

Use of Force: Ideological Influence on US National Security Strategies under George W. Bush and Barack Obama (2002-2010)

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Abstract

This research extends the survey that classifies the US political theories upon the issue of military enforcement issue in American foreign policy and international relations. The article demonstrates how earlier proposed theoretical classification and its implications works when applied to the comparative analysis of the National Security Strategies of the USA released by George Bush Administration in 2002 and 2006 and Barack Obama Administration in 2010. The key provisions of these Strategies are reviewed consistently with the ideas of American political scientists who participated in the elaboration of the Strategies' drafts. The research has shown that the Strategies 2002, 2006 and 2010 had inherited the main principles and guidelines worked out in by Philip Zelikow, Peter Feaver and James Steinberg as for the Strategies of the years 2002, 2006 and 2010 respectively. The analysis of ideological influence on Bush and Obama Strategies has also exposed that Bush and Obama political courses have quite similar ideological backgrounds for the use of force issue. In this way the Obama's Strategy of the year 2010 contains the same categories as the Bush's Strategies of 2002 and 2006: the regime change, the limited sovereignty and probable preventive use of force. Hence, interventionism turns out to be the primary ideological foundation of the Strategies of 2002, 2006 and 2010. However the differences between the approaches of the Bush and Obama Administrations towards the questions of the use of force legitimacy and priorities unveil that the Strategies of 2002 and 2006 have radical inclinations whereas Obama's strategy incorporates the ideas of rationalism.

Keywords: interventionists, conceptualists, defenders, national security strategy, Philip Zelikow, Peter Feaver, James Steinberg

1. Introduction

Presumably, military force remains the key factor in the contemporary system of international politics and international relations. Nowadays the only superpower is not inclined to refuse from active military response towards variety of threats including threats from (rogue) states or (terrorism). However the US security strategy and political science have not elaborated any comprehensive and explicit approach to the notion of "threat" which seems to be indispensable as long as the US does not have permanent political adversaries and its enemy list is compiled and revised subsequently to the changes in the American national interests. In view of the above, it is interesting whether there is any perspective for the US to change its point of view and refuse from aggressive use of force concepts.

In order to answer this question we, first of all, have to revise the use of force concepts that exist in American scientific society. In our previous article (Sukhovey & Gaivoronskaya, 2014) we have shown theoretical model suitable for the description of concepts concerning the use of military force issue that exist in US political thinking. Thus proponents of active use of military force are generally regarded as interventionists; upholders of non-aggressive use of force concepts (Selective engagement, Smart power, Balance of power and offshore balancing) as conceptualists, and those who speak against the use of force except for the rare cases of self-defense from direct attack as defenders.

Now we have to investigate which approach to the use of force concept is represented in the security strategies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama and whether there are any significant differences between their political courses towards the issue of military engagement. In order to answer these questions we will analyze two presidents' guidelines written in National Security Strategies from 2002 to 2010. Then the Strategies will be

compared with ideas of American political scientists who contributed to the Strategies creation in order to figure out ideological characteristics of Bush and Obama Strategies propositions.

2. National Security Strategy in 2002

We assume that the main propositions stipulated in the works of Philip Zelikow are reflected in the official document of Bush Administration, the National Security Strategy, 2002.

P. Zelikow participated in Harvard project and co-wrote with Ashton Carter and John Deutch the report on Catastrophic terrorism (1998), where the authors presented their positions on international political environment after the Cold war. In this report the authors argued that after Soviet Union's defeat the terrorism has become the number one enemy. They described in details the catastrophic consequences of possible huge terrorist's attack (Zelikow, Carter, & Deutch, 1998).

On September 11, 2001, this prognosis came to reality and became a turning point for the US security policy. Therefore, in 1998 authors predicted the events of 9/11 and proposed the strategy how to solve the US national security problems.

It was logical that P. Zelikow was invited for drafting the US National Security 2002 which was deemed to embrace the outlines of the US security policy after terrorist's attack. This fact is proved by P. Zelikow on his site (2009).

Comparison of the extracts from the works of P. Zelikow with the propositions of the National Security Strategy (here and after the 2002 Strategy) have shown that the main concepts of the 2002 Strategy can be found in P. Zelikow works. We may even find out that the ideas mentioned in P. Zelikow works constitute a conceptual basis of the 2006 Strategy.

Besides the report "Catastrophic terrorism" used in this survey contains records of the meeting in Brookings Institution, where the war on terror strategy was preliminary discussed before the 2002 Strategy release. The 9/11 commission report was also used in the survey because of the fact that P. Zelikow was a director of the report and influenced the document significantly. These implications are proved by the following theses.

The first thesis reflected in the 2002 Strategy is that "with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, our security environment *has undergone profound transformation*". The Strategy stipulates that nowadays the US security is threatened by a group of individuals instead of the army of another state.

The same thought was reflected in P. Zelikow co-authored work "Catastrophic terrorism": it says that America's sense of security would be different after a huge terrorist attack. (Zelikow, Carter, & Deutch, 1998).

Both sources underline that the US security undergoes a transformation: there are no traditional enemies that can conflict the US: they surrendered to the terrorist organizations that have the aim to challenge the US supremacy not on a battlefield but acting on the quiet.

It is worth noting that disappearance of previous "number one" threat is explained the same way by the 2002 Strategy and Zelikow's work.

The 2002 Strategy states that Cold war had ended with the decisive victory of freedom and democracy. The same idea can be found in the report on Catastrophic terrorism: the authors strongly believe that the USSR collapsed due to the effectiveness of deterrence strategy (Zelikow, Carter, & Deutch, 1998).

Thesis about the victory over the Soviet Union is not a brand new idea for the American political science society and, certainly, is shared not only by P. Zelikow. For example, the representative of the Russian political science Tatyana Shakleina in her book is speaking about consensus among American political experts about the results of Cold war: almost all political writers are sure about the US role in the Soviet Union defeat (Shakleina, 2002). However it is important that the works of P. Zelikow contain the main guidelines that would be reflected further in the 2002 Strategy. It is becoming more visible when we compare other propositions of the Strategy with P. Zelikow's works.

The Strategy of the year 2002 pays special attention to active, offensive defense. It is stated in part V that the US would use all the elements of national power available to resist the threat even if it is not fully materialized.

The same accent on active defense was made in P. Zelikow work: "the authors recommend to use preventive strategy in order to build more stable security system (Zelikow, Carter, & Deutch, 1998).

This idea was also promoted by P. Zelikow within the of Brookings forum on homeland security: "Our strategies for combating those enemies must be initially offensive and international in shape" (2002).

Thus, the idea about offensive defense has something in common with P. Zelikow thesis about preemptive

strategy.

Part IX of the 2002 Strategy stipulates that the borderline between domestic and foreign affairs is disappearing.

The same statements are outlined in P. Zelikow's speech on the Brookings institution forum on homeland security: "I do think that ultimately homeland security and national security will be treated as indistinguishable...Don't reproduce the foreign/domestic divisions that others have criticized so long and so well" (2002).

The very idea of cohesion of domestic and foreign security is also typical for American political science; however it is remarkable that the 2002 Strategy comprises this idea as an imperative element as well as its detailed can be found in the works of P. Zelikow.

One more idea that is common for the Strategy of 2002 and Zelikow's works is thesis about responsibility of states. The Strategy says that "all nations have important responsibilities Nations that enjoy freedom must actively fight terror. Nations that depend on international stability must help prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction" (2002). Then it was stated in the text that the US would observe other states's compliance with their responsibilities.

This intention was explicitly mentioned in the Part III of the Strategy 2002 where it is stated that states that do not comply with their responsibilities would be convinced or compelled to "accept their sovereign responsibilities" (2002).

Thoughts of P. Zelikow are in tune with the paragraphs in the Strategy: the author considers that states should prove their compliance with international (the author names them so) norms such as commitment to nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), fight gains terror, etc. In case when states cannot prove their compliance with these norms, all worried nations can use all necessary action in order to protect themselves (2002).

It is seen that in both quotes interventionists' (in accordance with the classification presented in our previous article, Sukhovey & Gaivoronskaya, 2014) principle of limited sovereignty was used. This principle implies that a state may be treated by military measures if it is suspected of irresponsible behavior. The criteria of responsibility are rather vague, even though; it is understood by American authors in terms of the fight against terrorists, nonproliferation of WMD or duty to respect the human rights.

As long as the concept of limited sovereignty goes beyond norms of international law, the 2002 Strategy proposes to support like-minded states in order to avoid international institution's veto or disagreement.

This idea was fixed in the 9/11 Commission report, which was headed by P. Zelikow: the most important policies should be discussed and coordinated in flexible groups of leading coalition governments" (The 9/11 commission report, 2004).

Iraq war has shown that coalition practice opens a wide opportunities for the US to use force even in the case when the UN does not give its permission.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned comparisons we can say that the 2002 Strategy absorbs the main ideas written the works of P. Zelikow about:

- 1) Transformation of the security notion;
- 2) Active offensive defense and preventive use of force;
- 3) Domestic and foreign policy union;
- 4) Responsibility concept;
- 5) Coalition of like-minded states approach to use of force

This review has shown that the Strategy of the year 2002 is predominantly influenced by the Interventionalist's position and its radical deviation. Thus, this Strategy does not state that use of force is the last resort and says nothing about the legitimacy.

3. National Security Strategy in 2006

The 2006 Strategy was to update the main directives after Bush second-term election. The 2010 Strategy has the same radical interventionists' ideology with the previous Strategy, adopted in 2006. Likewise, the 2010 Strategy does not contain any provision about legitimacy and premise that the use of force should be the ultimate measure.

What is more important is that interventionist's ideology required support from the US society whose

representatives would be dispatched to real battlefields. The political technology that would provide such kind of support was elaborated by Peter Feaver and was successfully incorporated into the 2006 Strategy.

The evidence that P. Feaver was working on the 2006 Strategy can be found from the note to D. Ramsfeld about the ideas that can shape out a new National Security Strategy (Note to Secretary of defense, 2005) and P. Feaver's blog (2010).

In his academic works P. Feaver was investigating the question what steps the Government should make in order to convince the US society to tolerate the US army casualties and support current and new military campaigns.

The author came up with the conclusion that the US society is ready to support military operations and tolerate "relatively high the human costs of war" in the case of "right conditions" (Gelpi, Feaver, & Reifler, 2005). The first condition is that the US society should believe that military operation is started for right and just reasons. The second one is that the US society should be convinced that the US would win started war. These two "right" conditions we would call Feaver's rules.

If we look more precisely on the 2006 Strategy, we can see that this document is written in accordance with the logic of Feaver's rules.

The Strategy directly states that "America is at war" (2006) and this war takes and will take human lives: "We have always known that the war on terror would require great sacrifice - and in this war, we have said farewell to some very good men and women...And our work is far from over" (2006).

American society wants protection from repeating 9/11; therefore, the 2010 Strategy stated that during the war on terror all the casualties are justified: "We fight our enemies abroad instead of waiting for them to arrive in our country (2006)". Thus, there is an attempt to convince the society about the rightness of wars that Bush Administration would conduct under aegis of war on terror.

The future success in this war is a read line in the 2006 Strategy.

The text of Strategy 2006 contains unconscious markers that prove that success is most likely to achieve. Thus, the word "war" or "fight" does not stay alone without word "success" or "victory". Then we cannot find the term "problem" because it was changed for positive "challenge". Undoubtedly, it was made deliberately in order to convince the readers in success.

The structure of the 2006 Strategy contains in part informative paragraphs as "Success and Challenges" and "The way ahead" element.

The sub-element "Success" is aimed at the approval of previous Administration's actions (including military), which were regarded as positive and resultative.

For example, the Part III describes G. Bush first term achievements: the defeat of Al-Qaida in Afghanistan; the multilateral response to terrorists in Iraq and t.e. (2006).

The aim of the sub-element "Challenges" is to point that despite numerous positive results there were several directions that required active work in order to achieve full prosperity. And then all the challenges are clearly stated.

In the part "The way ahead" details that describe how to solve the challenge via stating clear objectives are mentioned also so that to prove: the success can be reached granted that a clear plan it is elaborated. This part also includes positive success dynamics.

Basing on arguments mentioned above we can say that the 2006 Strategy deliberately contains, at first, the notion of a just war and necessity to protect the American society and, secondly, the idea about success that can be achieved. Thus, it can be clear that this Strategy is constructed in accordance with P. Feaver rules.

4. National Security Strategy in 2010

For the 2010 Strategy analysis it is worth paying attention to James Steinberg point of view as he was the head of working group on document creation. We assume that the ideas of this expert had influenced greatly on the final edition of the National Security Strategy.

We outline several propositions in the 2010 Strategy that are common also for J. Steinberg's approach to the issue. Coincidence of J. Steinberg's point of view with the Strategy statements will be the evidence of J. Steinberg influence on the national security concept.

It was stipulated in the Overview of the National Security Strategy in 2010 that the US would be further committed to the system when all the states have responsibilities. And it was pointed out that there would be

consequences for those states that do not follow the responsibility concept.

This particular idea is also reflected in J. Steinberg and I. Daalder article on preventive use of force issue: the authors suggest to adopt international rules that would fix conditional (or limited) sovereignty. According to this system states would lose their sovereignty if they do not act responsibly. The responsibility is understood broadly as obligations to protect citizens' right, commitment to nonproliferation of WMD and prosecution of terrorists. (Steinberg & Daalder, 2005).

Thus, we can say that the Strategy 2010 contains Interventionalist's concept of limited sovereignty which was admittedly affected by Steinberg's influence. Inevitably, the 2010 Strategy has the same ideological component as Bush Strategies of the years 2002 and 2006.

However the 2010 Strategy does have the same Interventionalist's ideological roots, it is turning to another Radical ideological sub-division of the Interventionalist's group.

The Strategy reflects the idea that when there is a need to use the force the United States would seek a wide international support and legitimacy for military actions.

The same thought can be found in J. Steinberg article: the author considers it is better to the US to find a broad international support and cooperation. Otherwise the US would undermine its soft power and other countries' willingness to cooperate (Steinberg, 2003).

Rational background of the 2010 Strategy is seen also in the paragraphs about the military involvement as a last resort which occurs only as long as all measures turned out to be ineffective: the Strategy says that military actions should be taken when all other measures do not work (2010).

This proposition comes across with J. Steinberg's position: the author insists that military engagement should be made only in the case of grave risk when all other tools are proved to be ineffective (Steinberg, 2006).

There is no direct mention about preventive use of force in the 2010 Strategy; however there is a reason to consider that Obama Administration does not refuse from using preventive force concept. The evidence can be found in the works of J. Steinberg.

The author insists that the US should continue to apply preventive use of force strategy but rarely, only when other measures have already been implemented. The author also stands on the position that preventive use of force should be used without formal officially adopted doctrine.

In accordance with the author's point of view the formal approach to preemptive use of force:

- 1) Would force other states to consider that the US is ignoring international support and legitimacy. This tendency would be a real handicap for gaining international support for a long term.
- 2) Increases the intentions to use military engagement more often; although other nonmilitary tools can work effectively.
- 3) May cause a wave of attacks in the world that would be justified by preventive doctrine. Thus, the US example can have negative impact on global security.(O'Hanlon, Rice, & Steinberg, 2002).

Taking into consideration that the main constructor of the 2010 National Security Strategy is speaking in favor of preventive use of force, insisting that preemptive attack should not be formed as a doctrine, Obama's strategy does not exclude preemptive use of force.

Overall, we can see the influence of the rational interventionist's ideology in J. Steinberg's position on the 2010 Strategy.

5. Conclusion

The ideas of P. Zelikow, P. Feaver and J. Steinberg have a great impact on the Strategies of National Security Strategies issued in 2002, 2006 and 2010 respectfully.

All these official documents are written within the frames of Interventionalist's ideology; though they still have different nuances. Thus, the Strategies of the years 2002 and 2006 can refer to a radical approach: it does not stress the point that the use of force should be the last measure that is resorted to when all other measures are exhausted.

Through the analysis of J. Steinberg's works we can say that 2010 Strategy is written under the influence of rationalist's ideas. This document contains the propositions that the use of force legitimacy is important and the premise that military engagement should be concerned as a last option.

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