# The End of History, US Democracy Initiatives, and the New World Order

https://www.e-ir.info/2013/09/01/whither-democracy-promotion-the-end-of-history-united-states-democracy-initiatives-and-the-new-world-order/

ASHLEIGH CROUCHER, SEP 1 2013

*"The Purposes of the United Nations are to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace."[1]*

*-The United Nations Charter*

*"This is an historic moment. We have in this past year made great progress in ending the long era of conflict and cold war. We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order, a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations."[2]*

*-George H. W. Bush*

*"Now we've entered a new era, and we need a new vision and the strength to meet a new set of opportunities and threats. We face the same challenge today that we faced in 1946 — to build a world of security, freedom, democracy, free markets and growth at a time of great change."[3]*

*-Bill Clinton*

In the immediate post-Cold War period, there was an increase in rhetoric within the international community, particularly the United States, surrounding the dawn of a 'new world order'. In particular, without the blockade of the Security Council between the United States and the Soviet Union, the United Nations could fully uphold its commitment, as envisaged by its founders. However, the rhetoric of 'international peace and security' has been interpreted differently by various member states – most notably the United States – and as a result there have been different efforts aimed at achieving 'international peace and security'. This has been a key point of contention; the question of to what extent, if at all, democracy promotion should be embraced as a means of promoting international peace and security. Goals of peace and security, as interpreted by the United States, were founded upon the democratic peace thesis; that liberal democratic states do not go to war with each, and this formed the basis for advocacy of democracy promotion.[4] This essay will examine this question, with explicit reference to the United States' democracy promotion initiatives in the post-Cold War period. This essay will argue that the normative restrictions of the discourse of 'international peace and security' have severe empirical implications, and as a result of the varying interpretations, there is a lack of a coordinated approach. Using the specific example of the Clinton Administration[5] and subsequent U.S. democracy promotion initiatives embedded in foreign policy rhetoric, this essay will argue that there is an undertone of national interests embedded in democracy promotion abroad, and that these initiatives are employed selectively, based on the specific context.[6]

Democracy promotion in the post-Cold War era is founded upon the principles of the democratic peace thesis, or the

liberal peace. The democratic peace thesis argues that democracies[7] rarely, or never, go to war with each other.[8] There are four key tenets of the 'democratic peace' amongst scholars and policymakers. The first is that, due to the internal structure of democratic states, the only wars that the public could be mobilized to support are those against authoritarian regimes. Second, the norms of peaceful conflict resolution are prevalent in democratic societies due to the rule of law. Further, there is a high level of transparency within democratic institutions and the flows of information between democratic states make mediation a more attractive option to violence, and finally, there is a sense of a shared social purpose between democratic states, in which there is an underlying identity of interests that limit any violent disputes between democratic states. This, of course, is a contested concept; however the United States appears to have adopted this notion, as their democracy promotion initiatives have shown. International peace and security, as has been mentioned, is the key goal of the United Nations, however, despite the measures outlined in the Charter, this is not the method that all nations view as conducive of achieving international peace and security. The U.S., in particular, has its own interpretations of 'international peace and security' and this is evidenced through its foreign policy rhetoric in the post-Cold War period. In the case of the United States, it is useful to examine the relationship between its democracy promotion initiatives and two of its key strategic goals in the post-Cold War period; conflict reduction and economic liberalization. These two goals reflect not only the leadership in the United States at the time, but also the general political climate in the aftermath of the Cold War. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and rising numbers of democratic states in Africa and Asia, there were new markets entering the global economy, and the US saw this as a chance to 'liberalize' emerging economies. This led to arguments, notably that of Francis Fukuyama, that liberal democracies are the final form of human government, after communism had been 'defeated'.[9] This 'liberalization' of the global economy became a key tenet of American foreign policy in the 1990s, which adopted the views of Fukuyama. In his influential thesis, 'The End of History', Fukuyama argued that:

what we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such…. That is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.[10]

The U.S. is a strong advocate for the 'universalization of Western liberal democracy' that Fukuyama speaks of, and has incorporated this into their foreign policy rhetoric, particularly in the aftermath of the Cold War. However, despite this inclusion of democratization into the foreign policy rhetoric, these initiatives were inherently underpinned by the narrative of the 'national interest'. This is particularly evidenced through Bill Clinton's foreign policy objectives; Clinton's approach has been defined, in practice, as:

"a moderate semi-realist one in which democracy promotion alternatively surfaces and submerges depending on the context. Where U.S. economic and security interests correlate with the advance of democracy and a democratic trend is occurring, U.S. policy incorporates democracy promotion".[11]

In this sense, democracy promotion becomes a means to an end, rather than a goal in itself. As aforementioned, the two key strategic goals of conflict reduction and economic liberalization can potentially be achieved through democracy promotion; however the rhetoric of democracy does not necessarily translate to empirical success. It is therefore necessary to study US promotion from the perspective of America's strategic goals and not just the goal of democratization. The inclusion of democracy promotion in American foreign policy, however, is not a new concept; it is the latest term in the consistent influence of liberal internationalist conceptions of the country's role in the world.[12] The notion that the spread of democracy abroad is essential for American interests has its roots in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points from 1918[13], with this form of liberal internationalism shaping American Grand Strategy since the end of World War II.[14] Democratization abroad has been viewed by successive governments as the common denominator between a number of mutually reinforcing ideas about international politics and political order.[15] In the post-Cold War period, U.S. decision-makers believed that the spread of democracy had a two-fold positive outcome: the spread of democracy was an outcome that is both normatively pleasing and produces tangible domestic benefits for the U.S.[16] This 'win-win' mentality reflects sentiments of U.S. exceptionalism, understood in terms of an 'American Creed' situated in the debate between realism and idealism in American foreign policy.[17]

American exceptionalism is founded upon the self-belief the United States, as a state deliberately founded upon universal liberal democratic values, which influences how the 'national interest' is constructed. This national interest

is fuelled by a universalist worldview, which encourages the U.S. to:

"set strategic goals beyond narrow security and economic interests, [which] often led to the belief that any non-democratic regime is a threat to American values and institutions – and by extension, to the country's identity itself".[18]

In this perceived dichotomy of realist-idealist foreign policy, the lines become blurred due to the inherently intertwined nature of America's ideals and its conception of the national interest. Furthermore, it is in this sense that democracy promotion becomes a foreign policy tool and the effect that democracy promotion has on democratization itself comes into question.

When examining to what extent democracy promotion should be embraced as a means of achieving international peace and security, it is imperative that one must distinguish between the strategy *of* democracy promotion to secure national-interest goals and the strategy *for* democracy promotion to achieve democratization abroad.[19] It is argued here that international peace and security cannot be achieved through democracy promotion alone; this is due to the inherent flaws in the strategy *of* democracy promotion, particularly given the political climate in the nations most susceptible to foreign intervention. The Clinton Administration provides a useful case study for examining this distinction between strategy *of* and strategy *for* democracy promotion in relation to international peace and security.

As has been mentioned, democracy promotion initiatives are often imbued with undertones of the national interest, and democracy promotion is often a way to move towards these goals. Particularly with the rhetoric surrounding international peace and security, democracy *enlargement* is a one of the most expressed strategies *of* democracy promotion. Clinton, from the beginning of his presidential campaign, entrenched democracy promotion as a key foreign policy goal, however lacked empirical outcomes of democratization.[20] Clinton's foreign policy objectives can be understood through a number of ways, however with his strategy of democracy promotion, there was more freedom in seeking a grand strategy that could "fully incorporate the historical tendency to view the national interest in terms of promoting American political values abroad"[21], particularly due to the fact that the previous administration's grand strategy of containment ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Furthermore, in pursuit of the two key strategic goals listed earlier (conflict reduction and economic liberalization), the Clinton Administration advanced the institutional promotion of democratization abroad, but also explicitly attempted to use these approaches to further promote *national* goals, namely strategic and economic goals, rather than *international* aims, as his rhetoric suggests.[22] Additionally, traditional U.S. strategic goals were re-interpreted as ensuring military superiority over other emerging superpowers and subsequent blocs, which in turn prevents the rise of a rival global hegemon who would potentially threaten the liberal democratic international order.[23]

Clinton and his advisers shared a liberal internationalist worldview based upon the principles of democracy and economic liberalization, and as a result, have argued that democracy promotion supports both the spread of their nation's values and the achievement of its goals of national interest. Historically, there has not been an acknowledgement of the contradiction between the two broader goals. The spread and promotion of democracy in the post-Cold War era, termed 'Third Wave Democratization', the tendency to see all nations as 'capable' of becoming liberal democracies and the collapse of Communism all led to a renewed interest in liberal internationalist foreign policy rhetoric, which resulted in the Clinton Administration to embed democracy promotion into its national-interest oriented foreign policy.[24] This led to an era of ideational factors playing a prominent role in foreign policy making, in which issues of security and the national interest were constructed in terms of identity. This approach meant that countries hold pre-conceived notions of their political identity as intertwined with the nation's conception of the national interest, albeit often misleading.[25] Furthermore, policy-makers define the national interest in light of how it is related to the perceived instrumental benefits of democracy, which is at the forefront of the debate surrounding whether democratization should be embraced as a means of promoting international peace and security.[26]

As has been argued, the extent to which the United States includes democracy promotion within its foreign policy rhetoric is dependent upon the political context in which the policy is being expressed. In the aftermath of the Cold War, there were systemic changes within the international order which created a space for U.S. democracy

promotion initiatives; however the reason *why* the U.S. employed a strategy *of* democratization is still highly debated. Whilst the United States has been an advocate for creating sustainable peace in the international community, this advocacy has been based around their two key strategic goals of conflict reduction and economic liberalization. The U.S., in particular, has imbued undertones of their national interest into the promotion of international peace and security; however the strategy *of* democratization is not effective for the promotion of international peace and security. 'International peace and security', as envisaged by the founders of the United Nations, can only be achieved through cooperation, coordination and collective efforts between all members of the international community, and democracy promotion is not necessarily the most effective means. Despite the U.S.' efforts, democratization abroad has not necessarily translated into the transformation of developing nations into liberal democratic states, nor has it contributed extensively to conflict reduction or economic liberalization.

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[1] United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations,* 24 October 2945, 1 UNTS XVI, available at: http://www.unwebsite.com/charter [accessed 9 September 2011], Chapter I, Article I.

[2] George H. W. Bush, Address to the Nation on the Invasion of Iraq (January 16, 1991)

[3] Bill Clinton, "A New Covenant for American Security" (speech at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., December 12 1991)

[4] Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs", *Philosophy and Public Affairs,* (1983) pp.205, 207-8; Doyle applied the liberal peace theory to 'liberal states', which he defined as "states with some form of representative democracy, a market economy…and constitutional protections of civil and political rights" (p.205)

[5] Whilst this essay will focus on the Clinton Administration, it is important to note the emphasis that George W. Bush has placed on democracy promotion, particularly as an aspect of the broader 'War on Terror'.

[6] Thomas Carothers, "Democracy Promotion Under Clinton", *The Washington Quarterly,* (Autumn, 1995), pp.18

[7] Small, Melvin; Singer, David J. (1976). "The War Proneness of Democratic Regimes, 1816-1965".*Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 1: 50–69, Small and Singer define democracy as a nation that holds periodic elections in which the opposition parties are as free to run as parties, allows at least 10% of the adult population to vote, and has a parliament that either controls or enjoys parity with the executive branch of the government.

[8] There are many critiques of the democratic peace thesis, for example, see Joanne Gowa.*Ballots and Bullets: The Elusive Democratic Peace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999; Sebastian Rosato, (2003). "The

Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory". *American Political Science Review* 97: 585–602; Rudolph J. Rummel, with Peace Magazine Editors (1999). "A Reply to Shimmin". *Peace Magazine* 15 (5): 8; David E. Spiro, (1994). "Give Democratic Peace a Chance? The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace". *International Security* (International Security, Vol. 19, No. 2) 19 (Vol. 19, No. 2. (Autumn, 1994)): 50–86.

[9] Fukuyama, Francis (1989). "The End of History?" *National Interest,* vol. 16 (Summer), p. 3-18.

[10] Ibid., p.4

[11] Carothers, *Democracy Promotion Under Clinton,* p.18

[12] Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); Adam Quinn, *US Foreign Policy in Context: National Ideology from the Founders to the Bush Doctrine* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010)

[13] On Wilson's thinking and legacy in foreign policy, see the essays in G. John Ikenberry,*et al., The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009)

[14] Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006)

[15] G. John Ikenberry, 'America's Liberal Grand Strategy: Democracy and National Security in the Post-War Era', in M. Cox, G.J. Ikenberry, and T. Inoguchi (eds), *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies and Impacts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009)

[16] Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise,* (New York: Routledge, 2007) p.49

[17] Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony,* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1981), pp.24-30, 236-47

[18] Layne, *The Peace of Illusions,* pp. 119

[19] Nicholas Bouchet, 'The Strategic Use of American Democracy Promotion after the Cold War: The Clinton Administration". Paper presented at the SGIR 7th Pan-European International Relations Conference, Stockholm, 9-11 September 2010, p.3

[20] Thomas Carothers, *The Clinton Record on Democracy Promotion,* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000)

[21] Bouchet, *The Strategic Use of American Democracy Promotion After the Cold War,* p.4

[22] Ibid., p.5

[23] John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations,* (New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1992) p. 194-5, 203-9; Ikenberry, *America's Liberal Grand Strategy,* p.108

[24] Smith, *Pact with the Devil,* p.96-116

[25] Quinn, *US Foreign Policy in Context,* p. 20-1; John Gerard Ruggie, 'The Past as Prologue? Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy', *International Security,* Vol.21 No. 4 (1997) p.20; John Gerard Ruggie, *Winning the*

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[26] Schraeder, 'The State of the Art', p.35

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*Date written: October 2011*