DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION IN US FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract: *This article delves into the driving forces behind the US's human rights and democracy promotion policy. To facilitate the investigation of this work, liberal internationalism is deployed. This theoretical framework has been selected because of its insistence on the logic of consequences and this work's recognition that democracy promotion is not an instinctively altruistic policy choice of the US. Also, the history of human rights and democracy promotion in US foreign policy is traced to the presidency of Woodrow Wilson. Thus, the US foreign policy tradition of human rights and democracy promotion is dubbed "Wilsonianism" and its basic premises correspond to those of liberal internationalism. Subsequent administrations are then contrasted to gauge their attention to human rights and democracy promotion. Finally, utilising the aforementioned theoretical and historical frameworks, the human rights and democracy promotion policy of the current Obama administration is analysed. Despite seeming to pay less attention to human rights, it is clear that only the tactics and rhetoric have changed since President Bush; human rights and democracy promotion remain high on the US agenda and it is a matter of great interest to examine how these themes have endured as the anchor of US foreign and defence policy for the better part of a century.*

Keywords: democracy, human rights, foreign policy, liberal internationalism, Wilsonianism, Democratic Peace Theory, morality, realism, exceptionalism

Introduction

Since World War I, when the US fought 'to make the world safe for democracy,' administrations have been interested, to varying degrees, in promoting democracy around the world.[1] In his famous

address to the US Congress, Franklin Delano Roosevelt spoke about democracy in the following way:

> Even when the World War broke out in 1914, it seemed to contain only small threat of danger to our own American future. But, as time went on, the American people began to visualise what the downfall of democratic nations might mean to our own democracy … the future and the safety of our country and of our democracy are overwhelmingly involved in events far beyond our borders … No realistic American can expect from a dictator's peace international generosity, or return of true independence, or world disarmament, or freedom of expression, or freedom of religion – or even good business.[2]

However, until the end of the Cold War, democracy and human rights played only a marginal role in wider international affairs since, conceptually, human rights clashed with a seemingly more fundamental concept; sovereignty and hence they tended to be overshadowed by ideological and strategic interests.

The end of the Cold War breathed new life into US democracy and human rights promotion (DHRP), since it emerged from that period as the sole superpower. Presidents Bush (G.W.) and Clinton adopted democracy promotion as a key component of their foreign policy objectives.[3] Indeed, during Clinton's first administration, no goal seemed more significant than promoting democracy abroad. In 1993 for instance, Clinton declared that '(i)n a new era of peril and opportunity, our overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world's community of market-based democracies.'[4]

The 9/11 attacks marked another turning point for US's efforts of spreading democracy. The 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) introduced by Bush (W) prioritised the promotion of democracy, stating that the US would make 'freedom and the development of democratic institutions key themes in our bilateral relations, seeking solidarity and cooperation from other democracies while we press governments that deny human rights to move toward a better future.'[5]

A spring 2008 report from the US National Academy of Sciences estimated that between 1990 and 2005 the US Agency for International Development spent some $8.47 billion (USD) in 120 countries (est) on the promotion of democracy and governance assistance.

In general, the democracy promotion budget of the US makes-up about three percent of the total foreign assistance budget.[6] Given such attention to democracy and, by extention, human rights promotion, this work delves into the question of why the US has prioritised DHRP in its foreign policy?

Although some distinguish between human rights and democracy promotion activities, this work regards them as two sides of the same coin and assesses them together. To echo Carothers

> (t)his view is based on the assumption that human rights, or more particularly, political and civil rights such as the rights to free expression, free association, freedom of movement, and quality before the law, are defining elements of democracy. It follows from this assumption that by definition promoting democracy entails promoting human rights and conversely that promoting human rights is a form of promoting democracy.[7]

The following section defines the theoretical framework of this work and presents the relationship between DHRP and foreign policy. This is followed by an examination of the Wilsonian tradition in US foreign policy thinking, which is, so to say, a synonym for democracy promotion. Then, the relevant policies of the Obama Administration are analysed in the context of the Wilsonian tradition.

DHRP and Foreign Policy: An Uneasy Relationship

Human rights and democracy feature prominently in liberal theories of IR and therefore, research focusing on these themes must consider liberalism's assumptions about political behaviours and policy-making, if even as a basis of critique. This work however is grounded in liberalism and does not seek to move beyond it. Instead it accepts many of liberalism's core assumptions and seeks to refine liberalism's treatment of DHRP as it pertains to US foreign policy. This theoretical preference is also advanced because, unlike realism (among other theories), which regard states as the primary actors, it maintains that 'individuals, rather than states [...] are important in international relations.'[8] Liberalism is described in broad terms as a theory 'relying on claims about the impact of interdependence, the benefits of free trade, collective security and the existence of

a real harmony of interests between states.'[9] However, liberalism is better understood 'not as providing a blueprint for thinking about IR or foreign policy, but rather as a cluster or matrix of underlying values, principles, and purposes that provide a guide and framework through which one can think flexibly about IR, albeit within certain normative parameters.'[10]

More precisely, liberal internationalism calls for DHRP in foreign policy. According to MacMillan, 'liberal internationalism emerged as a coherent worldview in the Enlightenment and reached its height as a systematic statement of international reform with Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, intended to form the basis of the post-World War I peace.'[11] However, internal (failure to have the Versailles treaty passed through Congress due to prevalence of isolationist mood among congressmen) and external (World War II and the Cold War) factors prevented the materialisation of Wilson's ideas. Only after the Cold War, were the ideas of liberal internationalism revived. As MacMillan suggests

> the liberal emphasis upon the determining power of factors at the state level – such as the spread of liberal democratic regimes – and the ability of states to refashion their national interests through the development of commerce has received fresh interest in recent years following the end of the Cold War as well as empirical support from the democratic peace research program.[12]

Burchill describes this process in the following way:

> the demise of Soviet Communism at the beginning of the 1990s enhanced the influence of liberal theories of international relations within the academy... in the 1990s Fukuyama revived a long-held view among liberals that the spread of legitimate domestic political orders would eventually bring an end to international conflict.[13]

According to Fukuyama, 'a world made up of liberal democracies ... should have much less incentive for war, since all nations would reciprocally recognise one another's legitimacy.'[14] But what are the basic features of this liberal internationalism? MacMillan portrays it as 'an insistence upon the moral primacy of the individual and a tradition of political and philosophical interest in the conditions of individual freedom, or autonomy.'[15] He proceeds that within liberal internationalism '"liberal democratic" political systems ... are

regarded as offering a rational means of facilitating the greatest collective domain of freedom for equal individuals through being bound by the principles of the accountability of power, political representation through an independent legislature and the rule of law, and the enjoyment of human rights.'[16]

Liberal Internationalism and Democratic Peace

Liberal internationalism is primarily focused on preventing war and establishing peace. According to liberal international thought, 'the "disease" of war could be successfully treated with the twin medicines of *democracy* and *free trade*,'[17] because '(w)hen the citizens who bear the burdens of war elect their governments, wars become impossible.'[18] Free trade and commerce would then overcome the artificial barriers between individuals everywhere and unite them in one community.[19] Writing in 1848, Mill claimed that free trade was the means to bring about the end of war, 'it is commerce which is rapidly rendering war obsolete, by strengthening and multiplying the personal interests which act in natural opposition to it.'[20]

Liberal internationalists believe that there is a relationship between the domestic and foreign policies of states. In other words, 'liberalism is an "inside-out" approach to international relations, because liberals favour a world in which the endogenous determines the exogenous.'[21] Hence, they uphold the Democratic Peace Theory (DPT), which posits that *mature* democracies would not engage in war against each other. According to Doyle, 'the aggressive instincts of authoritarian leaders and totalitarian ruling parties make for war. Liberal states, founded on such individual rights as equality before the law, free speech and other civil liberties, private property, and elected representation are fundamentally against war … And so peace and democracy are two sides of the same coin.'[22] He proceeds that 'the apparent absence of war between liberal states, whether adjacent or not, for almost two hundred years may therefore have significance. Similar claims cannot be made for feudal, "fascist," communist, authoritarian or totalitarian forms of rule.'[23]

Doyle further claims that,

> pacification of foreign relations between liberal states is said to be a direct product of their shared legitimate

> political orders based on democratic principles and institutions. The reciprocal recognition of these common principles – a commitment to the rule of law, individual rights and equality before the law, and representative government based on popular consent – means that liberal democracies evince little interest in conflict with each other and have no grounds on which to contest each other's legitimacy: they have constructed a "separate peace."[24]

However, adherents of DPT do not claim that democracies do not wage war at all; they accept that democracies are even somewhat war-prone. However, theirs are wars against non-democracies.[25] Accordingly, 'in their relations with non-liberal states, liberal states have not escaped from the insecurity caused by anarchy [...] the very constitutional restraint, international respect for individual rights, and shared commercial interests that establish grounds for peace among liberal states establish grounds for additional conflict in relations between liberal and non-liberal societies.'[26]

Thus, 'liberals believe that democratic society, in which civil liberties are protected and market relations prevail, can have an international analogue in the form of a peaceful global order. The domestic free market has its counterpart in the open, globalised world economy. [...] the legal protection of civil rights within liberal democracies is extended to the promotion of human rights across the world.'[27] Liberal internationalism is essentially a project to transform international relations so they may conform to models of peace, freedom, and prosperity allegedly enjoyed within constitutional liberal democracies.[28] It should be noted, that liberal internationalism is fundamentally reformist rather than revolutionary. It seeks not to transform the basic structure of the state system, but rather to moderate those elements that realists have identified as the fundamental causes of war.[29]

It is, however, worth mentioning that realists have dubbed liberal internationalist thinking as naïve, and argue that DHRP in foreign policy contradicts national interests. For realists DHRP is associated with the wider issue of morality in international affairs, or ethical foreign policy, approaches that realists regard as detracting from a states' ability to achieve its most coveted aspiration, continued material survival. Before proceeding to the bulk of this work however, it is important to present the realist critique of liberal

internationalism and its attitude towards morality in international affairs.

The Great Debate Redux and the Realist Critique

According to Beitz, 'the realists' scepticism about the possibility of international moral norms has attained the status of a professional orthodoxy in both academic and policy circles, accepted by people with strong moral commitments about other matters of public policy.'[30] The realist vision of morality thereby calls on decision-makers to promote and protect the interest and lives of their fellow citizens, rather than seeking the realisation of some obscure, abstract notions of universal morality.[31] In other words, realists support the promotion of democracy as long as it serves for advancing national interests of the country in question. According to Morgenthau, 'realism maintains that universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in their abstract universal formulation, but that they must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place … There can be no political morality without prudence; that is, without consideration of the political consequences of seemingly moral action.'[32] He proceeds by suggesting that 'the principle of the defence of human rights cannot be consistently applied in foreign policy because it can and must come in conflict with other interests that may be more important than the defines of human rights in a particular circumstance.'[33] In a similar vein Kennan claims that 'interventions of this nature (those undertaken under the banner of democracy, human rights, majority rule, and so onto criticise the internal practices of states) can be formally defensible only in the practices against which they are directed are serious injurious to our interests, rather than our sensibilities.'[34] Realists would add that 'conditions of profound insecurity for states do not permit ethical and humane considerations to override their primary national considerations.'[35]

Firstly then, for realists there is scant connection between the domestic and foreign policies of states. Instead, realists argue that it is not the domestic regime or the structure of government that pushes states into war, but rather it is the structure of international relations that determines their behaviour. Furthermore, national interests are defined in terms of power, implying that each state

is engaged in a perpetual quest for power to ensure its survival in the international system. Therefore, foreign policy in pursuit of national interests must exclude human rights, save as a rhetorical devise to mobilise citizens in pursuit of national interests. For realists, human rights promotion is dangerous as it can endanger relations with allies which are important to maintain the balance of power; the only means in the realist world to preserve peace. Finally, there is no place for human rights promotion or moral policy in a world where security dilemmas drive states' behaviour. According to Heins and Chandler, the realist critique of ethical foreign policies can be set out succinctly in four different points:

1. Ethical foreign policies are bound to be ineffective and quixotic. They ignore the reality of politics without being harmful or beneficial to anybody;
2. Ethical foreign policies weaken the state and are harmful to national interests. They ignore both the reality of politics and the consequences of this ignorance;
3. Ethical foreign policies are a part of a smart ideological manoeuvre. They benefit national interests by pretending to transcend it and by making everybody believe in this transcendence;
4. Ethical foreign policies are a part of the problem they pretend to solve as they produce immoral behaviours and consequences.[36]

As noted, realists do not completely disregard DHRP from foreign policy however they suggest that foreign policy pursue such objectives only as long they serves the advancement of more material national interests. It implies that they retain an instrumental approach to DHRP.

Like realism, liberalism is a rational theory; it is driven by the "logic of consequences." As such, liberal internationalism advocates DHRP because they serve the interests of the promoters. According to Forsythe,

> key developments that were to lead to the international recognition of human rights occurred when Franklin D. Roosevelt and others drew the conclusion that human rights were connected to international peace and security ... human rights as such became a formal part of international relations when important states believed that

> universal human rights affected their own self-interests. The human rights language that was written into the United Nations Charter had less to do with a western moral crusade to do good for others, than with the expediential concerns of particularly the United States.[37]

The UN Charter's Article 55 is a telling example of such an interpretation. It reads: '*With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations*, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote ... universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.'[38] The wording of this Article clearly reflects the concept of the "logic of consequences."

Now that the theoretical foundations have been depicted, attention can be paid to answering the main question of this work, namely; why has the US prioritised DHRP in its foreign policy?

The Wilsonian Tradition in US Foreign Policy

According to Russell-Mead, four traditions comprise the core of US foreign policy decision-making: Hamiltonian, Jeffersonian, Jacksonian and Wilsonian traditions.[39] Hamiltonians favour a global order of trade and economic relations where the US is the strongest (hegemonic) state, able to militarily prevent any other state, or blocs, enhance their power base to the point of undermining US vital interests – aka, Hamiltonians prefer the aggressive pursuit of US economic interests. In contrast, Jeffersonians are isolationists; and fundamentally disagree with Hamiltonian views. Instead, they tend to focus on strengthening democracy and capitalism domestically and seek to enhance internal cohesion rather than international adventurism or leadership. Jacksonians are highly suspicious of international law and organisations which they regard as restraining. The idea is not to 'bother with people abroad, unless they bother you. But if they attack you, then do everything you can.'[40] Finally, Wilsonians are described as maintaining 'belief in the UN and international law.' They suggest that 'the United States should be pushing our values around the world and turning other countries into democracies whether they like it or not. And the US should

also work multilaterally in institutions … We should put human rights ahead of trade …'[41]

Wilsonianism

Kennedy asserted that every American president since Wilson has embraced the core precepts of Wilsonianism.[42] Even Kissinger, the archetype-realist, concedes that 'Wilson's principles have remained the bedrock of American foreign policy thinking.'[43]

In *American Power* – a survey of American foreign policy and its chief architects since 1914 – Taft observes that the shadow cast by Woodrow Wilson affected the US's long term view of international relations.[44] Although not all American public figures have interpreted the Wilsonian legacy in the same way, a general admiration persists for Wilson's "idealism" in approaching international relations. According to Taft, William Bullitt, Chester Bowles, Henry Wallace, Herbert Hoover, John Foster Dulles, Walter Lippmann, Franklin Delano Roosvelt, and even George F. Kennan followed Wilson in believing that the US should aspire to reform world politics, and they viewed the wars the US was drawn as opportunities to promote this end.[45]

Several years ago, Stiegerwald suggested that in the Cold War's wake, Wilsonianism – shorthand for the projection of America's Liberal ideology into US grand strategy – had been rehabilitated, and had reclaimed its central role in the shaping of US grand strategy.[46] Layne argued that Wilsonianism did not need to make a come-back after the USSR's demise, because with respect to American grand strategy it had never gone away, although its role was obscured by the geopolitical aspects of the US-USSR rivalry. For Layne, '(t)he Soviet Union's collapse lifted the realpolitik veil from American grand strategy, and exposed to clear view its Liberal ideological foundation. Today, US policymakers believe, as they have since the early 20th century, that the United States can be safe only in an Open Door world – a world shaped by America's Wilsonian Liberal ideology.'[47]

Wilson had a grand liberal vision of world order, but ironically, did not compose a developed view of world affairs or an ambitious foreign policy agenda during his presidency in 1913.[48] Nonetheless, Wilson became the founding father of the liberal tradition of US

foreign policy. He did so initially in speeches during the period of American neutrality, and later in his justification of the war with Germany. It was in a speech before a joint session of Congress in spring 1917 that Wilson declared that the war against Germany was necessary so the world could be 'made safe for democracy.'[49]

But what are premises upon which Wilsonianism is based?

Firstly, it belongs to US cultural tradition. Forsythe, for instance, argues that

> to a great extent a state's foreign policy on human rights is bound up with its version of nationalism, which is to say with a nation's collective self-image, which is to say with its informal ideology … In the case of the United States, to understand the interpretation of human rights in foreign policy it is crucial to understand that some in the elite and most in the mass public view the USA as a beacon of freedom in the world.[50]

Americans and their leaders generally share the notion that the US is set apart from others.[51] US foreign policy elites have traditionally been afflicted by a pervasive sense of US vulnerability, which is, as Williams observed, a by-product of American exceptionalism; that is, the belief that, because of its domestic political system and ideology, the US is a singular nation.[52] Indeed, it is commonplace to observe that, 'the nation was explicitly founded on particular sets of values, these made the United States view itself as different from the nations of the Old World from which it originated.'[53] Because it is set apart, the reasoning continues, the US has special responsibilities and obligations to others.[54]

From the early settlers in New England to the powerful Goldwater – Reagan – George W. Bush wing of the Republic Party, important contemporary political circles have seen the US not as an ordinary nation but as a great experiment in personal liberty which has had implications for the entire planet.[55] According to Forsythe, 'American exceptionalism, the belief in the exceptional freedom and goodness of the American people, is the core of the dominant American political culture.'[56]

Secondly, the belief that the US can only be secure in a world of ideologically like-minded states acts as the motor behind Wilsonian thinking. As diplomatic historian LaFeber observes, 'America's mission' of extending democracy worldwide is not altruistic. Rather, 'it

grew out of the belief that American liberties could not long exist at home unless the world was made safe for democracy.'[57]

Thirdly, liberalism's intolerance of competing ideologies, and the concomitant belief that merely by existing, non-democratic states threaten America's security and the safety of Liberalism at home. In one of his speeches Wilson remarked that a 'steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. It must be a league of honour, a partnership of opinion … Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honour steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interest of their own.'[58]

Fourthly, the confidence that America's values are good for the US as well as for the rest of the world, and that, in self-defence, Washington has the right to impose them on others. Wilsonian Liberalism self-consciously rests on the conviction that America is a model for the world, and that its values and institutions are superior to everyone else's. 'There are American principles, American policies,' Wilson announced in January 1918. 'We stand for no others. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.'[59] Thus, "nationalism" or in other words, belief in American "exceptionalism," cultural superiority and DPT form the core of Wilsonianism.

Although commonly seen as idealistic, in context, Wilsonian diplomacy was a "realistic" response to political crises.[60] By the end of 1917, the West needed an answer to the Bolshevik's New Diplomacy because, as one historian argued, the First World War had produced a situation where 'millions of bayonets were in search of an idea (ideology).'[61] To be sure, Wilsonianism was, at least for a moment, also the form that the first, self-conscious assertion of American power in Europe took.[62]

After Wilson's spectacular failure to create world order through the League of Nations after World War I, liberal internationalism – based on his Fourteen Points address – was largely discredited.[63] The Bolshevik Revolution (1917), Mussolini's seizure of power in Rome (1922), the Great Depression (1929), and Hitler's ascquisition of power in Berlin (1933), combined with the US Senate's refusal to allow the US to join the League of Nations rendered Wilson's policies as impractical.[64]

As a result many concluded that the liberal doctrine had failed. However, according to Ikenberry, 'in shadows it remained a strong presence in the practical work of American officials, especially as they sought in the first few years after World War II to reconstruct Europe and open postwar world economy.'[65] FDR's "Four Freedoms" (freedom of speech, of religion, from want, and from fear), and the birth of the UN, serve as examples of that presence. Roosevelt, and Truman after him, was convinced that attention to a broad range of human rights in international relations was needed to forestall a repeat of the kind of aggression witnessed in the 1930s from Japan, Germany, and Italy. From this view, the UN was required not only to coordinate traditional interstate diplomacy, but to adopt social and economic programmes to deal with the national conditions that led to dictatorships and military governments and eventually, to world wars.[66] Nevertheless, as Roosevelt feared the loss of discretion in public policy decision-making, human rights were vaguely endorsed in the UN Charter which 'came to be the first treaty in world history to recognise universal human rights.'[67] However, the 'UN Charter allowed the Security Council to take binding decisions on security questions, but not on social questions. The Charter also contained a prohibition on UN interference in national domestic affairs.'[68]

The realities of the Cold War soon overpowered the thinking of US officials however and following the 1947 doctrine of containment – with its rousing urgency and clarity of purpose – pushed liberal internationalism back into the shadows.[69] Throughout the Cold War US foreign policy was associated with heavy *realpolitik*. Officials in the White House were preoccupied with the rivalry against the USSR and all efforts were directed to this end. During those years, non-democracies could easily become US allies, provided they made their choices in favour of the Western bloc.

Nevertheless, over the course of the Cold War there was an attempt to elevate human rights issues in the US foreign policy agenda. This occurred in the 1970s, during the Carter administration and his initiative was a response to international developments: 'Just as the First World War had called into question Europe's Old Diplomacy, the Vietnam War called into question the Pax Americana both abroad and at home … Carter's appeal to a foreign policy of human rights and democracy, therefore, was an alternative way

of addressing the "crisis of confidence" and "covert pessimism.'"[70] Indeed, Carter's human rights policy did not lack strategic thinking. 'It is well known that Carter used the Helsinki Accords to morally bludgeon the Soviet Union, while picking those countries, like authoritarian client states in Central America, "unimportant enough to be hectored about human rights."'[71] The ideological function of human rights, therefore, was to restore the moral authority of liberal institutions, by advocating and strategically supporting political and civil rights against the USSR, which promoted social and economic rights.[72] Thus, only the end of the Cold War paved the way for a human rights policy free of ideological considerations. According to Ikenberry 'in the aftermath of the Cold War, the chief elements of liberal grand strategy re-emerged in a clearer light.'[73]

Under Clinton, Wilsonianism became the centrepiece of administration policy when it was announced that 'the containment of communism' would be replaced by 'the enlargement of democracy.'[74] Clinton spoke in support of human rights: for universal rights at Vienna; for criminal prosecutions in The Hague at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; for containment of repressive states like the Sudan, Iraq, and Iran; for sanctions on Burma/Myanmar.[75] Yet, strategic and economic interests were hardly absent in the Clinton administration's foreign policy; 'Not only did the Clinton Administration not intervene to stop genocide in Rwanda in 1994, but also that Administration de-linked trading privileges from basic civil and political rights in China.'[76]

Bush's (W) vision, as articulated in the NSS included elements of the "one-world" vision of Wilson. The NSS proclaimed that 'today, the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence. In keeping with our heritage and principles, we do not use our strength to press unilateral advantage. We seek instead to create a balance of power that favours human freedom.'[77]

It seems as if he meant that the world would be united under American leadership. Zakaria noted at the time that '(i)t is a breathtaking statement, promising that American power will transform international politics itself, making the millennia-old struggle over national security obsolete. In some ways, it is the most Wilsonian statement any President has made since Wilson himself, echoing

his pledge to use American power to create "a universal dominion of rights.'"[78]

Echoes of the Wilsonian ideal could also be heard in Bush's 2005 declaration that the 'best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.'[79] At the same time, Bush identified democracy promotion as a central focus to the *war on terrorism* and national security in his second inauguration address on 20 January 2005: 'Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security … So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.'[80]

Furthermore, in January 2005, Condoleeza Rice listed three top priorities for her administration's diplomacy before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: 'First, we will unite the community of democracies in building an international system that is based on shared values and the rule of law. Second, we will strengthen the community of democracies to fight the threats to our common security and alleviate the hopelessness that feeds terror. And third, we will spread freedom and democracy throughout the globe. That is the mission that President Bush has set for America in the world and is the great mission of American diplomacy today.'[81]

Attributing the terrorist threat looming over the United States to the failure of democracy to take root in the Middle East, President Bush committed the United States to 'a forward strategy of freedom in that region.'[82] Pursuant to that strategy, the exportation of democracy to Iraq is viewed as the spearhead of a region-wide democratic transformation. Both Bush and Rice made their belief clear that the Middle East's successful democratisation is crucial to American security. Once again, the instrumental feature ascribed to human rights was visable.

However, Bush's human rights policy was hardly free from double standards. Where Washington had strategic and security interests, it attempted to de-link human rights from cooperation. For instance, 'it has always been the case that key oil-producing states like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were exempt from US pressure on human rights.'[83]

It should also be noted that Bush's human rights policy heavily relied on unilateralism and American exceptionalism. Rice wrote in

2000, that emphasis under Bush would be on American, not international values. Since American values were considered to be universal, one could advance good things in the world by promoting American values.[84]

As illustrated by the above, DHRP in US foreign policy is a follow-up of the Wilsonian tradition. And, in line with Wilsonian tradition, democracy promotion is one of the "instruments" in the service of US interests, be it strategic, security-related or economic. According to Gowan, 'America's "new cosmopolitanism" is an ideological consensus across the Clinton and Bush administrations beneath which actual diplomacy is wholly dedicated to the calculations of power politics.'[85] That national interests are concealed under the form of a universal ideology is clear in the hypocritical deployment of humanitarian forces in places where the US possesses interests (re: Iraqi oil, Balkan military bases), the refusal to deploy in places of marginal strategic significance (re: Rwanda) and exemptions from moral requirements for strategic allies (re: Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan).[86] Ironically, and somewhat tellingly, Rice, writing in the Washington Post (December 2005) argued that democracy promotion was in the national interest as it was 'attempting to draw neat, clean lines between our security interests and our democratic ideals does not reflect the reality of today's world.'[87]

DHRP under Obama

Obama inherited a "suffering America" from Bush, as both the domestic and foreign policy of the US were in crisis. Bush's attraction to unilateralism and American exceptionalism, reduced the profile of US foreign policy in general, and DHRP in particular. The war in Iraq was particularly important in this regard as the 'constant identification of democracy promotion with the Iraq intervention and other regime-change policies has besmirched the very concept in the eyes of many around the world.'[88]

Hence, Obama faced the difficult task of raising the profile of US foreign policy and its DHRP credentials. In his inaugural address, Obama expressed a determination to advance democracy, saying: '(t)o those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of the history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench

your fist.'[89] However, in his first address to the UN General Assembly delivered on 23 September 2009, one can hardly find a confirmation of his adherence to democracy promotion. He broadly speaks about combating al Qaeda, proliferation of nuclear weapons, climate change, economic crisis, a global response to global challenges (etc). He described four pillars as a fundamental basis for his foreign policy: non-proliferation and disarmament; the promotion of peace and security; the preservation of the planet; and a global economy that advances opportunity for all people.[90] He clearly showed that democracy promotion is not among his priorities; 'The reason apparently is that, in Obama's mind, the spread of democracy is not a shared global interest or task. It is rather a task and struggle for each country.'[91]

Only towards the end of his UN address, does Obama touch on democracy and human rights, attributing an instrumental role to them in accomplishing the abovementioned priorities: 'democracy and human rights are essential to achieving each of the goals that I've discussed today.'[92] He concluded his democracy rhetoric underlining that, 'democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people and in its past traditions. And I admit that America has too often been selective in its promotion of democracy.'[93] It seemed as if he tried to distance himself from Bush's rhetoric, thus declaring that democracy promotion has nothing to do with the promotion of American values. Furthermore, Obama took office confident that democracy promotion had alienated America's traditional allies in the Middle East and strategic countries such as Russia. So, by distancing himself from Bush's policies he sought to regain their confidence and engage them in solving global and shared problems. Nau describes what he calls the Obama Doctrine which is to say that Obama

> has a coherent worldview that highlights "shared" interests defined by interconnected material problems such as climate, energy, and non-proliferation and deemphasises "sovereign" interests that separate countries along political and moral lines. He tacks away from topics that he believes divide nations – democracy, defence, markets, and unilateral leadership – and toward topics that he believes integrate them – stability, disarmament, regulations, and diplomacy ... He is a policy pragmatist in response to

a worldview of shared community interests that transcend sovereign national interests.[94]

Generally, in his major foreign policy speeches in 2009 Obama mentioned democracy either belatedly or abstractly; 'In none of these speeches did he mention, let alone confront, the oppressive policies of a new wave of authoritarian powers stalking the world – Russia in Europe, China in Asia, Iran in the Middle East, and Venezuela in Latin America. Instead he turned to many of these new autocrats as principal partners to pursue shared global interests of disarmament, economic recovery, climate change, and non-proliferation.'[95] Indeed, earlier in France, he disowned the idea that America had a unique role whatsoever; 'I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism.'[96] For Nau, in 'the Obama doctrine there is no global struggle for freedom that parallels and limits the prospects for cooperation. Cooperation emerges from shared interests not from shared values.'[97]

Hiatt noted that, 'in Cairo, Oslo and elsewhere, he spoke powerfully about freedom, dignity and democracy. But democratic allies felt that his focus was on improving relations with authoritarian powers, while democracy activists felt there was always some priority higher than theirs: nuclear non-proliferation, counterterrorism, climate change … The administration criticised the narrowing of freedom in Russia, but cooperation on Iran was a higher priority. It chided Hosni Mubarak for choking civil society in Egypt, but the autocrat's cooperation on Israel-Palestine mattered more.'[98]

During Hilary Clinton's first diplomatic trip in early 2009 she strongly downplayed human rights concerns in China. She remarked that 'human rights issues in China can't interfere with the global economic crisis, the global climate change crisis, and the security crisis.'[99] For Rubin, '(w)hether it was avoiding an Oval Office visit by the Dalai Lama, not demanding an opportunity to promote human rights during the president's recent visit to China, or not pressing for the release of jailed dissidents there, a practical decision was made that US concerns about the economy, global warming, and non-proliferation took precedence in the relationship with China.'[100] In Central Asia, 'the administration leans toward accommodation of the regimes, simply because US operations – and US

lives – in Afghanistan outweigh any other considerations,' noted Martha Brill Olcott.[101]

Obama's International Engagement

The first NSS released under Obama in May 2010, underlines four key American interests:

1. The security of the United States, its citizens, and US allies and partners;
2. A strong, innovative, and growing US economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity;
3. Respect for universal values at home and around the world; and
4. An international order advanced by US leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.[102]

The document proceeds by suggesting that:

> The United States supports the expansion of democracy and human rights abroad because governments that respect these values are more just, peaceful, and legitimate. We also do so because their success abroad fosters an environment that supports America's national interests … As our history shows, the United States can more effectively forge consensus to tackle shared challenges when working with governments that reflect the will and respect the rights of their people, rather than just the narrow interests of those in power.'[103]

This wording echoes Wilsonianism and DPT, however, the document rejects Bush's rhetoric claiming that the US will not seek to impose its values on others by force

> Instead, we are working to strengthen international norms on behalf of human rights, while welcoming all peaceful democratic movements. We are supporting the development of institutions within fragile democracies, integrating human rights as a part of our dialogue with repressive governments, and supporting the spread of technologies that facilitate the freedom to access information. And we recognise economic opportunity as a human right, and are

promoting the dignity of all men and women through our support for global health, food security, and cooperatives responses to humanitarian crises.[104]

That indicates how DHRP will be carried out under Obama. The freedom to access information, namely the internet, are of great importance given the recent "social network revolutions" in the Maghreb; revolutions which demonstrated the power of modern information technologies. Moreover, the multilateral approach strives for an increasingly peaceful, secure and opportunistic international order outlined in NSS is another important point as it further highlights the difference between Obama and Bush. Under Obama the US renounces Bush's "unilateralism," and instead seeks a multilateral approach to international affairs, thus regaining the confidence of its allies.

In his second address to the UN GA, Obama again spoke about the Middle East, the economic crisis, al Qaeda, non-proliferation, climate change, and again left human rights and democracy until the very end: 'we stand up for universal values because it's the right thing to do. But we also know from experience that those who defend these values for their people have been our closest friends and allies, while those who have denied those rights – whether terrorist groups or tyrannical governments – have chosen to be our adversaries.'[105] Once again, he reiterates the basic premises of DPT.

Additionally, Obama outlined a basic means of human rights promotion:

> Civil society is the conscience of our communities and America will always extend our engagement abroad with citizens beyond the halls of government. And we will call out those who suppress ideas and serve as a voice for those who are voiceless. We will promote new tools of communication so people are empowered to connect with one another and, in repressive societies, to do so with security. We will support a free and open Internet, so individuals have the information to make up their own minds. And it is time to embrace and effectively monitor norms that advance the rights of civil society and guarantee its expansion within and across borders.[106]

This approach stresses the importance of nongovernmental organisations along with other groups in civil society as the fomenters of liberty.[107]

Democracy & Human Rights in USFP

Thus, both the NSS and his major foreign policy speech in 2010 outlined the freedom of internet and access to information as a primary focus of DHRP. As mentioned, this innovative approach has already proved its worth. The Maghreb revolutions, where social networks played a key role, revealed the power of Obama's approach to democracy and human rights promotion.

In his UN address he also stated that 'neither dignity nor democracy can thrive without basic security.' By declaring this he joined the so-called *security-first* school, thus further distancing himself from Bush who was an adherent of the *fast-track democratisation* school.[108]

Obama's message is that America will lead by example;

> That is the mantra of the Obama people, who argue that the cause of democracy will not be promoted by lecturing, or for that matter by invading, but by engagement and example. By engaging, the argument goes, US policy will undermine autocratic regimes by removing the Uncle Sam bogeyman and putting the American way of life of display through direct contact with the maximum number of people. Meanwhile, by focusing on common ground with prickly and unsavoury nations, constructive diplomacy in the name of non-proliferation, the Afghan struggle etc, can get done.[109]

Rademaker, a former official in the Bush (W) administration, described Obama's foreign policy as such: 'For a president coming out of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, it's remarkable how much he has pursued a great power strategy. It's almost Kissingerian. It's not very sentimental. Issues of human rights do not loom large in his foreign policy, and issues of democracy promotion, he's been almost dismissive of.'[110]

However, as abovementioned facts testify it is hardly correct to assume that DHRP is completely absent in Obama's foreign policy, as he simply differs from his predecessor in his pragmatic approach to DHRP. He is an adherent of soft, rather than hard power. He believes in the power of the internet and information and he is keen to limit governmental control over the internet in order to guarantee

a free flow of information. Therefore, he outlined the freedom to access the internet and information as the primary targets of his foreign policy. Through this, Obama is keen to create the opportunity for people to make their own decision as to whether they want to continue with the way things are or change them. The recent Maghreb revolutions prove the power of this approach which does not yield to force and one could even argue that it is a superior approach because traditional non-democratic allies of the US cannot point to efforts of imposing American values on them. Moreover, renouncing the imposition of democracy by force, the US avoids the possibility of being blamed by its Western allies, as well. Obama made it clear on more than one occasion that the driving force behind democratisation efforts should be local people. It is them who should make decisions about which regime they want to live under. The US will only lead by example; there is no place for force in his democracy promotion efforts: that is the Obama way of DHRP.

Conclusion

DHRP are two sides of the same coin and in essence, promoting democracy entails promoting human rights and vice-versa. When the US adopted Wilsonian logic as the guide to its foreign policy, it was doing more than simply attributing a specific ideological persuasion to the state, it was marking the beginning of an enduring theme which eventually came to act as a basic formula for international peace and security. While Wilson hoisted DHRP to the US international agenda, all subsequent administrations (although to varying degrees) have utilised it in the formulation of their foreign policies. Therefore, the tradition of democracy promotion in US foreign policy must remain dubbed as Wilsonianism.

In pursuing DHRP in its foreign policy, the US must not be mistaken for an altruistic actor, it is primarily concerned about its own security, stability and prosperity and McFaul and Fukuyama are keen to note that no country in the world has benefited more from the worldwide advance of democracy than the United States.[111] However, the US should not be incriminated for rational considerations and self-interest in its efforts of pushing DHRP since the positive results it has, and will likely continue to inspire, are of incalculable importance.

Churchill's dictum that 'democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time,' is certainly apt in the case of US DHRP and in pursuing self-interest in its democratisation efforts the US improves the circumstances for other countries as well. Hence, DHRP not only fits within the "logic of consequences," but also within the "logic of appropriateness." The US does need to exercise more consistency and cohesion in its democratisation efforts, as it must be mindful of its unique international position as well as its "special obligations and responsibilities" towards others.

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