

The bush doctrine



President George W. Bush made known to the people all over the world the existence of his new National Security Strategy on September 2002. While the new scheme preserved a few components from past strategies, in many aspects it is a daring digression from previous U. S. policy. It clearly asserts that the United States is in an extremely distinctive spot of political and military ascendancy and that it possesses an ethical responsibility to utilize this power to institute an autonomous and noninterventionist world order.

This new strategy maintains that the United States must set up and sustain a global military supremacy to achieve the kind of democratic and peaceful world it has visualized. According to this plan, its execution necessitates blocking, if necessary by force, any and all those who will challenge this notion of U. S. military dominance. As it is, terrorists and some states that are known to seek or actually possess weapons of mass destruction pose a colossal challenge to world stability.

Fearing that the Cold War principles of deterrence and containment may be outdated or would no longer work, and that “ if we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long,” Bush declared in the National Security Strategy a novel “ preemption doctrine” to combat such threats (Speed & May, 2005, pp. 38-49). The Bush Doctrine This doctrine is a set of foreign policy courses of action initially disclosed by President Bush during his commencement speech addressed to the graduating class of West Point on June 1, 2002.

When taken as a whole, these principles shaped a comprehensive and novel stage in US policy that stressed military pre-emption, military superiority (what has been known as strength beyond challenge) unilateral action and a

dedication towards extending democracy, liberty and security to all regions. Such set of principles was made official in a document called The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, published on September 20, 2002.

This doctrine provided the framework for the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The term Bush Doctrine at first referred to the policy formulation stated immediately after the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center assault that the United States would see no difference between terrorists who commit outrageous acts against property and humanity and those people who believe and protect these terrorists. During the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, this policy was stridently applied.

Even though the Taliban-controlled government of Afghanistan volunteered to extradite al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden if concrete proofs were given that he was really responsible for the September 11 attacks and also offered to entrust bin Laden to Pakistan where he would be tried under Islamic law, their refusal to extradite him to the U. S. with no preconditions was considered justification for invasion. This principle then connotes that any country that would not take a pro-active position against terrorism would automatically be seen as a country supporting it.

In a televised speech to a session in Congress, President Bush recapitulated the doctrine with these very popular words - " Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. " Roots of the Doctrine History of the doctrine can be traced back to the Department of Defense when a draft version of the internal Defense

Planning Guide principles prepared by Paul Wolfowitz came out, at that time then he was the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in 1992.

As the guidelines were leaked to the press and consequently triggered bitter controversy, President Bush commanded it to be re-drafted which now became to be known as the Bush Doctrine. Debate over the Bush Doctrine In spite of the United States' position as a world power, the ominous September 11 assault on the American people on American soil and Bush's declaration of a GWOT depicted more than ever the necessity of taking a new perspective of its global security environment (Zelikow, 2003, p. 19).

The Bush Doctrine progressed from a realist selective engagement scheme toward a plan of US supremacy with the motivation and enthusiasm to utilize pre-emptive military might in confronting threats essential to American national security (Dueck, 2004, pp. 523-532). Both liberal and conservative standpoints clashed. The Bush Doctrine instigated an ocean of censure, praises and its own set of disputes, deliberating on its legitimacy and strength as the appropriate strategy for America in the twenty first century.

President Bush's administration chose to take a position toward a NSS of Primacy, utilize preemptive military action to take care of national vital interests, and use a "coalition of the willing" when UN support was less than expected (Bush, 2002). So much disagreements and deliberations surface at home and abroad after the release of the September 2002 NSS. The idea of United States dominance push people to be on two extreme sides - advocates strongly believe that the US is a principled and a respectable "knight in shining armor" and a genuine defender against anarchy and wickedness.

Those who intensely oppose refer her as “ the all powerful root of evil” (Foreign Policy, 2002). Very specifically, Bush Doctrine detractors see the use of “ primacy” as an unwarranted speechifying and an unlawful rationalization to employ pre-emptive military strikes when the US conveniently opts for it (Ney, 2004, p. 10). It simply means that the doctrine’s antagonists view it as egotistical, over-belligerent and menacingly intimidating (Kagan, 2004, 65-72). “ By the time the war actually began in March 2003, the Iraq crisis was no longer just the result of transatlantic differences, but a significant cause of them” (Gordon & Shapiro, 2004).

“ Critics point out that the practice of preemption is not new, however turning it into doctrine weakens international norms and encourages other countries to engage in risky actions. Similarly, they argue, American primacy is a fact, but there is no need for rhetoric that rubs other peoples’ faces in it” (Ney, 2004, p. 9). Criticisms Those who have been very cynical of the Bush Doctrine articulate that it is not a principle of pre-emptive war but preventive war. A pre-emptive war is one against an enemy preparing to strike right away. A preventive war is one against an enemy that will pose a danger in the future.

Likewise, they consider it a huge problem if American preventive wars might motivate other countries to validate attacks on their enemies as “ preemptive wars. ” Apparently, the National Security Strategy warns other nations not to “ use pre-emption as a pretext for aggression” and explains that the “ reasons for [American] actions will be clear, the force measured, and the cause just. ” However, critics argue that with this policy, it will be

difficult for America to be successful in stopping other countries from using pre-emption to wage war.

Another argument from detractors further insist that the doctrine implies that America will do what it chooses without respect and consideration for international organization agreements. This principle, according to them, emasculates the authority of the initiatives of these international groups to confront many global predicaments like slavery, drug-running and terrorism, concerns that are also important to the United States. In like manner, these opponents of the doctrine are fearsome that a willingness to use preemptive military force may turn this “ last resort” scheme into a “ first resort” instrument.

By going it alone in the world, American power loses its authority and authenticity and the United States is seen as a tough tormentor and persecutor. Finally, say it isn't realistic. These critics stressed the fact that it took democracy hundreds of years to set in, develop and become established in Western countries. Societies like Iraq, which have no democratic tradition, cannot be expected to right away form liberal institutions. It is also thought that the costs of nation-building will be outrageously overwhelming.

And on the personal level, these opponents of the doctrine think that it is definitely shameful for the US to impose her way of life, most especially the capitalistic system, on other cultures. When is a First Strike Acceptable? For the sake of argument, one accepts to be true that some right of pre-emptive self-defense exist under international law, the next query is how far it can go. Experts on the subject claimed that even if there was a right of striking

first, it could only exist when the country affected had no time to take the issue to the United Nations.

Based on Article 51, it has been argued that “ you have the right of self-defense until such time as the Security Council takes action. And therefore it’s implied that if you have the time to deliberate and to go to the Council before you take pre-emptive action, then you have to go to the Council. ” In short, the Bush doctrine was and is obviously illegal. If one considers it closely, there was never an indication or suggestion that Iraq is going to launch an assault at the United States or that any of the countries that potentially fall within the scope of military action validated by the Bush doctrine are immediate threats.

Clearly, the policy was aimed at “ effectively closing down dangerous regimes before they become imminent threats” an act which represented a usurpation of the Security Council’s role in global affairs. In the specific case of the United States and Iraq, however, experts did not consider Iraqi actions to pose a grave threat to the United States to justify a pre-emptive attack. As an indication of what might indicate a sufficient threat, there should be evidence that the Iraqileadershipis in possession of some sort of weapon, plus a means to get it to the United States, plus actually intending imminently to do that but otherwise not.

The Dangers of Unilateralism It has been asserted that it was intrinsically undesirable for the United States or any other country to take pre-emptive action unilaterally. The difficulty posited by anticipatory self-defense as that of finding a reasonable middle ground between the reductio ad absurdum of two extremes have been depicted, “ If you insisted that a small country wait

for a neighbor to attack it with nuclear weapons before responding... everybody would just say the law is an ass.

On the other hand, if you have a law which says that any country that feels threatened is free to attack any country from which it feels the threat is emanating, then you don't have a law at all. " In the case of the United States and Iraq, it has been sketched out what a reasonable interpretation of the law would demand -- that the US show other states (starting with the Security Council and NATO) evidence to suggest that Iraq is supporting the use of force by terrorist organizations against a member (or several members) of the United Nations.

Without such evidence, " you probably shouldn't do it, because everybody is going to assume that you're acting for other motives. " That would destabilize the international system, because other countries would see the Bush doctrine as a potential threat to themselves. Extending this point to a general principle, analysts say that when there is a rule in international law that had to be interpreted reasonably, as with the right of self-defense, the process by which it was interpreted became more important than the substance of the rule itself.

It could not simply be interpreted by a single country, with no attempt to persuade other countries of the necessity of its actions. If the process [of interpreting the rule] is an entirely unilateral one, in which the strong do as they will, and the weak have to accept it, then the world is back to the Peloponnesian wars, and certainly most countries would resist that.

International Law and the Bush Doctrine

At home and abroad, the doctrine triggered so much alarm because it evidently ignores even the minor respect to international law and collaboration that exemplified Post-Second World War foreign policy until the Clinton administration. From now on, the U. S. might make use of the cover provided by UN resolutions and international coalitions for the sake of expediency, but Bush and his team were openly declaring that the world's only superpower would do as it wanted without being bound in any serious way by the international community.

Between September 11 and the public declaration of the Bush Doctrine, there were many manifestations of the administration's sweeping condescension for international law. The bombing of civilian areas and the use of cluster bombs in Afghanistan were all in direct violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims. Likewise, a blatant infringement of other Geneva Convention provisions is the imprisonment at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba, of aliens detained in the war on terrorism.

More than six hundred detainees from more than forty nations are at present being held at Guantanamo. These foreigners are declared by the Bush administration to be "unlawful combatants" and not "prisoners of war" whose rights are supposed to be protected under the Geneva Conventions but as it is, these detainees have been prohibited from seeing family members or having access to lawyers. The list of incidents where the Bush administration has written off or repudiated support to various agreements with other powers is huge and far-reaching.

One good way to recapitulate the approach the Bush administration is taking and its current line of thinking is to say that the U. S. is now organized, equipped and geared up to hold everyone in the world answerable under international law-except itself. Nowhere has this stance been more prominent than in the administration's policy towards the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC has been a major subject of international discussion and negotiation for years and was scheduled to come into existence on July 1, 2002.

It will be made up of judges and a prosecutor chosen by the 66 nations that have ratified the 1998 Rome Statute of the ICC and will claim to have jurisdiction over the most heinous abuses resulting from international conflicts (Keach, 2003). Right or Wrong Strategy? Evidently, the Bush Doctrine is an exceedingly audacious plan. However, it is hideously inconsistent and faulty. Some of the flaws are: • International support almost zero. These guidelines will be confronted with a high degree of opposition from the global community which implies that it will also be the end of open cooperation to stop terrorists and all forms of terrorism.

It cannot be denied that global unity and collaboration is a great necessity in order to effectively hunt terrorist leaders and bring them to justice. With the kind of opposition the US is getting and the type of psychological and emotional level the global community is in, that ability to obtain cooperation is in danger. • There is too much to lose economically. Or a poetical way of saying it is - the war may have been won but along the way, peace is lost. Obviously, economics was behind the the West's great triumph during the Cold War.

The US's consecutive principles of containment permitted wealth and success in the face of peril. It is common knowledge that the US's hightechnology and affluence facilitated her to obtain increasing levels of superiority over the USSR. With the Bush Doctrine, the threat of ' hot' wars with small nations of insignificant power over a long period of time has and will persist to gravely damage the United States and global economies. Economic catastrophe can and will create problems in states the US formerly had no reason to be afraid of.

- US military cannot fight and win clean victories against these opponents. As the Russians found out in Grozny, urban warfare is not even remotely similar to the clean open air victory we fought in the first gulf war. Further, the other foes we may fight are much more difficult, particularly N. Korea. The collateral damage in that situation would likely be massive. Conclusion The Bush administration's language of preemptive strikes, regime change, and anticipatory self-defense, simply present euphemisms for raw military aggression and belligerence.

Critics claimed the new " strike first, ask questions later policy," and hostile unilateralism are hazardous legitimating of preemptive strikes. Israel, Pakistan, Russia, China, and smaller powers had already made use of the so-called Bush doctrine and " war against terrorism" to legitimize assaults on domestic and external enemies and there were big possibilities that it could escalate into bigger conflicts that will definitely make the world an extremely volatile and vicious place to live in.

" A global strategy based on the new Bush doctrine of preemption means the end of the system of international institutions, laws and norms that we have

worked to build for more than half a century. What is at stake is nothing less than a fundamental shift in America's place in the world. Rather than continuing to serve as first among equals in the postwar international system, the United States would act as a law unto itself, creating new rules of international engagement without the consent of other nations. In my judgment, this new stance would ill serve the long-term interests of the United States” (Galston, 2002).

In the book *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Future of Good Intentions*, Clyde Prestowitz (2003) asserts that Bush’s doctrine of preemptive strikes and military supremacy emasculates three primary towers of strength as far as international order and stability are concerned – 1) the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia which recognized and established a principle of respect for national sovereignty and noninterference in the affairs of other countries; 2) the UN Charter that disallows the threat or use of military force except in self-defense or under the authority of a UN Security Council mandate; and the 3) Nuremberg Trials which considered preemptive strikes a war crime. In addition, this doctrine of preemptive strikes could give free rein to a sequence of terrible wars that could thrust this planet into a dreadful and nightmarish militarism and totalitarianism vividly depicted in George Orwell’s *1984*. The Bush principle is an extremely barbaric policy, bringing the international community to a social Darwinist battleground where years and years of international law and military discretion were set aside in possibly the most perilous foreign policy doctrine that had ever surfaced in American history.

It foretells a militarist future and a period of eternal war in which a new militarism could create a succession of interminable bloodshed and reprisals, such as the case in the Palestine-Israel conflict (Vidal & Gore, 2002 / 2003).

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