

# The war of americans



Over the course of the last half-century the U. S. has enjoyed unprecedented power in every aspect whether it be politically, economically, militarily, or by any other means. In its dominance of world politics since WWII, the U. S. has been able to cast its influence around the globe. However, the U. S. experienced a gradual decline in its sovereignty over the course of this era as well. A prime example was in 1973 when OPEC raised oil prices drastically over the course of the next two years.

" OPEC" s ability to increase at will the world price of its precious product highlighted the industrial world" s dependence on foreign sources of energy. (Keylor, p. 346) Being a sovereign nation requires not being subject to external forces, being able to conduct an independent foreign policy, and being able to control events within your own borders. Today, U. S. sovereignty continues to decline for a number of reasons. The only question is whether it is healthy or harmful for the U. S. to do so. The first reason why U. S. sovereignty is declining is due to what is known as interdependence. This phenomenon developed after WWII with the creation of the UN, GATT, the IMF and other such intergovernmental organizations.

All of these served to create linkages between the major nations of the world in the postwar era. Membership in such organizations makes the U. S. subject to international law. Rosecrance" s identification of the trading state signifies the shift away from geopolitical influence and towards a global economy. Both the roles of international trade and foreign investment have increasingly become a greater element of U. S. economic importance. Additionally, the tying together of economies from around the world has lead to an increase in economic warfare.

The increased use of economic sanctions and other such measures can be contributed to their perceived effectiveness in obtaining foreign policy goals. The U. S. integration into the world economy leaves it susceptible to the economic decisions of its trading partners and providers of raw materials. Reliance on import and export goods is an essential part of the U. S. economy. This can be seen in every day life. Just think about how much gas prices have increased recently as the result of a few nations restricting their oil supplies in order to raise prices.

While the countries responsible for this could all be readily defeated by the U. S. in war, the U. S. is powerless to combat their practices. Aside from its place in the world market, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction also serves to limit the sovereignty of the U. S. First off, new nuclear powers, which would likely include a number of aggressive authoritarian states, will lack the resources to manage the elaborate command and control capabilities required.

" Even if hostile countries somehow catch up in an arms race, their military organizations and cultures are unlikely to catch up in the competence race for management, technology assimilation, and combat command skills.

(Betts, p. 29) In addition to proliferation of nuclear weapons, there is also wide concern among U. S. leaders about the spread and development of biological weapons. The rise of religious nationalism and anti-U. S. sentiments in nations such as Iraq give cause for concern to the U. S. that an attack using biological weapons is possible. " One simple fact should worry Americans more about biological than about nuclear or chemical arms:

unlike either of the other two, biological weapons combine maximum destructiveness and easy availability. " (Betts, p. 32)

Even more threatening to U. S. sovereignty is the threat of terrorist attack to our nation's soil. The proliferation of the aforementioned weapons is worrisome to U. S. officials that a horrendous nuclear or biological terrorist attack is feasible. The possibility of such an attack places a serious hindrance on the U. S. ability to protect its citizens within its borders. Conspirators of such an attack could be based within the U. S. or abroad, which makes it increasingly difficult to guard against. Additionally, it is impossible to deter such a course of action.

When a nation is attacked, the government behind the attack is readily identified and a counterattack can be undertaken. However, when it is unknown as to who is behind the attack, it makes it impossible to deter it from occurring since " retaliation requires knowledge of who has launched an attack and the address at which they reside. " (Betts, p. 34) Such concerns have increased since the end of the Cold War as there is widespread doubt surrounding the degree of control Russia used in disposing of their nuclear weapons.

The information revolution also poses a serious threat to U. S. sovereignty. The increasing opportunities for interaction through technological advances in communications and transportation make information more readily accessible. The strong reliance on the behalf of the U. S. on information infrastructure makes it vulnerable to attack. (Wriston, p. 179) " The smallest nation, terrorist group, or drug cartel could hire a computer programmer to

plant a Trojan horse virus in software, take down a vital network, or cause a missile to misfire... The United States" increasing reliance on massive networks may make it more, not less vulnerable. " (Wriston, p. 80)

As with the problem of an armed terrorist attack, it is extremely difficult to determine who is responsible for a break-in of a private, supposedly secure, U. S. government web page. Fortunately, we have not yet witnessed any such form of information warfare; however, imagining the form it might take and protecting against it has become the preoccupation of a presidential commission and numerous task forces. (Wriston, p. 179) Despite the erosion of U. S. sovereignty, it is still by far the most powerful nation in the world today.

I for one would welcome the erosion of U. S. overeignty since it furthers interdependence in world politics and serves to perpetuate world peace. The greater the economies of the world are intertwined, the less likely it is that a nation will go to war with another that it is linked to by a web of transnational relationships. It may also be in the best interests of the U. S. to lose some of its sovereignty since the world is moving towards civilizational entities (Western, African, Islamic, etc. ) as identified by Samuel Huntington. (Huntington) If he is correct in his prediction, then the U. S. is better off belonging to one of these civilizations rather than standing alone.