

F-2 Contemporary Issues in U.S. Foreign Policy

Chair: **Sean Giovanello**, University of North Carolina - Pembroke

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Non-Terrorism-Related American Intervention in the Age of the 'War on Terror'

ABSTRACT:

This paper will be drawn from the last chapters of the revised and expanded edition of *American Adventurism Abroad: Invasions, Interventions, and Regime Changes since World War II* (Blackwell Publishing, 2007). The original edition of this book (Praeger, 2004) analyzed 30 cases from the involvement of the US in the Greek civil war (1947-49) to the "humanitarian intervention" in Kosovo (1999). The new edition covers four post-9/11/01 cases of American intervention: into Afghanistan, Iraq, Venezuela, and Haiti. The first two cases in Islamic countries are related to President George W. Bush's "war against terrorism" – the first one obviously so, the second more controversially. The second two cases, in the Western Hemisphere, on the other hand, have nothing to do with the "war on terror" and serve to confirm the larger argument of *American Adventurism Abroad*: that US foreign policy in the periphery of the global capitalist world has historically been driven not by its purported rationales (of fighting terrorism or communism, or promoting democracy or human rights), but rather by the motive of being hegemon of the international economic system. As in the earlier cases, the post-9/11 interventions into Venezuela (April, 2002) and Haiti (February, 2004) show the US resorting to tactics of dubious legality and allying itself with violators of human rights. As such, they discredit the more benign claims for general US foreign policy and undermine the legitimacy for a "war against terrorism" in other venues. In keeping with ISA-South's conference theme stressing relationships between different disciplines, this work (both the proposed paper, and the larger book from which it is drawn) is notable for looking at the world through both political and historical lenses.

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Collision Course: The Looming Hegemonic Battle between the United States of America
and the Islamic Republic of Iran

ABSTRACT:

In this paper, I examine the current hostilities between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran by sifting the dyad through a pair of theoretically grounded hypotheses. This argument draws mainly upon hegemonic stability theory and offensive realism to demonstrate that U.S. policy towards Iran is a preventative attempt to subvert an aspiring regional hegemon seeking to change the status quo. The first hypothesis stems from Robert Gilpin's argument about war and hegemony. "As relative power increases," he writes, "a rising state attempts to change the rules governing the international system, the division of the spheres of influence, and, most important of all, the international distribution of territory. In response, the dominant power counters this challenge through changes in its policies that attempt to restore equilibrium to the system." The second follows John Mearsheimer's theory, which argues that "regional hegemons in one region of the globe will attempt to check aspiring hegemons in other regions because they fear that a rival great power that dominates its own region will be an especially powerful foe." Using quantitative data on Iran's material capabilities and ambitions, I contend that Iran is aiming for hegemony in the Middle East, which will bring it into open conflict with the world's sole superpower. To demonstrate that Iran is a rising power (relatively speaking), I follow Andrew Hurrell's model for identifying emerging powers in the international system as states that "possess a range of economic, military and political power resources; some capacity to contribute to the production of international order, regionally or globally; and some degree of internal cohesion and capacity for effective state action." Correspondingly, I argue that current U.S. foreign policy also complies with theoretical expectations by attempting to subvert potential regional hegemons. The Bush administration's military and diplomatic strategies are implicit (and in some cases explicit) in their intentions to check aspiring powers in other regions of the globe. Furthermore, I use this case study as heuristic to determine whether older theoretical paradigms derived from the history of the European great power system retain their predictive and explanatory power when used to test contemporary systemic dynamics. The evolution from

multipolarity to bipolarity and now unipolarity, I argue, calls for new policy prescriptions to reach a détente between the two nations.

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Old Wine in New Bottles: A Rhetorical Comparison on Ending the Wars in Vietnam and Iraq

ABSTRACT:

Current rhetorical efforts by the Bush Administration to prepare the American public for withdrawal from Iraq bear a remarkable resemblance to efforts during the Nixon Administration to justify withdrawal from Vietnam. This study will examine the similarities and differences in rhetorical devices used by both the Nixon and Bush Administrations in talking about withdrawal from devastating and unpopular wars. The conclusion will demonstrate that American foreign policy rhetoric is remarkably consistent, even over several decades of time.

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Thinking in Time: Bush, Rumsfeld and the Vietnam Analogy

ABSTRACT:

In their influential book *Thinking in Time*, Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May argue that decisions are best understood by examining the histories of participants and their use of historical analogies. Much can be gained by reviewing the backgrounds of President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld as regards Iraq policy and their use of the Vietnam analogy. Donald Rumsfeld was part of the Ford Administration when Vietnam was united by the communists in 1975, an event many Republicans believe could have been avoided. From 2001 to 2006, Rumsfeld's dominant role at the Defense Department paralleled that of Robert McNamara during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations from 1961 to 1967. Both Rumsfeld and McNamara were strong-willed secretaries of defense who exerted control over the uniformed military in the name of new doctrinal approaches. Both were replaced when their wartime policies did not succeed. President George W. Bush was receptive to the views of Rumsfeld and others regarding Iraq in part because of his family's history with Sadaam Hussein. Also, the imperative to win in Iraq reflects his view that the Vietnam War was lost at home because of a failure of will. His determination not to lose in Iraq parallels that of Presidents Johnson and Nixon in Vietnam. The policies of Donald Rumsfeld and George W. Bush in Iraq may be more fully understood by examining their histories, especially their views about the Vietnam War and its implications for the use of force in pursuit of American objectives abroad.

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The Future of US Hegemonic Relations with China

ABSTRACT:

In modern international relations history, the rise of a new power in an existing hegemonic system has often resulted in war. The rise of British naval power and Spain's decision to attack England with the "Spanish Armada" provide two such examples. The case of Germany challenging British hegemony and the outbreak of WW I is another, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and WW II might also be interpreted in these terms. However, perhaps due in large part to the presence of nuclear weapons, no direct conflict between the US and USSR during the latter's rise following WW II. This paper seeks to gain insight from these examples and take a look at the contemporary case of China. Question: while high levels of trade do not prevent the outbreak of war among nations, does economic integration cage the dogs of war?

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