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## **SUMMARY**

### ***UNDERSTANDING US HEGEMONY/EMPIRE AND ITS REGIONAL DIMENSIONS THE REDEFINITION OF AMERICAN POWER UNDER GEORGE W. BUSH***

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Summary  
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## Opening Remarks

*Charles-Philippe David, Raoul-Dandurand Chair and Director of the Center for United States Studies, UQAM*

In the last four years, there has been a significant increase in the literature on American hegemony and empire. We must go back forty years to register a similar proliferation. It is interesting to note, with Michael Cox, that in the course of the last four decades the United States appears to have gone from hegemon to declining power and back to hegemon again. It is no longer current to regard the US as a declining power. However, we cannot yet fully comprehend how American hegemony translates into a coherent overarching strategy.

In a recent study, Stein Tønnesson of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo asks two basic questions that should frame our analyses of American power. First, *what is* the United States: an empire, a certain type of empire, an empire in decline, or not an empire at all? Second, what do Americans and others think the US *should* be? There are as many answers to these questions as there are assumptions and normative interpretations... And the academic community has not yet adequately responded to prior questions, such as:

- What are the precise meanings of both "empire" and "hegemon"? How do we distinguish one from the other? Is George W. Bush's America an imperial power or a hegemonic power?
- Assuming the United States is a preponderant power, can this position be sustained indefinitely? Is American power growing or declining? What are the implications of the many and varied possible developments?
- Must American preponderance inevitably lead to an arrogant foreign policy and to a US presence everywhere on the globe?
- What are the respective roles of American culture and identity in the formulation of an imperialist, or hegemonic, foreign policy? What does History teach us on this score?

Finally, we should consider two crucial aspects of the decision-making process in relation to American foreign policy. First, it is simply impossible to predict the outcome of policy decisions. This should always be taken into account by those who would try to arrive at some "objective" definition of American power. Second, careful study of the American foreign policy decision-making process should be considered indispensable to any evaluation of American power and its consequences on the world order.

## From Hegemony to Empire: Understanding the New American Imperialism

*David Grondin, Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science, UQAM*

We should have no qualms about drawing a parallel between American power and empire. Our current understanding of the history of American power is based upon a conceptual definition that excludes the notion of empire. The dominant view in the field of historical sociology rejects the proposition that the US is an exceptional case that defies comparison with anything else. The post-colonialist approach to International Relations is also interested in American imperialism. It emphasizes the preponderance of the United States as an object of inquiry in the fields of IR and global politics.

With all due respect to these two approaches, American imperialism should be defined somewhat differently. We should not simply attempt to decide whether the US is truly an empire, in ways reminiscent of the Roman or British historical experiences. We should instead discuss American power *as if* it were imperial. This would help us understand the effects that the Bush doctrine and the rise of neo-conservatism have had on the transformation of American foreign policy. More specifically, we need to examine the discourse on empire espoused by the neo-cons.



This “New American Imperialism” should be viewed as a “Neo-Conservative Empire”. This novel imperialism is intricately linked to a cultural and ideological war between neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism: between the hegemonic global free market as envisioned by Clinton and the military empire preferred by George W. Bush. For the neo-liberals, the defeat of communism and the globalization of the world economy have been the organizing principles of both the domestic and global order. Opposing this materialistic, neo-liberal version of imperialism, the Bush administration has used the 9/11 events as an opportunity to steer American foreign policy away from its liberal principles. The “historic moment” of 9/11 has been used as a pretext for an aggressive expansion of US global hegemony, which in turn has triggered an anti-American backlash around the world.

Identifying the United States as an empire gives rise to an *historicized* account of globalization, one that problematizes the notion of power rather than regarding it as a neutral and natural phenomenon. This ultimately leads us to a better understanding of the United States’ place in the contemporary international system, while also helping to lay the groundwork for a fruitful comparison with the past.

## **AMERICAN HEGEMONY AND THE WORLD ORDER (PART I)**

### **Chair**

*Greg Robinson, Professor of American Studies and History at the Department of History, UQAM*

### **The Geopolitical and Strategic Dimensions of US Hegemony under George W. Bush**

*Simon Dalby, Professor and Chair of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University*

In an era marked by what is commonly characterized as a war against terror, it is quite instructive to reflect upon American hegemony in geopolitical and strategic terms. How should we interpret those dimensions of American power? Analyzing the logic underpinning the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, it becomes apparent that the Bush Doctrine is indispensable to a better understanding of the geopolitical and strategic aspects of American power. We should not consider George W. Bush’s speeches as either naive or ideologically hollow. While it may be tempting at times to resort to conspiracy theories, these should not influence our view of the present situation, because they rest on the false premise that what is stated publicly is nothing but deliberate lies.

The emergence of the Bush Doctrine as the dominant foreign policy formula of the current American administration can be considered the result of a long historical development originating in the dissolution of the Cold War geopolitical order, as well as in a radical change in American political culture. In addition, we have to consider the role of religion and the manifestation of American nationalism. It is quite telling to hear the President proclaiming himself both a devout Christian and a “war president”. The aspiration to preeminence is thus understood as consistent with a divine calling, wherein power is merely a tool wielded to fulfill the quasi-religious duty of saving humanity from itself.

It is incorrect to view the US as a secular society. The President could not have been clearer: God is on his side. This implies that America is blessed and endowed with a divine mission. This aspect of the Bush Doctrine, resonating with many dimensions of American nationalism, is a powerful cultural force that goes beyond mere electoral considerations.

If we grant that Americans are operating in an imperial mode —something that is clearly suggested by the troop deployment and patterns of foreign intervention—then much immediately becomes clearer. This hypothesis brings into question many postulates of the International Relations literature, as well as challenging the premises on which the political practices of the past century have been based. For if the US is indeed an imperial power, then the United Nations Organization is stripped of all significance. This institution was established on the basis of a global contract, which was premised on a standard of non-intervention and a belief in collective responsibility to guarantee security for all. These principles contravene the current American doctrine of preemptive war. Yet, the UN has been used to grant some form of legitimacy to American actions.



The language used by the Bush administration when it characterizes Iraqi civilization as savage and barbaric is exactly the same as the language used by the European empires in their erstwhile attempts to legitimate the violent means by which they sought to conquer the world. To understand the world through the prism of the Bush Doctrine's "with us or against us" requirements perpetuates the injustice and violence generated by this type of imperial administration. It leads to the absurd idea that conquest is a form of liberation. The Bush Doctrine is not global in scope: it specifically targets the Middle East. This geographical dimension of American strategy is intimately linked to the fact that the *Texas Oil Boys* presently holding power in Washington are trying to bolster a petroleum-dependent capitalist order.

### **The Emperor's Worn-Out Clothes: The Future of America's Global Economic Hegemony in Historical Perspective**

*Étienne Cantin, Professor of Industrial Relations, Laval University*

History does not consist of cycles of hegemony, and we cannot predict the future. This does not mean, however, that historians cannot teach us anything. Although it is commonly maintained that the Bush Doctrine represents a negation of the broad lines that have defined the country's foreign policy since the end of the Second World War, there is much that links the past and present of American foreign policy.

The period immediately following World War II was characterized by industrialization, globalization and reconstruction. An international liberal order was put in place under the supposedly benevolent power of the United States of America, leading many to hail the advent of a *Pax Americana*. Many states then came into being south of the Equator, states which have locally reproduced American models of governance. American leadership has been fundamental to the processes of democratization and the establishment of international institutions. The development of commerce through free trade has also been an important aspect of this leadership.

With the Bush Doctrine, the projection of American power around the globe looks quite different. The notions of preemptive attack (anywhere, anytime) and unilateralism are at the core of this doctrine. The irrationality and idiosyncrasy of the neo-conservatives have led to the rise of a belligerent foreign policy. Nonetheless, American military might is linked to energy security, and all of this is taking place in a context where Asia is aspiring to a global role. The tragic events of 9/11 have been used to push an agenda that has its roots in the period following the end of the Second World War.

Military intervention in the rogue states is tailored to bring these states back into the orbit of globalization. The problem with the neo-cons' version of imperialism is that the constellation of social forces within those states risks rendering their reconstruction impossible, even with the "help" of American military occupation.

### **AMERICAN HEGEMONY AND THE WORLD ORDER (PART II)**

**Chair** *David Grondin, Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science, UQAM*

### **Propaganda and Empire: American Cultural Hegemony and the Bush Administration**

*Aida A. Hozic, Assistant Professor of International Relations, University of Florida*

Professor Hozic's presentation advances the idea that there is both continuity and change in the way the United States acts on the world stage—as President Bush himself says, there is something new about the way America is exercising its power in the world. She brings into relief the Bush administration's narcissistic vision of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Professor Hozic draws three connections to support her argument: (1) a nexus between security, technology and economy; (2) a nexus between the Bush administration and the media; (3) a nexus between Power and the representation of power (hegemony).

The nexus between security, technology and economy: she explains the nature of this nexus first by briefly describing security, technology and the economy under Clinton's presidency.

- 1) The commercialization of security: under Clinton, the defense budget did not decrease as much as is believed. Rather, there was a strict emphasis on not funding R & D projects that had no practical application in the civil sphere.
- 2) R & D exports were focused on the sale of aircraft and the privatization of satellites.
- 3) Clinton emasculated the Army. For many Americans, it is inappropriate to assign the US armed forces to peacekeeping operations. That is why Professor Hozic maintains that for the Republicans and the American conservatives things returned to normal once Bush took office.

What a return to normal means is that the State is once again playing an aggressive role in international affairs. Professor Hozic then turns to the question of imperialism, arguing that, Bush's claims notwithstanding, the United States is indeed engaging in territorial conquest. She notes that during Bush's administration, the R & D component of the Defense budget has continued to grow and is being ploughed back into the military industrial complex Professor Hozic concludes her discussion of this idea by observing that, when it comes to military R & D, the state has once again assumed a developmentalist role as conceived by Chalmers Johnson.

The nexus between the Bush administration and the media: while the entertainment industry was strategic for Clinton and served as a pillar of his presidency, Bush has dealt with the media by means of further regulation. When President Bush named him Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Michael Powell, Colin Powell's son, made a promise not to interfere with the press. Professor Hozic notes that this promise has not entirely been kept. There was a ban, for instance, on airing Bin Laden's tapes without prior approval; other examples include the deprivatization of satellites during the war in Afghanistan; Disney's refusal to distribute the film *Fahrenheit 9/11*; and the fact that some reporters have been paid to write articles on the importance of the institution of the family.

Finally, Professor Hozic talks about the nexus between power and the representation of power, also understood as the relation between power and its representation of reality. Professor Hozic regards as paramount the United States' view of itself as an empire which is able to create its own reality. This was clearly evidenced by an article written by journalist Ron Suskind for the *New York Times*. In this piece, Suskind remembered a conversation he had with a senior official from the Bush administration in which the latter said: "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do." However, Professor Hozic worries about the simplistic portrayal of reality by the media at the present time, emanating from rightist broadcasting networks and programs aimed at American teenagers.

Professor Hozic points out that the idea of the United States as an empire isn't new. In fact, she argues that an informal empire has existed since 1945. The difference between then and now is that Americans have come to believe in the naked rule of power, so there is no longer any attempt to conceal it from the world. The result of this is an empire that resembles the 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial empires.

Professor Hozic concludes by stressing the ambiguity of the United States' hegemonic position. It is not easy to pin down due to the differing interpretations of hegemony, and the fact that territorial conquest tends to go largely unopposed.



## What Remains Hidden in the "Debate" Between Empire and Hegemony

Robert Vitalis, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania

Professor Vitalis opened his remarks by noting that one of the hypotheses associated with his work is that a new world order is coming into being. According to him, however, this is not the case. What we are witnessing now is a "critical realignment", a radical transformation of the American political economy. In addition, he maintains that this world order can easily be misunderstood by analysts since there is growing confusion surrounding the concepts of empire and hegemony. The two words are often taken as synonymous— which is an analytical error according to Professor Vitalis. A second analytical error is the belief that they cannot coexist. For Professor Vitalis, they are, in fact, co-existing tendencies.

He maintains that two concepts, or discursive practices, could shed light on the imperial practices of the United States. The first is American exceptionalism: the idea that the course of American history has been markedly different from that of any other state. This belief influenced the social sciences from the 1940s to the 1970s, and during that period the United States was widely seen as the antithesis of an empire. The second key is the concept of race, which was fundamental for the scholars who founded the discipline of international relations in the United States. For quite a long time, these intellectuals even used the terms "international relations" and "interracial relations" interchangeably. Professor Vitalis notes that, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the work of American scholars concentrated on problems related to empire and race (finding practical strategies for better ways of administering territories and civilizing backward races), using race science as a tool.

Professor Vitalis observes that hegemony is not a new concept in the study of world politics. It often refers to *the hierarchical order among rival great powers*, so it is neither a form of empire nor a form of domination. An empire is another form of hierarchical international order, in which one state seizes power and rules subordinate societies. However, the concept of hegemony is typically used to characterize the two major periods of liberal market expansion in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which individual powers built and sustained free trade regimes: the Pax Britannica and the Pax Americana. From the 20<sup>th</sup> century on, the rules of liberal hegemony applied only to industrialized states, to advanced democracies that operate within a "security community" in which the use of force is unthinkable. And, paradoxically, what we are witnessing now, under the Bush administration, is a unilateralist turn that is liable to destroy the relationship among "the advanced democracies" (what was once called the Anglo-Saxon race).

## US Foreign Policy and International Law

Shirley V. Scott, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of New South Wales

In this paper, Professor Scott hypothesizes that what is new about Bush's approach to international law is that his administration is much more ready to undermine the idea of international law as a politically neutral set of standards and rules. According to Professor Scott, to assert that the Bush administration, unlike its predecessors, cares little about international law is too simplistic. Rather, she sees the various kinds of action and inaction in relation to international law for which the Bush administration has been criticized as falling into a pattern that could be deemed realist: that is, using international law as a mechanism by which to maximize American security and increase American influence over the policies of other states, while seeking to minimize any external influences on US policies.

But, in Professor Scott's view, this is not new behavior. The political use of international law is not a new American trend, at least not since World War II. Since that time, although the Bush administration is held to be different from the Clinton administration, there has been substantive continuity. Professor Scott also observes that power has been wielded more forcefully in an attempt to influence the policies of other states.



In conclusion, Professor Scott suggests that asking the United States to espouse the idea of international law does not constitute a request for altruism; on the contrary, investing in the legitimacy afforded by International Law must be seen as being in the national interest of the United States.

## **STUDENT PANEL (PART I)**

### **Chair**

*Élisabeth Vallet, Research Fellow at the Raoul Dandurand Chair of Strategic and Diplomatic Studies, UQAM*

### **"We Stand Passively Mute". US Congress and National Security Policy during the First Bush Administration**

*Frédéric Gagnon, Research Fellow at the Center for United States Studies, UQAM*

In his presentation, Frédéric Gagnon showed that the US Congress took a passive stance on national security issues during George W. Bush's first administration. He identified three key factors that reveal how and why Congress rallied around the President's proposals without seriously questioning, debating or modifying them. These three factors of congressional passivity are: terrorism, Bush's popularity during his first mandate, and the convergence between the values held by leaders in Congress and those of the Bush cabinet.

Gagnon began by explaining how terrorism was linked to congressional passivity. He argues that Congress tends to unite when there is a global threat to the United States and fears about national security. This congressional unity around presidential proposals can be seen as an "organizational norm" that has guided the behavior of Congress since the Cold War era. US reaction to the Soviet nuclear threat during the 1950's and 1960's demonstrates that Congress truly believes that the executive branch is the sole authority capable of effectively protecting the United States from any type of danger. Gagnon observed that even recently, after the 9/11 attacks, Congress massively supported President Bush's demand for increased resources to combat global terrorism. No questions were raised, no opposition was heard.

Following his discussion of the terrorist factor, Gagnon went on to explain how George W. Bush's popularity during his first presidential mandate also contributed to congressional passivity on national security questions. After the 9/11 attacks, Bush's popularity jumped surprisingly from a mediocre 53-54% on September 11, 2001, to an impressive 90% approval rating at the beginning of the American military operation in Afghanistan. Gagnon links President Bush's high approval rating with an explosion of American patriotism after 9/11. This key popularity factor reveals that when a President obtains high approval ratings, US congressmen are inclined not to criticize the executive power for fear of losing electoral support. Gagnon argues that in 2004, Congressman Tom Daschle lost his seat after being portrayed as an "obstructionist" by the Bush cabinet. In sum, Gagnon argues that congressmen avoided national security issues (such as criticizing military budget increases, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) during the first Bush administration, choosing to focus on domestic matters.

The third and final factor Gagnon identifies is the convergence between the values subscribed to by the Congressional leaders and those held by the members of Bush's cabinet. First, Republicans controlled the House of Representatives and the Senate in 2001 and 2005. In Gagnon's reading, this meant that President Bush could count on important and influential allies who would adopt executive decisions without opposition. In addition, Gagnon observes that the leaders' values in matters of national security clearly corresponded to those of President Bush: they favored an increase in military spending and overthrowing Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. The convergence of values between the executive branch and Congress marginalized any opposition or criticism from the Democratic Party.

In concluding his presentation, Frédéric Gagnon affirmed that the combination of these three factors—terrorism (systemic), presidential popularity (national) and the convergence of values (individual)—helps to explain congressional passivity during the first Bush administration from 2001 to 2005.



## **The Ideological Forces Behind Bush's Foreign Policy: The Collusion between Neoconservatism and Assertive Nationalism**

*Jean-Frédéric Légaré-Tremblay, Research Fellow at the Center for United States Studies, UQAM*

In his presentation, Jean-Frédéric Légaré-Tremblay's set out to compare two driving ideological forces within the Bush administration: neo-conservatism and assertive nationalism. He endeavored to show that neo-conservatism and assertive nationalism colluded in shaping US foreign policy from the time of the 9/11 attacks in 2001 until the war in Iraq in March 2003. By describing and comparing these two ideological forces, Légaré-Tremblay attempted to shed light on the influence of these two forces on President Bush's foreign policy since 2001, while clarifying some of the differences between neocons and assertive nationalists.

To begin, Légaré-Tremblay noted, first, that, despite their differences, neoconservatives and assertive nationalists share a realist view of the world. He showed that neither neoconservatives nor assertive nationalists had anticipated the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001. Rather, both were focused on traditional military issues such as the threats posed by states such as Iran, North Korea and China.

Second, Légaré-Tremblay showed that, in spite of their shared realist views, neoconservatives and assertive nationalists had differing visions of the United States' role in the World. He argued that neoconservatives are optimistic: they believe that the US should maintain an offensive strategy in its effort to spread democracy to every corner of the world. Assertive nationalists, on the other hand, are deeply concerned with external threats to the US and, in contrast with the neocons, favor unilateral military intervention to protect American interests. Preoccupied with defending the American nation, they have a more pessimistic vision of international relations. According to this view, it is essential for the United States to maintain a strong defense in the interest of homeland security. Légaré-Tremblay pointed to the example of the National Missile Defense Plan, which was developed and promoted by Donald Rumsfeld, an assertive nationalist.

Third, Légaré-Tremblay presented a strategy/policy argument demonstrating that, despite some divergences, both ideological forces have in common certain conceptions of the US approach to international events. He maintains that both ideologies share a belief in muscular interventionism: both strongly believe that the US military must be deployed to defend American interests. They differ, however, with respect to how the US military should be used. Assertive nationalists firmly believe that the US military must be used for defensive purposes; neocons, on the other hand, urge that the US engage in offensive intervention to "export America" to the world. In addition, Légaré-Tremblay noted, neocons and assertive nationalists are both unilateralists. He pointed out a distinction, however, in the ways the two ideologies understand unilateralism. Assertive nationalists are determined unilateralists who act defensively to protect American interests. By contrast, neocons believe that an "instrumental multilateralism" is possible with respect to American intervention and foreign policy. Légaré-Tremblay concluded by discussing the main difference between the two ideological forces on the question of nation building and foreign aid: the pessimistic assertive nationalists firmly believe that nation building and foreign aid are futile.

In his final remarks, Légaré-Tremblay talked about the practical influence of the two ideological forces during George W. Bush's first term. He explained that, while it is difficult to determine which of the two ideologies held sway in the Bush administration, it is clear that after the 9/11 attacks the two ideologies colluded. This is apparent in the muscular and unilateral approach to military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. In spite of the complicity of the two ideologies in these two key events, Légaré-Tremblay argued, the removal of Saddam Hussein precipitated a clear division between neocons and assertive nationalists. While neocons believe that exporting American values should be a goal of US foreign policy, assertive nationalists believe that these values are proper to the United States and should be protected from external threats.



In conclusion, Légaré-Tremblay suggested that the neoconservative commitment to unilateral intervention might have begun to wane since the beginning of the 'post-war' in Iraq. Many neocons have been critical of Bush's operations in Iraq; they are urging the President to reach out to traditional allies and they even support a United Nations' led multilateral engagement in Iraq.

## **THE SUB-REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF US HEGEMONY**

### **Chair**

*Charles-Philippe David, Raoul-Dandurand Chair and Director of the Center for United States Studies, UQAM*

### **The Power That (Wants to) Be: The Perception and Contestation of American Power in the Greater Middle East**

*Onnig Beylerian, Immigration Refugee Board, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada and Lecturer at UQAM*

Professor Beylerian's paper focuses on the difficulties inherent in the rise of the Islamic or Arab states—although, today, it may be hard to qualify these states as emerging powers (*puissance en devenir*), since many are politically backward and in complete disarray. The United States should come to grips with the fact that Islam is spreading rapidly throughout the region as a unified ideology. This could eventually lead these countries to organize themselves as a body similar to the European Union, and to speak in a single voice. The main question that the United States should be asking itself is how to respond to Islamism. Professor Beylerian identifies four problems that the Bush administration's policies pose for the Middle East.

1. Difficulty in identifying and articulating the nature of the main threat and the adversary from which it emanates, including its strategic goals. Apparently, it is not clear who the enemy is, because terrorism is not impersonal: it is, rather, a method of combat resorted to by a specific actor. In this particular case, the actors are Jihadists led by Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri who want to convert the principal powers to Islam.
2. The Bush administration has not properly analyzed the power sources of the Jihadist movement which are, in fact, situated in the Arab-Islamic public space dominated largely by Islamist movements. The Jihadist and the international Islamist movements should not be confused. But the fact that the influence of the former in the Middle East is now considerable should not be neglected.
3. The Administration has not really grasped the strategic goals of the Jihadists. These movements have understood that they do not have to win the war; rather, they have to show that they can survive for some time, and this can be achieved through the decentralization of Islamist movements.

By seeing Iraq as a threat and invading it, the Bush administration widened the war by opening another front in Iraq. The underpinning motive was that many saw Iraq as an easy target for a quick attack.

Professor Beylerian identifies three sources of Bush's ambivalence. First, the Bush Administration does not have a policy on Islamism. Second, if the Bush administration wants to be coherent, it should begin making demands on Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Third, the Bush administration, or perhaps the neo-cons, does not know how to combat Islamist ideology without attacking Islam itself and without viewing the entire religion as a political doctrine.

According to Professor Beylerian, Bush faces a genuine difficulty, but he has turned it to political advantage: that is, instead of revealing the true motives behind the American invasion of Iraq, namely, giving Islamic countries a taste of American power, he chose to play the weapons-of-mass-destruction card, opening a new front in addition to the one opened during the search for Bin Laden. What is clear for Professor Beylerian is that neither the United States nor President Bush had an exit strategy from Iraq, since they overestimated Iraqi civil society, expecting it to take control of the country once it was liberated from Hussein. Professor Beylerian believes that this is part of



the reason that the United States planned to leave the country after securing it. But that retreat is unlikely to happen any time soon, especially given the administration's plans to democratize the Greater Middle East. For George W. Bush, it appears that America's commitment in Iraq is a trans-generational venture that requires a bipartisan consensus, just as the Cold War did. This Greater Middle East initiative, which Professor Beylerian considers not to be so original after all, is intended to spread freedom in the Middle East, so that, in future, the United States will not have to worry about new enemies arising in the region. In fact, the United States reproaches itself for not having paid greater attention to the political and economical backwardness that ultimately spawned these threats. However, the initiative is deficient on two counts: security and the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Professor Beylerian underscores the differences between the American and European approaches to the Middle East. While, for the Europeans, peace is the primary goal and democracy a long-term objective, for the Americans, democracy comes first, followed by peace. They also differ on how to bring about democracy. For the Americans, it is achieved above all through the elites—regime change is the preferred approach; for the Europeans, several partners need to be found within civil society.

It is the American approach that prevails in the region, and here Professor Beylerian sees a series of problems. First, there is a credibility gap because few in the Middle East believe the US can succeed. Second, Washington has overly broad plans for Middle East reform, and this is because it does not grasp the reason for the inadequacy of social and political institutions in Arab and Islamic countries. Third, while Iraq's rehabilitation is vital to the ultimate success of the United States in the region, this may take a long time to achieve. Fourth, since Washington's contacts in the Middle East are not with Arab and Islamic civil society but, rather, with rulers and influential elites, its strategy is flawed by ignorance of the particularities of the individual Arab and Islamic countries. Fifth and last, the Americans do not know how to build institutions in the Middle East. Professor Beylerian believes that the forthcoming G8-Arab League meeting might begin to remedy this problem.

### **The Skirts of the Hegemon Revisited: Australia and the Rise of American Hyper-power**

*Kim Richard Nossal, Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Queen's University*

Professor Nossal's discussion deals with the case of Australia and how its government has responded to American power in Asia-Pacific. Specifically, he concentrates on the fact that the Australian relationship with the United States marks the end of a century long Australian effort to get out from under the skirts of one hegemon (Great Britain) only to enter the folds of a new one.

During the 1940s, Japanese invasions made Australians realize that Britain was actually incapable and unwilling to protect them, so they embraced the new hegemon of the late 1940s: the United States of America. The new thinking was summed up in Harold Holt's catch phrase: "Our government will go all the way with LBJ."

Between 1972 and 1983 Australia did not abandon the US, but moved closer to Asia in order to become more deeply involved in the Asia-Pacific economy. In 1996, John Howard and the Liberals took office and transformed Australia's relationship with the US, seeking to turn it more to Australia's advantage. A clear example of this was the signature of a free trade agreement with the United States late in 2000, against the recommendations of local negotiators who saw few advantages for Australia in the agreement.

Professor Nossal concluded his remarks with the observation that Howard's Administration has shown remarkable political skills with respect to the military and the question of security. It put these skills into action following the attacks of September 11, 2001, which persuaded the administration that Australia was a potential terrorist target and thus changed the government's attitude. During the Iraq invasion, Australia continued to deploy troops until Hussein was deposed, which guaranteed the preservation of their special relationship with the US, as well as with countries critical of the invasion.



## **Contribution or Constraint? Canada's Role in Bolstering and Containing US Power**

*Stephen Clarkson, Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Toronto*

According to Professor Clarkson, the North American periphery can play a significant role either in boosting or in circumscribing US power. Observing the American continent, he concludes that, notwithstanding the current degree of continental integration in the economic, cultural, and demographic spheres, the United States does not appear capable of fulfilling its Manifest Destiny—that is, imperial control of its own continent. Setting aside the conceptual distinction between its hegemonic and imperial nature, Washington does not seem to be able to exercise coercive power over Mexico or Canada in order to bend them to its will. Thus, Professor Clarkson sees the United States' potential for empire (political control and economic exploitation exercised through coercion) as extremely limited with respect to its peripheral relationships.

For Professor Clarkson, the concept of hegemony (dominance achieved through consensual acceptance of the system-leader's authority) can generally be applied to the US in the post-World War II era. However, he maintains that American power cannot accurately be assessed without considering how it is affected by its relationships with its international interlocutors.

Professor Clarkson's paper is divided into three sections. The first deals with the nature of power and explains to what extent it makes sense to consider the United States' periphery as a component of its own strength. The next section looks at the evolution of the power relationship between the United States and its neighbors during the two centuries leading up to the attacks on New York and Washington by Al Qaeda. In the last section, Professor Clarkson attempts to clarify the periphery's role since September 11, 2001 in redefining US power.

American power may be defined as a measure of its gross domestic product, military power, and natural resources. American power can also be "redefined" if it gains or loses access to one or another of its neighbors' markets, armed forces, or raw materials. According to Professor Clarkson, September 11, 2001 allowed the United States to declare an open war on terrorism that proved, to the Bush administration's surprise, that its periphery had motives and consciences of its own. This was evident when Canada supported the mission to Afghanistan and refused to take part in the one to Iraq. Mexico, on the other hand, withheld its support for both military interventions.

American expansionism began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, first, in an ideological-military capacity, when the US tried to conquer the continent by force, and subsequently by economic and cultural means: through an export-driven economic development plan powered by US capital in Mexico, and during the inter-war period, when US investment and trade started to exceed British investment and trade in Canada. From the Canadian perspective, the peak of this influence was the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (1989), extended to include Mexico in 1994. The implementation of NAFTA in 1994 was quickly followed by the inauguration of the World Trade Organization in the next year. Taken together, these new continental and global arrangements represented the post-Cold War triumph of US hegemony.

Professor Clarkson underscores the major changes that US power has undergone. It no longer partakes of the logic of consensual hegemony but has adopted the stance of a coercive empire towards other states—which are easily labeled enemies if they fail to lend support. But the same logic does not apply to the US' relationship with its two neighbors, since total security for the United States would mean economic autarchy, with neither goods nor people crossing its borders. Nevertheless, Washington used access to its market to extract security-policy concessions from both Canada and Mexico.

Third, Professor Clarkson examines the behavior which qualifies US power as hegemonic or imperial, especially after September 11, 2001. He sees a tendency toward hegemonic power in the fact that when President Bush



announced his decision to invade Afghanistan, Secretary of State Colin Powell had almost no difficulty persuading the rest of the world of the legitimacy of attacking a regime that failed to respect human rights and supported of Al Qaeda. On the other hand, Washington went into imperial mode when it asked for support to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein and failed to obtain it from most other governments, which saw no links between Al Qaeda and the Iraqi president, nor any evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Professor Clarkson concluded his talk with a discussion of the United States' security reaction to September 11, which he describes as a territorial reorganization of continental defense, combined with an extra effort to control planetary defense. A clear example of this regional initiative was the creation of a Northern Command whose responsibilities included Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. However, since Mexico's constitution prevents it from undertaking any military operations beyond its borders, and Canadian public opinion fiercely opposes any sharp increase in military cooperation with the Bush administration, the United States appears to have been left to its own devices by its neighbors.

## **STUDENT PANEL (PART II)**

### **Chair**

*Charles-Philippe David, Raoul Dandurand Chair and Director of the Center for United States Studies, UQAM*

### **Kosovo 1999: Clinton's Coercive Diplomacy and the War to End All (Ground) Wars**

*Sébastien Barthe, Research Fellow at the Center for United States Studies, UQAM*

Mr. Barthe's presentation centered on the Clinton administration's decision not to use ground troops in Kosovo, but, rather, to employ coercive diplomacy to deal with Milosevic. This choice of strategy is directly linked to the conviction of some Clinton advisers that the instability in Kosovo was a repetition of what had taken place in Bosnia between 1993 and 1995. The drawing of parallels between Bosnia and Kosovo suggests that the decision-makers made recourse to analogies in the deliberations preceding the decision.

In support of his contentions, Mr. Barthe drew on the theory of Yuen Foong Khong presented in his book *"Analogies at War."* Yuen Foong Khong argues that leaders use analogies to perform specific cognitive and information-processing tasks essential to political decision-making. In brief, for Khong, the analogies are intended to help decision-makers reach a better decision in specific circumstances. In the case of Kosovo, two sets of analogies guided two different decision-making groups.

The first analogy involved Vietnam and Somalia. Based on this analogy, Defense Secretary William Cohen and Chairman of the Joint Staff Hugh Shelton decided to employ economic sanctions and adopt a diplomatic approach. This "minimalist" group chose a cautious course to avoid repeating past mistakes.

It differed from the "activist" group led by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and by NATO's Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, General Wesley Clark. In support of its point of view, the activists drew an analogy with Bosnia to advocate a coercive diplomacy strategy. It maintained that in the Bosnian conflict of 1995 the use of air strikes was the best means to stop the damage wrought by Slobodan Milosevic and compel him to do what the US wanted, namely, to enter into diplomatic negotiations (Dayton Peace Accord).

In considering the two options, Clinton, Gore and Sandy Berger came to favor the activist position. Coercive diplomacy had the advantage of producing immediate results. By October 8, 1998, Milosevic agreed to remove his forces from the province. On March 24, 1999, Bill Clinton made a televised announcement about the air strikes because the Serbs had once again taken the offensive. In his speech, he said that American troops would likely be sent to Kosovo as part of a NATO peacekeeping force, but they would not be sent as an invading force. For Mr. Barthe, this statement is clearly a reference to the analogy with Bosnia. If NATO used force, Milosevic would quickly yield.



In conclusion, Mr. Barthe attested the notion that the Bosnian conflict was looming in the minds of Washington decision-makers when the Kosovo crisis arose. In his reading, the analogy with Bosnia won out over analogies with Vietnam and Somalia, and the former's dominance over the latter twice led the Clinton administration to adopt a strategy of coercive diplomacy in dealing with Milosevic .

## **Empire or Hegemony? Consequences of the Bush Revolution for the World Order**

*Julien Toureille, Research Fellow at the Center for United States Studies, UQAM*

In his presentation, Mr. Toureille sought to evaluate the nature of American power in an international environment that has changed considerably since the end of the Cold War and again following the 9/11 terrorist attack.

His discussion proceeded along two lines: first, an examination of US military power, and, second, an analysis of the global integration of the United States. Finally, he assessed the consequences of the Bush revolution for the world order, endeavoring to determine whether the US has become an imperial power that jeopardizes international stability.

His basic thesis was straightforward: the military's power does not allow it to dominate the international arena. The wealth of the US economy, the driving force behind globalization and the source of US military power, depends on close relationships with other states.

### 1- Assessing US power in a complex international environment

The US strives for dominance in two specific areas: the military and the economy. The unipolar military environment is directly linked with the massive resources of the US, and has given it a major strategic advantage, as well as access to technologies. Mr. Toureille also maintains, contrary to Paul Kennedy's thesis, that military power will not bankrupt the US economy. Present across the globe, US military power sustains the idea of *empire*. Ironically, military spending is part of the technological progress that has been at the heart of US economic growth in the last decade and has made the US a central actor in globalization. Mr. Toureille noted, for example, that 820 billion dollars of foreign investment flowed into the US economy in 2004. US leadership in the current process of globalization and in the field of computer technology contributes to the productivity and competitiveness of the US economy. In sum, Mr. Toureille argued that the US is integrated in the process of globalization, of which it is the driving force. In this case, therefore, it is more accurate to speak of hegemony than of empire.

### 2- Consequences of the Bush revolution for the world order

James Lindsay and Ivo Daadler argue that the Bush revolution is based on two assumptions: first, in a dangerous world, the US should no longer be bound by international constraints; second, the US should use its power to change the status quo in the world. This revolution has three major consequences for US foreign policy: 1. a preference for unilateralism; 2. the preemption doctrine and 3. the use of military power to effect regime change in rogue states.

Bush's first term foreign policy represented a rejection of international constraints over the exercise of US power, as illustrated by the reluctance to use the NATO structure to intervene in Afghanistan, the response to 9/11 and US military presence abroad.

This military unipolarity makes it safe and easy for the US to overturn tyrannies on its own, but US armed forces are ill prepared to face the myriad challenges of a complex international environment.

If Gulliver can search and destroy monsters abroad as the military victories in Afghanistan and Iraq showed, his wealth, particularly in its economic form, depends on the links and interconnections he maintains with others. The flow of FDI reveals a profound structural dependency of the US economy on decisions made abroad.



In conclusion, Mr. Toureille argued that American power is not absolute or unfettered. It is multi-dimensional and does not allow the US to do whatever it wishes. America is not the free, sovereign driver of a complex vehicle—the international system—that it can steer whichever way it pleases. All the mechanisms of constraint afforded by international institutions limit the role of the US to being the engine of the system.

## **THE REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF US HEGEMONY**

### ***Chair***

Richard K. Scher, Professor of Political Science, University of Florida

### **The Future of the US-European Relationship**

*Bruno Tertrais, Senior Research Fellow at the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Paris*

Mr. Tertrais began his presentation by asserting that the Great Alliance between the United States and the European community which prevailed during the Cold War is now a thing of the past. This fundamental change can be explained by six factors.

First, the European community and the United States differ in their perceptions of what constitutes a military threat to their national interests. They pursue different goals which are sometimes in conflict with their respective international security agendas.

Second, the movement towards the creation of a European union is becoming a reality that can no longer be ignored. The integration process involves, among other things, the harmonisation of policy. Therefore, the United States must now deal with a single bloc of countries instead of many.

Third, for the Europeans the question of security appears settled once and for all. The German problem is no longer a threat and we are witnessing a pacification of Europe.

Fourth, there was a change in the political elite during the mid 1990's, with the rise of a new generation of Republicans.

Fifth, the European community and the United States responded differently to the 9/11 attacks. For the United States, war has begun and terrorists should be terminated. As for the Europeans, they find the goals of the war on terror unclear. They are done with wars, and believe that terrorist threats should be managed. Thus, whereas the Europeans focus on stability, the United States concentrates on bringing democracy to the Middle East.

Finally, the damage arising from the above-mentioned changes and from the war in Iraq will not easily be repaired. A shift is taking place in European thinking such that anti-Bush sentiments are turning into anti-American protests. Mr. Tertrais suggests that this may be a generational effect.

However, he affirms that an Atlantic alliance still exists. Foreign direct investment and trade between the European Union and the United States continues to grow regardless of disagreements on security issues. Also, states within the alliance share cultural values, such as good governance and the rule of law. In fact, notwithstanding the war in Iraq, they have some shared strategic concerns. On the question of the Iraq war, Mr. Tertrais observed that the decision of the European states not to participate was not a question of the balance of power, but a will to assert their sovereignty.

In conclusion, Mr. Tertrais offered two short term forecasts concerning problems likely to arise within the alliance that will strain the relationship between the United States and the European community: Iran's determination to build up an arsenal of nuclear weapons and Europe's lifting of the arms embargo on China.



## **The Limits of America's Hegemony in Asia**

*André Laliberté, Professor at the Department of Political Science, UQAM*

From the outset, Professor Laliberté sought to clarify a crucial point concerning the analysis of American hegemony in Asia: three regional security communities in Asia coexist and each of them is weakened by chronic instability.

Two delicate and unsolved problems doom the Northeast Asia alliance. First, the repatriation of Taiwan by the Chinese and, second, the North Korean regime's relentless pursuit of its nuclear ambitions. Also, the historic rivalry and mistrust between Japan and China remains active, paralysing any progress towards the formation of an effective security alliance. Nevertheless, this region represents the third core of the world economy, which has profound implications for the military balance of power.

The South Asia alliance encompasses weak states that have to deal with internal and interstate ethnic and religious conflicts. Also, inequalities of wealth characterise this region, where the booming Indian economy contrasts with the precariousness of life in Nepal.

Finally, the Southeast Asia alliance rallies disparate countries, many of which have to deal with a multiplicity of ethnic communities and deep social cleavages fostered by separatist movements. Most of them are governed by authoritarian regimes where violent repression is the norm.

With respect to US hegemony in Asia, Professor Laliberté affirms that the Chinese government does not see the United States presence in the region as a threat. The main reason is that China wishes to focus on economic growth, which requires stability; thus it prefers to avoid conflict and is not very interested in military build-up. Other states in the region also accept American hegemony in the region, because it is uniquely able to deal with potential domestic political unrest. To understand these states' behaviour we need to understand the weakness of the region and the absence of a real dialogue between the three regional communities.

However, the United States is confronted with many thorny problems that may have a negative effect on acceptance of its presence. The most sensitive among them is probably the question of Taiwan, in which the Chinese government rejects US interference.

## **The New Americas and the Old Foreign Policy Agenda**

*Sylvain F. Turcotte, Director of the Research Group on Economy and Security at the Raoul Dandurand Chair in Strategic and Diplomatic Studies UQAM*

The main thesis of Professor Turcotte's presentation can be summarized by the assertion that Latin America is not a strategic region for the United States. The US pays attention to the region only when serious crises arise. Therefore, US hegemony in the region is not the main variable. Nevertheless, the United States still expects Latin American countries to align themselves automatically with its interests— which is no longer a foregone conclusion.

Prof. Turcotte explains that by the 1980s Latin American countries had distanced themselves from the United States and attempted to pursue their own paths, especially with regard to development policies. They focused on internal development, and highly protected economies were the norm. At first, not much attention was paid to defining a clear foreign policy. In the 90s, Latin American countries began to diversify their external ties at the expense of the United States, especially in matters of trade, forming alliances mainly with Europe and China and, more generally, building up South-South alliances with other southern countries. In this strategy, Brazil took the lead.



The Mercosur regional institution is a clear example of this evolution. It was used to oppose US hegemony in the region, and serves Brazil's aim of establishing a bipolar continental structure in which it will constitute the main pole of opposition to the United States.

Professor Turcotte concludes by addressing a semantic issue. He notes that Latin Americans now call themselves Americans and do not understand why the citizens of the United States should be able to appropriate this term.

### **The Role of the United States in Western Africa**

*Cédric Jourde, Assistant Professor at the School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa*

Professor Jourde asserts that Africa is not one country, and argues that the misconception of American policymakers in this regard affects their depiction of Africa. He identifies five notions that combine to distort reality, especially in relation to West Africa, the subject of his presentation.

First, since the bombing of US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, the United States has viewed West Africa through the prism of global terrorism. For the US, it is a place where terrorism can find fertile ground due to the pre-eminence of Islamic identity and the presence of a variety of terrorist organizations, which are able to operate in relative freedom compared to other regions.

Second, the United States regards the region as a war torn area fraught by permanent instability.

Third, West Africa is a source of natural resources. In face of instability in the Middle East, the US is seeking to diversify its energy imports. Nigerian oil production represents one attractive option, among others. Consequently, Nigeria is a major recipient of US military aid.

Fourth, according to the consensus in Washington, West Africa requires further economic liberalization. The reality is that West African countries have opened their borders and hardly subsidise their economic activities. On the other hand, the United States and the European community have closed their borders to African products and heavily subsidise their natural resource sectors.

Fifth, West Africa needs more democratization. In conclusion, Professor Jourde points out that although Africa is in dire need of well designed international aid, the US has little interest in Africa.

