Post 9/11 US Foreign Policy: Continuation of 'New Imperialist' Ambitions?

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To What Extent is Post 9/11 U.S. Foreign Policy a Continuation of Previously Established 'New Imperialist' Ambitions?

As the dust begins to settle in Iraq, following a militarily aggressive pursuit embarked on in the aftermath of 9/11, it has become increasingly evident that tenets of 'new imperialism' are observable. With much of the political discourse attributing linkages between the increasingly aggressive foreign policy with imperialism post 9/11, there has not been an analysis detailing the extent to which imperialism had already been an embedded practice in U.S. foreign policy development.

This study will demonstrate the existence of imperialist ambitions, on behalf of the U.S., from the period between the end of the Cold War to 9/11, which will also serve to explain the country's post 9/11 foreign policy development. By displaying the existence of this imperialist trajectory, this study will provide a necessary exploration into the development of U.S. foreign policy and will reveal the extent to which the imperialist aspects of post 9/11 echo previously established imperialist ambitions. The reasoning behind the decision to engage in a war with Iraq is a contentious issue. With the initial security threats of Hussein's weapons of mass destruction being discredited and the questionable extent to which humanitarian motivations were deployed, this study will have an important place in helping understand the reasons behind the apparent post 9/11 imperialist foreign policy.

An influx in a, relatively, contemporary body of literature asserts that the foreign policy of the U.S. has contained imperialist ambitions, attributing those ambitions to the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001. This literature details U.S. foreign policy at the end of the Cold War and the period between the Cold War and 9/11. Similarly, there is a body of literature noting the imperialist nature of U.S. foreign policy post 9/11. These sources will help establish the extent to which an imperialistic trajectory is apparent in pre 9/11 U.S. foreign policies and reveal how parallels can be drawn with the seemingly imperialistic policy after the attacks. The analysis will apply an established framework of imperialism to analyse three periods in time: the end of the Cold War, the period between the end of the Cold War and 9/11 and finally the post 9/11 period. With the singular focal point of the study being on the extent to which imperialism in U.S. foreign policy was established before 9/11, and the degree to which this explains post 9/11 foreign policy, the study will specifically examine those policies with an imperial quality to them. It will therefore elect not to explore the extent to which other factors affected post 9/11 foreign policy.

New imperialism will provide the theoretical framework for this analysis, with the concept of 'imperialism' acting as the analytical tool. This study will, therefore, begin by providing a definition of the core principles of imperialism and, then, continue by demonstrating the intrinsic relationship between imperialism and U.S. foreign policy. Lastly, it will provide a theoretical framework by which an analytical approach can be used.

Definition of 'New Imperialism':

To effectively assess the extent to which the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States witnessed a continuation in imperialist foreign policy, it is important to develop a working definition. Importantly, the definition

must note the idiosyncratic nature of 'U.S. imperialism' and acknowledge the dissimilarities between it and previous examples of European imperialist colonialism. By highlighting the differentiation between the concept of 'new imperialism', a concept that the United States is often perceived as engaging in, and 'colonialism', two terms that were once thought to be virtually synonymous, it will be possible to ascertain the unique elements of imperialism prevalent in the United States. Similarly, by demarcating the concepts, it will be possible to note the extent to which U.S. actions appear to be imperialist and, as a result, to which post 9/11 actions demonstrate a continuation of previously established imperialist ambitions. Furthermore, by defining imperialism and establishing a theoretical frame, the focal analysis on the Iraq invasion 2003, against which the post 9/11 alteration in U.S. imperialism will be assessed, requires the establishment of a frame work on U.S. foreign policy.

In *'Culture and Imperialism*' Edward Said exemplifies a paradigm shift, within academia, in relation to the understanding of the concept of 'new imperialism' (1993). Although primarily focusing on the intrinsic correlation between Western culture and sustaining an imperialist ideology, Said effectively distinguishes the terms 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' (1994, Robbins *et al*). He describes imperialism as 'the practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling in a distant territory' and colonialism as the 'implanting of settlements on a distant territory' (1993, p. 8).

Amongst a multitude of factors, there are two notable differences between the older analysis of neo – colonialism and new imperialism (Tickly, 2004). The first focuses on the development of a dominant position that western states have established economically within an increasingly globalised world (Kohr, 2001). As early as the 1970s, academics asserted that 'there is a strong tendency for the most powerful segments of the capitalist class to see their future in the further growth of the world market rather than its curtailment' (Hymer, 1979, p. 262). This focus led to post-colonial states being made 'economically useful' and the distribution of neo-liberal economic structures globally (Tickly, 2003). With increasing globalisation, the dominant global economic interests are associated less with the concept of 'nation state,' as the increasingly become transnational in their composition (Tickly, 2004). The establishment of transnational economic bodies has witnessed an increase in the influence that transnational bodies, like the World Trade Organisation for example, maintain over the economic policies of low – income countries (Negri & Hardt, 2000). Clearly, this demonstrates a diversion from the path that European imperialism was embarking on, whilst displaying a continuation of dominance. Furthermore, the establishment of transnational bodies offered a self-legitimising way of maintaining spheres of influence.

The second element that differentiates neo-colonialism from imperialism is the way in which both are understood. Critics of earlier forms of European colonialism asserted arguments primarily based on structuralism. Critics of new imperialism largely utilise culturalist and post-structuralist arguments. The basis of these critiques and the analysis of new imperialism have been made possible through the emergence of post-colonialism (Tickly, 2004). The imperialist Empires of Europe mostly distinguished the 'subordinates' based, primarily, on race (Stoler, 1989). With former colonies achieving independence and increasing ethnic diversity within western states, the use of 'race' as a form of categorisation was discredited. The focus, instead, shifted to cultural differentiation as a form of categorisation (Tomlinson, 2001). One of the most notable examples of 'antagonistic' civilisations occurs between the Christian world and the Muslim world, as with, for example, the 'inevitable' clash between the United States and Iraq (Barber, 1992).

Consequently, the extent to which the aforementioned concept of 'imperialism' is applicable to the United States is contentious amongst academics (Said, 1986) and, notably, the American population, for whom a large proportion associate negative connotations with the term (Nye, 2004). Initially, individuals that attempted to apply the term imperialism to the U.S. would often be dismissed as being communist or Marxist (Eland, 2008). Indeed, Niall Ferguson wrote an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, 2003, asserting that 'the greatest empire of the modern times has come into existence without the American people even noticing.' One key element that has allowed the population of the United States to dismiss the notion of imperialism is one based on the belief in American exceptionalism. An intrinsic element of U.S. foreign policy development, exceptionalism contributes to the label 'imperialist,' which is being leveled against Americans. Some academics assert that the United States is able to act with imperialist ambitions because the notion of American exceptionalism is so widely accepted (Johnson, 2004). Believing that the U.S., unlike the old European power, will not collapse, exceptionalist rationale dictates that the U.S.

must embrace its special role in human history (McCrisken, 2004).

The effect that exceptionalism has on foreign policy development is a key feature within American imperialist analysis. The four 'traditional' schools of thought within United States' foreign policy [Wilsonian, Jeffersonian, Jacksonian and Hamiltonian] highlight the apparent reasoning behind behaviour that can be perceived as imperialist (Mead, 2001). The Jeffersonian school of thought is arguably the least imperialist. It dictates that a primarily domestic focus be maintained within politics, allowing the United States to become an example for the 'unexceptional' states to follow (Mead, 2001). Unlike the fundamentally domestic focus, Wilsonian policy dictates that the U.S. should try to internationally distribute their ideologies, for example by the spread of democratic principles, often relying on the use of hard power or the distribution of neoliberal economic policies through diplomacy and soft power (Neack, 2008). Jacksonian policy dictates that, although focusing on domestic development, if attacked, the U.S. retaliatory measures will include using overwhelming military force (Lieber, 2005). Comparatively, Hamiltonian foreign policy focuses primarily on opening foreign markets and distributing neo–liberalist economic policies (Mead, 2001). Using these established frameworks, the actions of the U.S. can be categorised and, to an extent, have their previous forms of reasoning explained. Similarly, the motivations behind U.S. imperialism will be demonstrated and the extent to which 9/11 directly affected the imperialist ambitions, with regards to foreign policy, will be assessed.

The American application of imperialism has witnessed a unique development. U.S. new imperialism is underpinned as a 'modern nonterritorial empire.' As Osterhammel notes, U.S. imperialism 'presupposes the will and the ability of an imperial center to define as *imperial* its own national interests and enforce them worldwide in the anarchy of the international system' (1995, p. 21). With regards to foreign policy, the level of control that the U.S. maintains is, primarily, based on a combination of hard and soft power. This essentially describes a system in which the U.S. is established as a dominant entity and other international actors are 'pawns' utilised by the U.S. to serve their national interest. Indeed, this notion exemplifies the argument that it is extremely difficult to note differentiations between colonialism and new imperialism, especially with regards to motives and economic, diplomatic, territorial and ideological considerations. However, the difference lies in the way foreign policy is utilised to exert influence in these areas (Steinmetz, 2005). The U.S., fitting within the 'new imperialism' bracket, has noted the beneficial nature of ruling regions of interest informally and indirectly. Using this definition, it will be possible to assess the extent to which imperialism existed in foreign policy before 9/11. Furthermore, it will be possible to note parallels in imperialistic tenets between the foreign policies before and after the terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001.

The Twilight Years of the Cold War: Developing a Contemporary 'New Imperialist' Paradigm

It is important to note whether there is an apparent imperialist trajectory that has made the post–9/11 foreign policies take an imperialist form. Similarly, by chiefly focusing on U.S. foreign policy, it will be possible to establish a framework so that post 9/11 foreign policy decisions, with a primary focus on the 2003 invasion of Iraq, can be compared with those before. With a historically imperialist past, perhaps most notably the expansionist policies of 'Manifest Destiny' and the assumed 'responsibility' to spread from 'sea to shining sea', extensive alterations to U.S. imperialism occurred throughout the 20th Century (Weinburg, 1979). The geographical focus of U.S. foreign policy shifted three times throughout this period. Initially, in the early 20th Century, the U.S. maintained a hemispheric focus, developing foreign policies that concentrated on Central America, the Pacific and the Caribbean (Ferguson, 2004). The second period saw the U.S., albeit reluctantly, engaging in Europe with the two World Wars. For much of the Cold War, Western Europe remained one of the key geographical focal points of U.S.–Soviet antagonism (Johnson, 2004). However, due primarily to Israel, oil and terrorism, the Middle East became the central area for U.S. foreign policy focus towards the end of the Cold War (Negri & Hardt, 2000). The two most important areas for analysis for evaluating the extent to which the U.S. was on an established new imperialist trajectory in the Middle East are the period at the end of the Cold War and, naturally, the period after the Cold War, leading up to the terrorist attacks.

The Second World War provided an aperture in the world order. Internationally, there was a clear move away from the 'illiberal' forms of control maintained by the imperialist European Empires (Darwin, 1988). The new imperialism that the U.S. developed relied less on coercion and violence and more on subtle forms of control. The concept was initially underpinned by a notional recognition of previous colonial states' sovereignty. It was coined 'notional' because it had been, and continues to be, evident that the U.S. maintains its ability to supersede national sovereignty

in the name of 'global security' (Tickly, 2004). The Cold War witnessed a Manichaean ideological outlook establishing itself in U.S. foreign policy, essentially noting that the U.S. was 'good' fighting 'evil', and it distributed this ideological stance amongst the western world (Ryan, 2000). Acknowledging the threat posed by the Soviets, the U.S., at the zenith of its post World War power, engaged in the establishment of international institutions. Indeed, 'The Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations, the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the US – Japan security pact were all established and served as cornerstones of American–led power' (Ikenberry, 2006, p. 5).

The establishment of international institutions are key in the development U.S. new imperialism. Of the major elements that distinguish new imperialism from previous examples of colonial imperialism (Kohr, 2001), international institutions were used by the U.S. to legitimise and conceal imperialist ambitions during the Cold War. By establishing U.S. centric institutions, it was possible for presidential administrations to, from the perspective of the international community, legitimately open up areas of the world that were previously closed to corporate and economic penetration (Negri & Hardt, 2000). By creating this level of penetration, the U.S. was able to maintain a level of control over economic regions, whilst concurrently preventing the establishment of models there that differed from those purported by neo–liberalism (Harvey, 2007).

Another aspect that highlights the U.S.'s desire to pursue new imperialist ambitions during the Cold War, interlinked with their abovementioned involvement in international institutions and the desire to maintain control over subordinated regions, is the global distribution of military bases (Todd, 2004). The bipolarity of power during the Cold War allowed U.S. foreign policy makers to portray the conflict as universal, 'zero – sum' and all encompassing (Ryan, 2000). Indeed, by demonising the Soviet threat, the U.S. was able to convince the international community that the worldwide distribution of troops was required for the maintaining of global security.

The purposes of U.S. overseas troops during the Cold War reveal the development of new imperialism. The first was to protect the geographical areas that the U.S. perceived to be of economic and strategic interest, responding to operational exigencies. The second was to prepare for nuclear war, a prospect that allowed both for distribution of troops and for the autonomy of the U.S. President to be increased (Cox, 1995). The third purpose of U.S. troops overseas, particularly in locations that were on the peripherals of the communist antagonists, such as Germany and South Korea, was to serve as a tripwire and ensure that any type of invasion or attempted expansion would result in U.S. military intervention. The final purpose was to be act as a reminder and function as a symbol of the U.S.'s ability to project with hard power (Johnson, 2004). By establishing a global military reach, the imperialist ambitions of the U.S. to maintain regional control over areas of interest are evident. However, the aforementioned 'zero – sum' nature of Cold War conflict, particularly the nuclear aspect, restrained the desire for military conflict.

One of the most notable periods during the Cold War demonstrating examples of the U.S. exerting influence in a subtle and new imperialist fashion was the proxy war in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989. Noting that U/S/ felt it needed to defend the area, due to primarily oil – based interests, President Carter announced in 1980 that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force" (Little, 2008, p. 152). Pre-empting the Soviet intervention, the US was supplying indirect support and weapons to the Islamist resistance nine months before the Red Army moved into Kabul, in the hope that the Soviets might become engaged in Vietnamese style quagmire (Little, 2008). The decade of conflict allowed the U.S. to maintain influence over a stat, while, at the same time, asserting a legitimising, benevolent purpose.

There are critics of the notion that this proxy war exemplified U.S. imperialism (Boggs, 2005), but, by providing the resistance with resources, the U.S. was able to indirectly assert power, rather than use military might to counter the Soviets. This is an integral aspect of the 'new imperialism' that the U.S. pioneered. They utilised rhetoric focusing on the preservation of Afghan independence in the face of Soviet's 'Evil Empire,' (Little, 2008) further cementing their role as 'international police,' without directly policing. Similarly, the critics asserting that the Cold War is 'obscured' as an 'imperialist project' (Johnson, 2002, p. 6) must acknowledge the significance of the proxy war in Afghanistan in forcing the Soviets to engage in a demoralising and economically crippling war for ten years. Thus, the U.S. improved its ability to assert imperialist power indirectly, while further cementing the Middle East as a region of interest.

Throughout the Cold War, the distribution of troops and involvement in foreign policy appears to have been, if governmental rhetoric is to be believed, dictated by benevolence and a belief in exceptionalism. Indeed, the U.S. accepted and perpetuated their role as adversary to the threat of the Soviet Union and communism. As realist power balance theories dictate, this involved other western states, financially struggling in the post World War II era, to associate themselves with, and become increasingly dependent upon, the United States. The poor economic conditions in the post World War II era that overwhelmed the European powers paved the way for the United States to sculpt a new world order. The combination of globally distributed military bases, combined with the establishment of U.S. centric international institutions during the Cold War, enabled the United States to assume the role of 'international police' in the wake of Soviet decline (Negi & Hardt, 2000). Similarly, the U.S. developed a liberal internationalist system that allowed them to indirectly control 'a more internationalized process of surplus extradition without necessarily having to exercise direct forms of militarized governance' (Glassman, 2004, p. 1535). These factors led to the progression of neoconservative thought and, later, dictated much of the initial post 9/11 foreign policy discourse. The most notable progress to the neoconservative ideology was the desire to act as 'world police' and 'benevolently' act to spread democracy. Additionally, the end of the Cold War firmly established the Middle East as an area of interest and acknowledged the importance of maintaining a military presence to maintain the political economic framework of the region for U.S. benefit. For these reasons, it is erroneous, therefore, to discuss 'imperialism' in the U.S.'s post 9/11 foreign policy as something new. Indeed, the Cold War provided the fundamental base for upon which imperialism was built.

Post Cold War Era: New Imperialism in Unipolarity

After the Second World, 'responding' to the Cold War exigencies allowed the U.S. to act relatively freely in establishing a new world order. Indeed, this period allowed the U.S. to realise its imperialist ambitions and establish a fundamental ideological base (Glassman, 2004). The end of the Cold War witnessed a slight break in western unity. Indeed, realist power balance theory dictates that the absence of the Soviet threat meant that the western states, particularly within the E.U., were becoming increasingly autonomous. However, the extent to which the relationships within the institutions were maintained is a notable element of the U.S.'s imperialist ambitions. By establishing U.S. centric institutions that served a purpose for the United States in the Cold War, the U.S. experienced a shift in their role in the 1990s.

The global distribution of troops remained long after the end of the Cold War, providing an apparent indication of the U.S.'s continued imperial ambition (Todd, 2002). It is argued that a shift in the aforementioned 'function' of troops overseas occurred after the Cold War. Johnson asserts that the focus had shifted to 'imperial policing' to ensure that no states are able to 'slip the leash' and was a means of 'attempting to control as many sources of petroleum as possible, both to serve America's insatiable demand for fossil fuels and to use that control as a bargaining chip for even more oil dependent regions' (2004, pp. 154 – 155). Combining this with the developing benevolent and exceptionalist conception of 'global police,' the U.S. appeared set to cement its imperial ambitions at the end of the Cold War. The three key elements of analysis in the post Cold War era are the U.S.'s role within the international community, the military's distribution and utilisation, and the notable ideological shifts amongst the presidential administrations.

Academics (Johnson, 2002; Boggs, 2005; Negri & Hardt, 2000) have asserted that when the U.S. became the only power capable of managing 'international justice' in the post Cold War era, the concept of 'global security' was established to enable the U.S. to act internationally for its own imperialist interests. The Gulf War was the first time when the U.S. was able to utilise its established role as 'international police' and exert military dominance (Negri & Hardt, 2000). The conflict allowed the U.S. to fully and 'legitimately' establish their focus on protecting their interests in the Gulf region. Perceiving the 'rogue states' of Iraq and Iran as the next threat to U.S. interests, maintaining a focus on the military focus became a priority in the Middle East (Little, 2008). The motivations behind the Gulf War has been described as the U.S. solely acting in 'imperial interest,' instead of the U.S. acting in 'imperialist interest' but with a genuine belief that they are acting within the 'global right' (Negri & Hardt, 2000). Although not an entirely erroneous assertion, the extent to which the Gulf War exemplifies the U.S.'s evident imperialist ambitions is notable. The region was selected because, as the realist argument asserts, it had favourable results from a cost–benefit analysis point of view. There was clearly a motivational element of securing the regions in possession of the oil

revenues, while deterring opposition.

The conflict allowed for massive military expenditure to become a norm in post Cold War budgets. With the Gulf War setting the tone and, indeed, further cementing the pro-interventionist ideological stance maintained by neoconservatives, the U.S. military spending increases of the 90s were supported by both Republicans and Democrats (Bacevich, 2002). Noting the previous successes of the British Empire to maintain militarily dominant, the U.S. developed the realist concept of 'N + 1.' In this equation, 'N' equals the military capabilities of all the states that have an antagonistic relationship with the U.S. combined. The comparative military strength of the U.S., in the post Cold War era, was a focal point for much of the decade's political discourse. The U.S. appeared to settle for nothing less than military 'supremacy' (Bacevich, 2002). The most fundamental shift that occurred in the post-Cold War era, with regards to the military, was in the desire to utilise the military more freely. Indeed, General Salikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, observed in 1997: 'for more than 50 years we were constrained by a bipolar rivalry with a superpower adversary'. This acknowledgement is a clear indication of the U.S.'s imperialist ambitions in the post-Cold War era. With the 'constraints' of the bipolar removed, the U.S. enjoyed relative freedom in establishing its imperial objectives.

The ability to project 'hard power' became one of the fundamental elements of U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Despite the assertion by some academics (Cox, 1995; Todd, 2002) that the post Cold War period saw a decline in imperialist ambitions, overall, the opposite shows to be true. Arguably, the 1992 election demonstrated that the U.S.'s missionary zeal was waning. Indeed, the more foreign policy orientated and Jeffersonian President, George Bush, conceded defeat against a more domestically focused and Wilsonian President, Bill Clinton. Clinton believed that the U.S. should not be, nor could it afford to be, the 'international police'. There was a rigorous debate within the U.S. over protectionism and the possibility of opting for a national – democratic tactic when it came to the country's socio–economic orientation (Todd, 2002). However, this desire not to entertain the role of 'international police' and to maintain a domestic focus exemplified the wavering commitment and respect that the Clinton administration gave to international institutions. It has been a disregard for international bodies, and use when needed, that has become key for U.S. imperialist ambitions (Ikenberry, 2006). Madelaine Albright, Clinton's Secretary of State, famously stated, with regards to the use of force against Iraq: 'if we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation' (Dobbs & Goshko, 1996). This belief perpetuated the notion, within the Clinton administration, that the U.S. was entitled to act above the fray of general politics. Clinton did, however, acknowledge the importance of engaging with international institutions and how soft power can be exercised through them.

Institutions were significant tools for the continuation of U.S. 'new' imperialism throughout the 90s. Although having a belief that America could supersede the decisions of international bodies, U.S. foreign policy had appeared to acknowledge neorealist theories of hegemony and power balance. These theories dictated that, particularly in the absence of the Soviet opposition, the subordinated states 'balance' up together to displace the hegemonic power. The way these institutions were developed, however, prevented this from happening. The American-centralised, western order that was created offered high levels of reciprocity and legitimacy for states involved and that cooperate. By supplementing diplomacy with the offer of engaging, with input, on policy development, the legitimacy was enhanced and the need for coercive actions by the U.S. was diminished (Ikenberry, 2006). The Wilsonian focus on international institutions to spread democracy was a fundamental underpinning of American foreign policy during this period (Nye, 2004). Indeed, it was this notion of democracy spreading that influenced much of the neoconservative imperialist ambition in the post-Cold War era. Although recognising the benefits of soft power and multilateralism, when convenient, neoconservatives believed that institutions constrained the U.S., with democracy distributions acting as the legitimising factor.

Post 9/11: Aggressive New Imperialism

This new imperialist desire to spread liberal institutions, with an appearance of benevolence, was a staple of U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, in the 1990s, the term 'imperialism' began to shed its former negative connotations and associations with colonialism, particularly in the U.S. (Boot, 2003). One of the most notable interventions by the U.S. in the 1990s that exemplifies new imperialism occurred in Kosovo from 1998 – 1999.

Despite the humanitarian rhetoric coming from Washington, one of the most important motivational factors was that of maintaining economic relations with Europe. With the E.U. establishing itself as a major pole of global capitalism, the U.S., wanting to remain dominant but accommodating, was willing to engage in NATO operations. This desire to pursue a foreign policy multilaterally served numerous purposes, again highlighting the imperialist ambitions of the United States. Motivated by a desire to not appear militarily incapable, it asserted that the decision to engage in the conflict was inevitable, all the while, with a 'well-established and habitual' desire to utilise the U.S.'s overwhelming military force (Boot, 1999). For Boot, NATO is merely an institution utilised by the U.S. to pursue imperialist interests. He asserts that the institution was established primarily as an instrument for 'war and imperialism' (Boot, 1999, p. 7). Although a hyperbolic claim, Kosovo witnessed NATO subservience under the United States. NATO demonstrated an evident level of imperialism with regards to the U.S.'s relationships with international institutions (Kampfner, 2004). Indeed, it has been asserted that 'without an American lead, NATO would have never been able to build a consensus' (Fukuyama, 2007, p. 42).

The ability to pursue imperialist ambition without being constrained by international institutions was a core ideological feature of the Bush administration. Bush's presidency ushered in a neoconservative dominant imperialist epoch. One of the fundamental elements of Bush's foreign policy was based on the concept of preventive, or indeed pre–emptive, use of military force (Ikenberry, 2006). Contrasting with Clinton's domestic focus, Bush appeared set on not merely maintaining military supremacy, but projecting the U.S.'s military supremacy overseas, when he came to power in 2001. Assuming office in January 2001, Bush had already increased military expenditure 15% by the time New York was attacked in September (Todd, 2002). Even despite Clinton's more domestic focus, throughout the 1990s, the military spending of the U.S. increased substantially. The Gallup Organisation conducted a poll during the 2000 election finding that, despite a rise in military spending from 9 percent to 40 percent between 1990 and 2000, the perceived military growth in the 1990s seemed to be small (Gillespie, 1999). The perceived the military as being too focused still on Cold War threats. In 1998, the distribution of troops overseas was 60 053 in Germany, 41 257 in Japan and 35 663 in South Korea (Todd, 2002), Bush was set on restructuring the military to be able to effectively respond to the exigencies of the new millennium and his administration's own agenda.

The Bush administration's ideological stance appeared to both transcend and extend the previously established normative viewpoints about the country's involvement in the international arena. The United States sought to pursue its imperial ambitions, primarily protecting its oil interests in the Gulf, by refraining from seeking security through engaging in realist power balancing or pursuing ambitions utilising liberal institutions (Ikenberry, 2006). The rhetoric from the Bush administration asserted that the U.S. must become so much more powerful than all other powers that security competition would become redundant. This focus on power, particularly within the international community, highlights the Bush administration's desire to establish a U.S.-oriented new world order. Similarly, the regional imperialist ambition is demonstrated by the desire to reallocate the military focus away from the previously established Cold War threat towards, what Bush and the neoconservatives perceived to be, 'outlaw states' (Ikenberry, 2006, p. 219).

A notable element is the massive military expenditure that dominated the period. The U.S. clearly expressed an interest in establishing a military that could not be rivaled. The Gulf War under George Bush and the Kosovo intervention under Clinton demonstrate that willingness to use the military regardless of political leaning. Despite some similarities, it would be erroneous to assert that these two are inherently similar with regards to the motivation involved. Both do, however, exemplify different elements of 'new imperialism', with Bush's decision to protect the established interests in the Gulf region and Clinton's utilisation of allies and pursuit of action that had benevolent and humanitarian elements. Both of these examples are underpinned by the concept of American exceptionalism and new imperialism, and they demonstrate its existence in the 1990s, before 9/11.

George W. Bush assuming the presidency in the post-Cold War era had a great impact on the direction of U.S. foreign policy. Within three weeks of reaching office, Bush expressed an interest in militarily engaging with Iraq, stating in reference to the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, 'we will enforce a no – fly zone, both south and north. Our intention is to make sure that the world is as peaceful as possible. And we're going to watch very carefully as to whether he develops weapons of mass destruction, and if we catch him doing so we'll take the appropriate action' (Bush, 2001). In the period leading up to the terrorist attack in New York on September 11th 2001, this rhetoric

became commonplace in the Bush administration. During this period, for the neoconservatives and for Bush, 'Iraq' became synonymous with 'rogue state'. The imperialist focus on the Middle East had been cemented and the Bush administration looked increasingly set on a military engagement against 'some nation in the Middle East area developing weapons of mass destruction and then threatening the United States' (Bush, 2001). Overall, the period between the end of the Cold War and 9/11 exhibits an apparent trajectory in imperialist ambition.

Following the attacks in New York on September 11th 2001, there was, clearly, a notable shift in the foreign policy rhetoric from Washington. Using the example of the Iraq, this section of the study will analyse the extent to which the conflict fits into the established 'imperialist' paradigm and demonstrate the imperialist aspects evident in the conflict. By establishing this frame, it will be possible to then assess the extent to which the U.S.'s post 9/11 foreign policy demonstrates a continuation of previously established imperialist ambitions. It is the foreign policy actions in the post 9/11 era that ignited much of the imperialist discourse amongst academics (Glassman, 2004). Similarly, this was extended to the acknowledgement of imperialism having been developed before 9/11, as Boggs asserts the terrorist attacks were 'a series of violent attacks at an empire held together in the final instance by U.S. military power' (2005, p. 44). By evaluating the extent to which Iraq was, indeed, an imperialist pursuit, both in its motivations and in the methods utilised, it will be possible to draw parallels, as well as note the differences, to pre 9/11 imperialist foreign policy and demonstrate any apparent imperialist trajectory leading up to the invasion.

After the invasion of Iraq, the term 'imperialism', which was, before, a heavily contested term in U.S. politics, was becoming increasingly mainstream (Boot, 2003). Under Bush's administration, the notion of imperialism having a role in U.S. foreign policy became commonplace. Indeed, after 9/11, the concept had become a popular notion amongst policy makers in the U.S. (Maier, 2002). The rhetoric assisted this apparent shift in the world order by asserting that U.S. actions were responding to the threat of terrorism, while the U.S. had been re-imagining the international community to fit their imperialist ambitions. Trumpeting the achievements in defending their region of interest and humanitarian democracy in the Persian Gulf and Kosovo, a large portion of the U.S. population, subscribing to a belief in exceptionalism, supported the Bush administration's calls for military engagement. In the post 9/11 period, a largely monolithic and pro-interventionist media was reluctant to support individuals or causes that appeared un-American. This severely limited the amount of access U.S. audiences had to counter-arguments. Similarly, by distributing inaccuracies that exaggerated the threat Iraq had posed, the Bush administration was able to gain public support for the pursuit of U.S. imperialist yearnings (Boggs, 2005).

These exaggerated inaccuracies demonstrate the desire of the Bush administration to engage in military conflict with Iraq. Despite believing that the U.S. had the military power to engage in a successful conflict with Iraq (Wallerstein, 2003), the Bush administration acknowledged the importance of getting U.S. demographic support. The administration highlighted a multitude of elements in the Iraqi threat in order to appeal to different ideological stances amongst the U.S. population. By asserting that Iraq state was intent on using weapons of mass destruction against the U.S. and destabilising the Persian Gulf region (Boot, 2001), the pain felt from the terrorist attacks of 9/11 allowed for individuals, particularly those who subscribe to a Jacksonian reactionary perception of foreign policy, to seek prevention of this 'terrorist' threat (Mead, 2001). Similarly, the Bush administration adopted a culturalist perspective to gain support and add legitimacy. By highlighting the humanitarian elements concerning involvement in Iraq, by demonstrating the necessity to 'overthrow a tyrant', the Bush administration was able to appear Wilsonian in the desire to 'free' the Iraqi population (Nardin, 2006). The ability of the Bush administration to influence the U.S. population that military action was required shows the tactics involved with the imperialist ambitions of the administration's foreign policy and the means by which it fulfilled its desire to intervene in Iraq. The military culture developed in the 90s endowed every U.S. intervention abroad with 'a patina of patriotic goodness and democratic sensibilities beyond question and debate' (Boggs, 2005). The 9/11 attacks cemented this 'culture' in the prelude to the Iraq invasion. For many Americans, it seemed to provide legitimacy and demonstrate benevolence.

The methods that the Bush administration utilised in initiating the conflict reveal how the war is able to fit into the new imperialist paradigm. Disguising the notion of 'new imperialism' by claiming the sole reason to be protection of national sovereignty (Tickly, 2003), the U.S. embarked on a 'preventative war' for which there was no apparent legal justification (Martin, 2009). The U.S. was, however, careful to justify the undermining of Iraq's sovereignty. By initially pursuing legitimation through approval from international organizations and groups, it weaved a multilateral and

humanitarian mask to conceal its imperialist intentions. Furthermore, Bush acknowledged the problematic nature of attempting to engage in a war opposed by members of the Security Council. By focusing on the legalities of the conflict, such as the U.N. Security Council Resolution 687 of 1991, which enforced the Iraqi government to destroy all weapons of mass destruction (Baylis *et al,* 2008), and invoking previously established legislation designed to promote multilateralism in the face of rogue states, such as the NATO treaty's Article 5 (Malone and Khong, 2005), the Bush administration coordinated a facade of multilateralism that acted as an effective public relations move. Furthermore, the 'humanitarian' desire to end Hussein's autocratic and tyrannical rule and establish a democracy in Iraq helped convince the U.S. population and portions of the international community that the war was worth pursuing, primarily due to belief held in ideas purported by the democratic peace theory, which notes that two democracies will never engage in conflict.

Despite the initial efforts to portray how high levels of democracy promote humanitarianism, after a while, the aforementioned humanitarian mask slipped and the imperialist face of the U.S. in Iraq became apparent. At the time of the invasion, the U.S. spending on non-military means of promoting influence, such as with foreign aid, had shrunk, progressively depleting thereon after, to the point of being just 0.2% of GDP (Bunting, 2003). There were apparent failings in the multilateral element of the invasion too. The bombing of the U.N. compound in Baghdad in 2003 highlights the extent to which the international institutions were perceived to be extensions of American power.

The desire to establish democracy became diluted following the invasion. The American leader of the Coalition Provisional Authority, Lewis Paul Bremer III, initially ran Iraq with an autocratic style. Outlawing 'subversive' groups, few challenges to his authority were tolerated. On top of this, Bremer dismantled the Iraqi army, imposed strict control over the media, restructured the educational system to fit with U.S. ideologies and established control over the oil facilities (Boggs, 2005). Indeed, Bremer appeared to subscribe to the military notion of 'oderint dum metuant' (let them hate us, so long as they fear), paying little attention to the humanitarian motivations. The imperialist underpinnings of the invasion were demonstrated in November 2007, when the white house issued a Declaration of Principles that insisted Iraq must grant U.S. forces indefinite access and must privilege U.S. investors (Shalom & Albert, 2011).

The time that the Bush administration had planned to spend in Iraq compared to the time actually spent also highlights the administration's imperial ambitions. Before the war, it was noted that the administration had planned an imperialist venture. Indeed, Bookman noted 'Why does the administration seem unconcerned about an exit strategy from Iraq once Saddam is toppled? Because we won't be leaving. Having conquered Iraq, the U.S. will create permanent military bases which will dominate the Middle East' (2002). This assertion appears to have stood the test of time. There has not been a full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, despite the ending of the war. One reason for this was the initial rhetoric of Bush, which detailed an endless war against terrorism and the Jihadist tendencies of the Arab world that served as a sort of Hobbesian self-fulfilling prophesy, implying there would be no obvious end to the conflict. This apparent lack of end motivations is an additional element highlighting the Bush administration's imperialist ambitions in Iraq.

One notable element of the invasion that highlights U.S. new imperialism is the establishment of a quasi-democratic Iraqi state. Having established a history in which 'Americans tended, on the whole, to be "leavers," not colonizers' (Clark, 2003), the U.S. recognised the greater advantages of indirect and informal imperialism (Steinmetz, 2005). The 'friendly' handpicked transitional leaders of the Iraq National Council exemplify the level of indirect control and, indeed, the low level of democracy that the U.S. actually wished to have in Iraq (Boggs, 2005). It is widely accepted by academics that the U.S. was never fully intent on allowing Iraq to become entirely autonomous, due to the level of importance associated with the oil reserves in the region (Shalom & Albert, 2011). This form of indirect rule, or ruling by proxy, is a fundamental feature of new imperialism.

When Obama won the U.S. Presidency in 2008, the imperialist ambition of the U.S. appeared to shift again. Although, the extent to which a de facto alteration actually occurred is questionable. Although initially positioning himself ideologically opposed to Bush's wars and promising a withdrawal of troops from Iraq, whether this has been achieved is, notably, partial. In February 2009, one month into assuming office, Obama altered his plan for a universal withdrawal to one in which 50,000 troops remained (MacAskill, 2009). Furthermore, with 131,000 troops

still remaining in October 2009, Obama planned to send 1000 more at the request of operational commanders (Ditz, 2009). Despite these similarities, it would be fallacious to assert that the foreign policies of Bush and Obama were the same. In a similar fashion to Clinton's focus on domestic politics after Bush Senior's war in the Gulf, the economic climate has forced Obama to maintain a primarily domestic focus.

During the post 9/11 period, the situation in Iraq clearly demonstrated some of the established features of new imperialism. The level of indirect control that the U.S. maintains over Iraq is the most fundamental feature of the Iraq War. The questionable motives for the intervention have now demonstrated the true imperialist ambitions of the U.S. and the desire to fortify their oil interests in the Persian Gulf region (Shalom & Albert, 2011). Although the Obama administration is inherently less aggressive abroad, his decisions on Iraq have arguably been based on the successes the U.S. had there prior to his Presidency. The two years before Obama assumed office witnessed a 'stabilising' of the country and a dramatic 'reduction in violence' (Woodward, 2010, p. 10). The stabilising of Iraq has allowed the Obama administration to develop an approach in which they can utilise containment methods, while the remaining troops continue to carry out imperialist ambitions by both promoting the anthropocentric humanitarian elements of the conflict's motivation and protecting the regional economic interests of the United States.

The invasion of Iraq demonstrates a continuation of imperialist ambitions that were established prior to 9/11. In essence, the terrorist attacks on September 11th 2001 had the unintended effect of re-legitimising and emboldening U.S. imperialist ambitions (Boggs, 2005). Furthermore, the imperialist ambitions are highlighted by the decision to engage in an old fashioned war between nation states, it 'misses the desire, or at least the stated target, terrorism' (Bunting, 2003). The period between the end of the Cold War and 9/11 was a critical epoch in the development of 'new imperialism'. This imperialism, although adapted in the post 9/11 era, paved the way for imperialist ambitions to be realised and acted upon. Although the 'imperialist' term is ordinarily reserved, and, even then, contentiously, for post 9/11 foreign policy, this analysis demonstrates an apparent trajectory in the imperialist behaviour that culminated in the Iraq War.

The Cold War, essentially, allowed the imperialist ambitions of the U.S. to be realised. The term 'new imperialism' is applied to this area to differentiate it from the previous imperialist powers of Europe. The post Second World War ability of the U.S. to sculpt a 'new world order' fundamentally allowed it to develop a world order that served its own benefits. Recognising the importance of a strong military, particularly in the protection of its regional interests, the U.S. military expenditure gradually increased since before the end of Cold War (Gillespie, 1999). This obsession with increasing military expenditure is one of the key features underpinning the military culture that developed in the United States before 9/11. In the absence of the Soviet threat, the concept of utilising the U.S.'s military might was to become a key feature in its post Cold War foreign policy. This utilisation of military supremacy to serve the imperialist interests is what allowed the Iraq War to become a reality. Another key feature developed during the Cold War, that underpinned the imperialist development, was the establishment of international institutions. Through the development of U.S. centric international bodies, America was able to assume an international role where it acted as a 'world police.' This, combined with the military supremacy and a pro– interventionist ideological stance, had allowed the U.S. to legitimise an increasingly militarily aggressive foreign policy.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 is a clear continuation of these ideals, offering justification of the intervention through the previously established role of 'world police.' The inevitability of an invasion was apparent before the war's initiation. Since the 1991 Gulf War, the rhetoric used by Presidential administrations suggested that Iraq had been perceived as a threat to global and U.S. security. The imperialism paradigm that the U.S. operates in dictates that international security must be maintained so that its imperialist ambitions are not undermined. The invasion of Iraq in 1991 demonstrates the willingness of the U.S. to engage in wars with states that pose a threat to their national or transnational interests.

Similarly, how the Persian Gulf being was established as a focal point for U.S. foreign policy at the end of the Cold War, an imperialist desire with U.S. foreign policies to safeguard the region was also apparent post – 9/11. This is especially the case, seeing that the oil reserves in Iraq are the largest in the world (Pivarnik, 2007) and the U.S. has an insatiable thirst for oil. With the focus having been on Iraq and the lasting desire for the protection of U.S. interests in the Gulf region, the invasion of Iraq as an imperialist ambition acts as a continuation from the pre 9/11 era.

One of the most demonstrative elements of post 9/11 foreign policy exhibiting imperial ambitions is exemplified by the neoconservative philosophy of the Bush administration. The development of the neoconservative ideology displays a level of inevitability regarding the Iraq War. Assisted by the aforementioned military culture in the 1990s that demanded a constant increase in military expenditure and the apparent success with the Kosovo intervention, the Bush administration inherited the helm of a ship that appeared set on war. The desire to promote democracy in Iraq and to stabilise the region with regards to the massive oil reserves resonates with the conventional neoconservative ideological stance. When Bush assumed office, the inevitability of the war in Iraq appeared to increase.

The development of 'new imperialism' in U.S. foreign policy at end of the Cold War and throughout the 1990s, the 'global police' role assumed by the U.S., and the foreign policy focus on the oil reserves in Iraq all contributed to the ideological stance of Bush in proceeding with the intervention. The most notable feature that reveals this is with Bush's rhetoric. 'Jane Mayer revealed in the New Yorker that a secret Bush National Security Council (NSC) document dated February 3, 2003, instructed NSC members to cooperate with Vice President Dick Cheney's Energy Task Force for "reviewing international policy towards rogue states" and "actions regarding the capture of new and existing oil and gas fields"'(Safty, 2008). The desire prior to 9/11 to 'capture new and existing oil fields' clearly demonstrates imperialist ambition within the Bush administration. Furthermore, the ambitions are based around the protection of national interests that were recognised long before 9/11.

Conclusions

The development of imperialism in foreign policy in the previous sections highlights the imperialist ambitions from variant U.S. administrations. One notable effect of 9/11 was in getting a significant, albeit misled, proportion of the American population behind the notion of military intervention. As this study has noted above, the military culture was prevalent in the 1990s. Indeed, it was this previously established acceptance of preventative, or pre-emptive, intervention that the Bush administration utilised to gain domestic popularity for the invasion in 2003. This military culture was a result of the belief in American exceptionalism, a fundamental feature of new imperialism. The belief in American exceptionalism developed concurrently and intrinsically with a form of imperialism throughout the end of the Cold War and the 1990s. With the United States cementing their military hegemony and assuming roles within international institutions, the belief that the U.S.'s position in the world was to be the 'good' force acting against the antagonistic 'evil' of the Iraqi 'rogue state' became widespread.

There is a clear trajectory that the imperialism seen to come about post 9/11 actually came from a history of imperialist ambitions that had already been established. Arguably, with regards to the pro-interventionist rhetoric that came from the Bush administration, 9/11 emboldened the military element of the invasion and allowed the administration to disregard any critique from others in the international arena. With pro-intervention rhetoric having existed before 9/11, along with this history of imperialist ambitions, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 acted as catalysts for the U.S. to increase its imperialist foreign policy, by which the pre-existing imperialist nature of U.S. foreign policy has become more apparent.

To advance this study, a further analysis could be applied through noting the difference between pre and post 9/11 U.S. foreign policies. By concurrently analysing the extent to which 9/11 was a fissure in American foreign policy, it would be possible to extend the assessment of previously established imperialist ambition's explanatory power in post 9/11 foreign policy development. Similarly, by noting, in more detail, the dissimilarities between the foreign policies of the presidential administrations, a deeper analysis of imperialist continuity would be evident. Additionally, a deeper theoretical analysis could be explored concerning the developing and intimate relationship between neoconservativism and imperialism,. Furthermore, by noting the intrinsic elements between these two concepts and their influence on U.S. foreign policy, it would be possible to further demonstrate the continuity in pre and post 9/11 foreign policy. By successfully noting the development of imperialist U.S. foreign policy post 9/11, this study has shown there has, indeed, been a continuation of previously established imperialist ambitions.

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