]”; “I urge other governments to do their part [about human trafficking, especially for sexual purpose]” (BUSH, 2003). He links them towards the very goals and principles of the UN, which were similar to those on which his own country was founded. This is not to say that his hegemonism policies were to be abandoned, it was however a clear sign to the world that capabilities alone don’t grant a country the highest position at the international system. The US learned it the hard way.

4. WHAT’S NEXT?

We can surmise that Bush and his team deeply believed they had the chance to clearly impose the “New World Order” his father had once previewed. In 2004, for instance, at the General Assembly, Bush recognized that the world security was directly linked to human dignity and he promoted this idea linking the advancements in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere with the democratization of the world, citing Aung San Suu Kyi⁹, for whom democracy isn’t a Western value, but good governance, responsibility, transparency and accountability. For that end, Bush’s team democracy exportation policy was laid down and exposed clearly to the world, including the proposal for the

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⁹ An important Burmese politician.
establishment of the Democracy Fund. A new world had to be crafted and the US, supported by the UN, would do the job (BUSH, 2004).

But, it should be clear enough that in their definition of what this new order meant, they forgot that the world had considerably changed (not to mention America itself). First of all, we should expose the imposition of representative democracy policy. According to Brzezinski (2008, p. 155), “when democracy is rapidly imposed in traditional societies not exposed to the progressive expansion of civil rights and the gradual emergence of the rule of law, it is likely to precipitate intensified conflict, with mutually intolerant extremes colliding in violence”. Iraq has become not only the cemetery of those exportation policies dreams but also to many that have been killed in the sectarianism that drove the country into chaos in 2014. The situation in the country represents that the Middle East is far from being plainly democratic and that great powers play at the region are even stronger (especially in the case of Syria, that has direct links to what has been happening in Iraq).

There are, however, those that were still positives about the prospects of American power. For Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth (2009), “there are hardheaded reasons to believe that the United States has the means and the motive to spearhead the foundation of a new institutional order”. They didn’t share the view of a “post-American world” and defended that the country should invest again in strengthening international institution, that did nothing but to help America boost its power through the last decade: “it will be harder for the Unites States to advance its national interests if it does not invest in them” (BROOKS; WOHLFORTH, 2009).

Analyzing US situation through this intuitionalist perspective, the authors state that “it was only by ignoring the benefits of intuitions and overestimating their costs that neoconservatives in the Bush administration were able to dismiss the role that they
can play in fostering U.S. global leadership”. But we could ask ourselves if, even in 2009, it was too late to pose themselves that question? The authors question Brzezinski positions that the US had no longer, under Bush presidency, legitimacy to change global institutions. For him, legitimacy goes beyond a mere government and is keener to represent a long-standing of a State actor; it cannot be measured by only one action. For that matter, we could say that, according to Brooks and Wohlforth (2009), the US kept being the largest and most possible actor both with material and human resources and will to keep shaping global perceptions.

The authors cite as an example of change that only the US could promote nowadays the quest for a revised Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. For them, it is imperative to forbid enrichment facilities in those countries where they don’t exist, guaranteeing that they could accede to low-level fissile material from other countries and, obviously, for pacific use (BROOKS; WOHLFORTH, 2009). What the authors clearly don’t get is that not even great powers, that share nuclear power with the US, are prone to follow them again, and that nuclear non-proliferation, as for instance the Brazilian stance is clear, will only happen when those that already have nuclear weapons decide to denuclearize themselves. Both speeches may be empty words thrown in the air, but Brooks and Wohlforth (2009) idea is clearly out of question currently.

Another proposal is the creation of a mini multilateral institution to coordinate economic sanctions, formed by the US and its allies, and outside the “UN’s broad membership” (BROOKS; WOHLFORTH, 2009). Once again, they didn’t get back in 2009 that neither Russia nor China were willing to make concessions to the US on such matters anymore and that the growing democratization of the international commerce would definitely undermine any illegitimate economic sanctions mechanisms. For that reason, the US is not anymore the sole responsible for revising that UN fundamental
tool to stop actions. Besides, as the Russian annexation of Crimea showed in 2014, economic interdependence of key US allies is another problem towards the revision of those mechanisms.

We can indicate at least four other developments that show how the United States’ capacity to lead was questioned (or understated), after the unsuccessful case of the Iraq War:\^10:

1) Even the Gulf countries were opposed to the ousting of Saddam Hussein from power, based on the fear of the Iranian “Shia crescent”, represented in groups as Hamas (in Gaza) and Hezbollah (in Lebanon). They feared what actually happened: a Shia majority government in Iraq.

2) The United States’ lost track of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which is of great humanitarian and geostrategic importance to the region, and to a lasting peace there. An important move was the recognition out of a sudden since 2010 of the State of Palestine by many countries in the Global South. In South America, Brazil lead that move.

3) Iran went ahead with its nuclear program, giving to Brazil and Turkey the chance to intermediate an agreement with Tehran, that even though didn’t reach the perfect resolution to the problem presented the world with new possibilities to solve regional and international crisis.

4) The BRICS\^11, even though loosely, are nowadays a great source of power: to start understanding their entrance into world politics so decisively we could go as far as to indicate their move as a non-West awakening (as Brzezinski called it). For the author: “the non-West’s awakened political aspirations generate

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\^10 We don’t intend to be exhaustive on this session.

\^11 Brazil, Russia, China and India. According to Hurrell (2006, p. 1), we should analyze these countries together because “they all seem to possess a range of economic, military and political power resources; some capacity to contribute to the production of international order, regionally and globally; and some degree of internal cohesion and capacity for effective state action”.
significant momentum for the ongoing redistribution of power. The resentments, emotions, and quest for status of billions are a qualitatively new factor of power” (BRZEZINSKI, 2007, p. 209). And they represent indeed billions of people, enlarging economies (that have undergone the 2008 crisis with relative ease compared to their northern companions) and middle classes, eager to participate and to be heard (HURRELL, 2006).

Last but not least, we cannot ignore the identities and passions that have arisen from Bush unilateral and Manichean acts. They are a great part of the forces that are reshaping world politics nowadays towards a double standard of pushing both to the strengthening of some States and its nationalism, and to the disintegration of some others.

International relations have always been the realm of both order and disorder. Institutions have always played the part for the first. The search for justice accounts for the disorder. When Bush and his team lost track of what the world actually expected from the United States and sought a foreign policy based on hegemonism they crafted their own country setback in world politics. Capabilities don’t account solely for one country successes. That was the clear lesson from the Bush Doctrine.
References


Documents


