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US FOREIGN POLICY CHANGES:

What are the dynamics behind US foreign policy changes after 9/11 attack?

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Introduction

After the terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon on 9/11 2001, a change in U.S. foreign policy took place. The attacks pronounced a new epoch in world security issues. U.S. and its leadership perceived urgency for a new plan in dealing with security, both locally and globally. *"A new empirical doctrine is taking place under George Bush"*¹, the French newspaper Le Monde wrote after the attacks. President George W. Bush labeled this shift in policy "War on Terror", a term which has subsequently been used often to outline U.S. foreign policy under the Bush administration. In the 22 pages long document, known as The United States National Security Strategy (NSS), the Bush Administration contends that U.S. should fight for extending their core values and beliefs all over the world.² These new ideas also encountered criticism and in 2006 the Bush Administration released a NSS report that acknowledged successes and challenges in the four years that passed since the first NSS report.

Today, in review, there is little doubt that U.S. foreign policy under George W. Bush was undoubtedly more belligerent and military related than it had been for many years. The War on Terror steered to two wars in the Middle East, and a Homeland Security policy that was harsh than ever before. In the aftermath of 9/11, an entire set of notions on how U.S. should conduct itself regarding foreign policy was established. The problem area is one that has occupied scholars in the years that followed, but this project pursues a new path by including the three-level theories of Mechanistic Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis in order to investigate the change in U.S. foreign policy after 9/11.

¹ Deudney, 2012, P. 28

² Deudney, 2012, P. 29

Based on these arguments, the following question will serve as the problem formulation of this project:

Why did The United States foreign policy change after the terrorist attacks on 9/11 2001, and how did decision-makers affect the shaping and execution of a new national security strategy?

Hypotheses

- A neo-conservative paradigm has influenced the decision-makers in the Bush Administration resulting in a more aggressive foreign policy.
- The terrorist attacks on 9/11 2001 created a momentum for decision-makers to unfold their already existing goals in foreign policy.
- The prolonged Iraq War forced Obama to seek a less aggressive foreign policy with greater focus on multilateral cooperation.

Limitations

The problem area is broad which calls for limitations. Based on empirical reasoning and an aim to provide a representative foundation on which I will be able to research and answer the problem formulation, five key elements have been identified. These elements also reflect the emphasis on the Bush administration's decision-making as the creators and executors of the new foreign policy. This project focuses on the decision-making in relation to these events and therefore the project delimits from examining how the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq was carried out. Based on empirical reasoning I have limited the power circle of decision-makers to include President George W. Bush, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Vice President Dick Cheney. Furthermore, the influence from other key members of the administration as well as influence from CIA director George Tenet and military general Tommy Franks is recognized.

Methodology

Research design

The research of the problem and the building of the problem formulation are set in empirical assessment about why U.S. foreign policy changed after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, 2001 and how decision-makers influenced this new foreign policy. The research is conducted through single case study and the research strategy of document analysis.

Research process

The project begins with an introduction that presents the problem area and problem formulation. The methodology section shows the choices of theory, empirical data and research strategy. The aim is that, a combination of theory and perspectives from relevant scholars will refine the analysis. In this research I preferred to conduct a single case study because it administers an opportunity to work in-depth with a single case and the context into which the case exists.³ By recognizing U.S. foreign policy after 9/11 as a single case, it is likely to see developments and motion within this case. A case study attempts to explain: *“decision or decisions: why they were taken [and] how they were implemented”*.⁴ These components within a case study is significant to this research since I aim to understand why the changes in U.S. foreign policy came along after 9/11 and how the Bush administration cogitated their strategy to implement ways to provide the best protection for the national security of U.S.

Research strategy

Document analysis is a strategy that has the benefit of not having to create data, which in this research is favorable since the access to conducting e.g. interviews with individuals relevant to answering the problem formulation is challenging. This strategy means having to depend on data already collected and recognizing that bias can happen in terms of this secondhand data.

Choice of Empirical data

Document analysis means examining the content of documents recognizing the context of what the document is generated from. The empirical data comprise of National Security

³ de Vaus, 2012, p. 220

⁴ Yin, 2009, p. 17

Strategy of the United States (NSS) reports from 2002, 2006 and 2010. The NSS reports from 2002 and 2006 are published by the Bush administration while the NSS from 2010 was released by the Obama administration. These NSS reports give an insight of the defined goals of foreign policy by these two presidents. The report from 2006 is a revised version of the NSS from 2002, outlining what the goals were and what successes and disputes have occurred in the four years that passed.

Theory

Mechanistic Realism

Mechanistic Realism (MR) perceives the fundamentals of social research as exploring significant phenomena. When detailing a phenomenon, the descriptions do not need to be thorough to be suitable, and additionally some phenomena cannot be described thoroughly, such as beliefs and values, that are ontologically subjective but epistemologically objective.⁵ The use of mechanisms have two prospects, the first is to "*disclose the causal chains that are hidden inside statements about general causal regularities*"⁶ and second "*identify the causal mechanism responsible for observations of interests.*"⁷ This implies, to convene several causal mechanisms that are extensive and more general than descriptions, but meanwhile are less precise than actual laws.

MR applies John Mearsheimers version of Realism, known as Offensive Realism, as a base point.⁸ The logic behind Mearsheimers take on Realism is not just a systemic theory, but as well an explanatory model of foreign policy and the decision-makers involved. MR attempts to take Realism to the least conceivable dimension of absorption and to do so Mearsheimers Offensive Realism is well put to use than e.g. Waltz definition of Realism, which is admitted by Waltz himself as just having the capacity to reveal insight on the systemic processes, and not on decision-maker processes in relation to foreign policy.⁹ MR varies from Offensive Realism on many phases. Most particularly is the fact that MR does not pursue to provide a grand theory of IR. MR produces a toolbox that will center on decision-making in foreign policy on three levels.

⁵ Rø, 2013, p. 21

⁶ Rø, 2013, p. 24

⁷ Rø, 2013, p. 24

⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 39

⁹ Rø, 2013, p. 39

Despite the fact MR is centered on explaining the decision-making process in foreign policy, it also has clear meanings of what makes a state, and this view is comparatively Realistic. MR illustrate a black box in which individuals hoover.¹⁰ And in this black box are the individual variables that effect state action, it is this black box that MR opens and explore the content and consequences of. The characteristics that describe a state is also taken from Offensive Realism, and then revised and put under a critical light in order to validate the tools of MR.¹¹

The twelve Mechanisms

The mechanisms themselves are provided as singular standalone tools that can be used individually or combined in order to explain foreign policy decision-making. These tools will be explained in short terms in this section, and then more thoroughly operationalized in the analysis in order to help explain the problem field and at the same time demonstrate the explanatory power of MR.

The first mechanism in the toolbox is "*The primacy of security*".¹² National security is the number one priority of a state in an anarchic world.¹³ This means, that the quest for survival is the highest goal among decision-makers and that they will make decisions that will ensure this goal. If this goal is not achieved, no other goals can be achieved: "*it is generally accepted that it is uncontentious to suggest that states aim to survive.*"¹⁴

The second mechanism is "*Observation and fear*".¹⁵ This means, that states observe and interpret other states actions in a fear related context. State leaders will draw conclusions based upon e.g. increased army, increased military spending, new technology, forming of alliances etc. These conclusions will be negative and interpreted in a way that will make decision-makers act on the basis of fear and emotion, and herein use cognition, which is directly linked to emotion.¹⁶ It is however important to be aware of the fact, that this mechanism is based on the assumption of proper rational belief formation. If the beliefs of a state are in fact incorrect then the mind of the individual can be unwarranted, and cause for ill-advised behavior.¹⁷

¹⁰ Rø, 2013, p. 48

¹¹ Rø, 2013, p. 48

¹² Rø, 2013, p. 49

¹³ Rø, 2013, p. 49

¹⁴ Rø, 2013, p. 49

¹⁵ Rø, 2013, p. 49

¹⁶ Rø, 2013, p. 50

¹⁷ Rø, 2013, p. 50

The third mechanism is "*Uncertainty and fear*".¹⁸ This means, uncertainty of intentions of other individual actors and also uncertainty caused by inconclusive evidence. When decision-makers interact with each other they have no real clarity about whether or not their counterpart has the motivations and intentions that he expresses. This is a cause for fear, as is evidence, which is circumstantial and thereby not conclusive. Inconclusive evidence will cause fear because decision-makers cannot conclude that they are *not* under threat, and therefore they are inclined to conclude the opposite.¹⁹

The fourth mechanism is "*Counter-wishful thinking and fear*".²⁰ This mechanism comes into play when states see friendly or complying actions of other states, but due to the anarchic structure of the international society, the states interpret these actions as attempts to trick the decision-makers to believe in a friendly relationship and then carry on with obscure motives. Therefore, decision-makers tend to view acts of friendship and cooperation as being a cause of fear and therefore treat it as possible threats to national interests.²¹

The fifth mechanism is "*(a) Power maximizing, (b) Power preservation and (c) Power amassment within reasonable limits*".²² Depending on the situation, decision-makers tend to maximize the power of the state they make decisions on behalf of. Leaders will always strive towards increased power, and this plays a role in the decision-making process as an increase of power is seen as merely positive, even though there might be other negative consequences following the decision that leads to an increase of power. The term *Power preservation* is, describes Rø, more in line with Waltz's opinion: "*first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the system*".²³ In essence this means that states will seek a policy that will make them able to maintain their current level of power, given that this level is acceptable to them. The term *Power amassment within reasonable limits* argues that, based on situational awareness, decision-makers will try to solve matters of international conflict by finding a middle ground between power maximizing and power preservation.²⁴ Again, this is based on the assumption that states and individual decision-makers alike act rational. By acting accordingly to mechanism 5c, they show resolve and willingness to balance power within reasonable limits.

¹⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 50

¹⁹ Rø, 2013, pp. 50-52

²⁰ Rø, 2013, p. 52

²¹ Rø, 2013, pp. 52-53

²² Rø, 2013, p. 53

²³ Rø, 2013, p. 55

²⁴ Rø, 2013, p. 57

The sixth mechanism is "*The primacy of military means*".²⁵ When considering strategic options in foreign relations, military resources available is the main point of focus in order to decide which course of action to be taken. Decision-makers have other resources to obtain more power, such as culture, finance, political power and media. However when operating under this kind of mechanism, decision-makers will be inclined to think that military is the primary tool to obtain power.²⁶

The seventh mechanism is "*Self-help thinking*".²⁷ When states are in a world that lacks the presence of a supranational authority, they will rely on themselves to solve matters and especially to increase their own security.²⁸ Decision-makers will not deposit the power to determine their own security in the hands of other states and they will help themselves because: "*states cannot depend on others for their own survival*"²⁹ and "*it pays to be selfish in a self-help world*".³⁰ It is obvious that states will help themselves achieving their goals, which affects the decision-makers in a way that will be more selfish on behalf of the state and also in matters that are not about acute national security.

The eighth mechanism is "*Precautionary action*".³¹ When decision-makers need to form a response to a national security threat they are likely to respond to a worst-case scenario.³² The reason is that, in an anarchic world, there is a high risk if your own national security is not based on a solid foundation. This makes decision-makers inclined to act preemptive and to play the power game on the safe side in context of their own national security.³³

The ninth mechanism is "*Timing*".³⁴ This mechanism is linked with mechanism 5, since timing is essential when evaluating what time is the best to power maximize or to power preserve. Timing therefore tends to influence decision-makers within other mechanisms. Decision-makers will especially try to time their actions right, if they believe that circumstances is likely to change in their favor in the future.³⁵

²⁵ Rø, 2013, p. 57

²⁶ Rø, 2013, p. 57

²⁷ Rø, 2013, p. 58

²⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 59

²⁹ Rø, 2013, p. 59

³⁰ Rø, 2013, p. 59

³¹ Rø, 2013, p. 60

³² Rø, 2013, p. 60

³³ Rø, 2013, pp. 60-61

³⁴ Rø, 2013, p. 61

³⁵ Rø, 2013, p. 61

The tenth mechanism is "*Geography*".³⁶ This mechanism is simply about the location of states and their interdependence and influence on each other, based on geography. The most determining fact is, if there is water between states. This leads decision-makers to conclude that power maximizing across vast oceans is difficult to achieve.³⁷ This should relieve states from some of the fear they possess, if they believe, that states tend not to want to conquer territory across oceans. However, it is relevant to keep in mind that this mechanism might be weaker than some of the other mechanisms, and thereby it might not lower the security of states.³⁸

The eleventh mechanism is "*Power distribution and deterrence*".³⁹ This mechanism is based on the assumption that states are aware of the power balance in world society and that this effects the decisions from a cost/benefit point of view. If it is concluded, by the decision-makers, that the costs will exceed benefits because of the awareness of power balance, then an otherwise attractive initiative becomes unattractive and less likely to be decided on.⁴⁰

The twelfth mechanism is "*Regional hegemony*".⁴¹ This mechanism basically explains that when a state has reached regional hegemony it will 1) try to preserve this position and 2) try to prevent other states in other parts of the world of achieving the same thing in order to preserve their own power and not create a shift in the balance of power. However, this only applies on regional hegemony and this mechanism is therefore in conflict in some way with mechanism 5a.⁴² This mechanism rests on the foundation, that individuals: "*observe arguments of decreasing marginal utility suggested by mechanism 5b.*"⁴³

Foreign Policy Analysis

Professor Richard C. Snyder is one of the founders of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). The theory emerged as a criticism to some of the international relations theories that appeared in the aftermath of WW2. Snyder challenged the ideas of national power and national interests as satisfying explanatory tools when studying the phenomena of international relations. Snyder viewed, that a definition of state action had to be about the behavior of the state's decision-makers. A pluralistic approach arose, bringing in data and perspectives from social sciences

³⁶ Rø, 2013, pp. 61-62

³⁷ Rø, 2013, p. 62

³⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 62

³⁹ Rø, 2013. p. 63

⁴⁰ Rø, 2013. p. 63

⁴¹ Rø, 2013. p. 63

⁴² Rø, 2013. p. 63

⁴³ Rø, 2013. p. 63

and other behavioral studies, when trying to explain the nature of foreign policy decision-making.⁴⁴

Three levels of analysis

FPA operates on three levels focusing on individual level, state level and systemic level analysis seeking to understand the process of foreign policy decision-making from different perspectives.

Individual level

Individual level analysis starts with the assumption that it is people who make policy.⁴⁵

Decision-making processes are therefore an integral part of the individual level analysis. The individual behavior of decision-makers is important, in order to understand why they made the choices they did. Implicit is the recognition that individuals are bound by limitations in terms of resources, information and time. Instead of an ongoing search for a better solution, when faced with these limitations, individuals will settle for the first acceptable solution.⁴⁶

Snyder draws on conclusions of scholars of IR such as Robert Jervis, when Snyder argues, that:

“individuals, short on time and operating in uncertain environments marked by ambiguous information, rely on history and their personal experiences to draw analogies for

understanding how to operate in the current situation.”⁴⁷ Furthermore explaining, that

policy-makers draw on lessons from history, calculating if such a situation has happened before then how was it responded to and whether or not this response was successful. These analogies can be powerful reminders of failures in U.S. foreign policy, elements sometimes referred to as quagmire, a term describing that some situations are too dangerous for U.S. to be involved in. Individual level analysis provides some factors that are crucial in

understanding foreign policy. These are: Cognitive factors, Emotional factors, Psychological factors and Perceptions.⁴⁸ All these play a role in the decision-making process when

conducting an individual level analysis on foreign policy decision-making. Cognitive factors, in short are deciding on choices based on bounded rationality.⁴⁹ This means, when decision-

makers are presented with choices they act within this rationality term and they act with tools provided from within that, which are shaping their decisions in ways that are

systematical in its nature. Decision-makers act on the basis of the factors above, one could

argue that this might seem irrational. However keep in mind the first assumption, that people

⁴⁴ Snyder, 2002, pp. vii - ix

⁴⁵ Rourke, 2008, p. 65

⁴⁶ Snyder, 2002, p.157

⁴⁷ Snyder, 2002, p.157

⁴⁸ Rourke, 2008, pp. 65-68

⁴⁹ Rourke, 2008, p. 66

create policy. FPA recognizes fear as an important part of the decision-making process, since fear influences perceptions. Perception plays a part in how decision-makers react to situations and when they fear for national security the perception on the actions of other states will influence decision-making. If an objectively positive action is perceived negatively by another state, it will tend to make decisions on foreign policy more selfish in the name of national security. Jervis, in Alden, argues that “misperception” is very important when analyzing decision-making process. This means that decision-makers draw on their own understanding of history, which they act on the basis of.⁵⁰ A recent critical review on FPA has suggested the advantage of applying a rational choice theory to decision-making process in order to achieve a more solid model to process the outcome of foreign policy.⁵¹ Even though the assumption is, that decision-makers act rational, it is important to keep in mind that they are influenced by many factors, primarily that they act in a “preservationist” way. This means, that they try to at least uphold the current situation and thereby produce less than optimal solutions.⁵² Rational choice theory would include that basic laws of choice applies and that states will seek maximization of utility, meaning their number one priority will be their own national interests, whatever they might be, and that they would conduct a cost/benefit analysis of choices at hand, seeking to choose the option that has the least cost for the sovereign state itself.⁵³

When looking at an individual’s organizational behavior it is important to note two dominating factors, which is the self-expectations and the external expectations. How an individual act in a group dynamic is influenced by these two factors that combined determine how a person acts.⁵⁴ Decision-making within such an organization relies heavily on the concept of group thinking. When individuals within a group try to make decisions, the process is filled with compromises and individuals trying to affect other individuals, especially the leader.⁵⁵

State Level

For decision-making to occur, individuals of course need to be present. However a political structure also needs to be present and in this structure, states are the most important building block of this structure.⁵⁶ When shifting to a more macro-level of analysis the focus will automatically be more on foreign policy, and not so much on decision-making. The arena

⁵⁰ Alden, 2012, p. 21

⁵¹ Alden, 2012, p. 15

⁵² Alden, 2012, p. 21

⁵³ Alden, 2012, p. 15

⁵⁴ Rourke, 2008, p. 72

⁵⁵ Rourke, 2008, p. 72

⁵⁶ Rourke, 2008, p. 78

that individual decisions take place within is likely to influence the outcome of the decisions on foreign policy.⁵⁷ This arena is another term for the political structure just mentioned. States and organizations play a vital role in creating this arena where policy is being made. Types of government also affect the process of foreign policy. If a government is more authoritarian the making of foreign policy are more likely to be centered at the top of the power structure, whereas in democracies the process is more likely to be open and take inputs from legislatures, organizations, media and public opinion.⁵⁸ Macro-level analysis is closely related to more conventional IR theory, and therefore is not focused on foreign policy.⁵⁹ It is however important to draw upon different levels of analysis to retain the possibility of different kinds of variables to occur and influence the outcome of foreign policy. Creating foreign policy in crisis times, where the policy created has an immediate and clear effect is called “intermestic policy”.⁶⁰ On these types of policies FPA says that legislators, interest groups, political and organizational branches come into play in creating the foreign policy. This decreases the power inside the power center of a state. When defining the actors in the state, it is noteworthy to explain that the power runs from head of government to political executives.⁶¹ Different factors then affect how policies are produced and carried out. To conclude, FPA acknowledges the state as an actor and as an important part of creating foreign policy.⁶² Let us also look back on Snyder’s definition, that the state is an integral part of the political structure, but what determines a state are the individual decision-makers that creates the state and its decisions.⁶³

Systemic Level Analysis

While countries may in theory have the option of deciding freely on foreign policy, as shown it is important for decision-makers to act rationally and make sound and reasonable decisions. System-level analysis focuses more on the external restraints on foreign policy.⁶⁴ The structure of the international system will influence states and individuals and how they act in foreign policy matters. In this level of analysis a more obvious restricted arena for states and individuals to act and these restraints can be divided to the following factors: The systems

⁵⁷ Hudson, 2007, p. 143

⁵⁸ Rourke, 2008, p. 78

⁵⁹ Hudson, 2007, p. 144

⁶⁰ Rourke, 2008, p. 80

⁶¹ Rourke, 2008, p. 82

⁶² Alden, 2012, p. 29

⁶³ Snyder, 2002, p. 4

⁶⁴ Rourke, 2008, p. 91

structural characteristic, its power relations, its power relationships, and its norms.⁶⁵ State behavior is seen as being dependent on the structure of the international system.⁶⁶ Within the international system level analysis it is an assumption that states have different interests that each transpires through the interests of the individual decision-makers.⁶⁷ International level analysis sees the international relations between states, as the primary interest of states. These include: national security, the economic security of a state, and the political sovereignty. These goals are defined as vital to a state's survival and therefore integral in the international system level analysis as they see relations between states as a measure of how well these goals are achieved.⁶⁸ This point is highly relevant also in regard to Mechanistic Realism, especially mechanisms 1 and 5. Here same points can be recognized. And therefore these views from both FPA and MR are essential in order to analyze foreign policy on an international systemic level.

⁶⁵ Rourke, 2008, p. 91

⁶⁶ Bova, 2012, p. 71

⁶⁷ Bova, 2012, p. 72

⁶⁸ Bova, 2012, p. 72

Data Analysis

National Security Strategy 2002

One of the most remarkable changes in U.S. foreign policy from Bill Clinton to George W. Bush is the use of preemptive strikes. When Bush released his National Security Strategy (NSS) report on September 17, 2002 he sealed the argument of preemptive strikes by saying: *"We cannot let our enemies strike first."*⁶⁹ Preemptive strikes against a supposed enemy are seen as somewhat controversial, because it changes the nature of the origins of a military conflict. In the NSS report, the Bush administration argues that U.S. will evoke their right to use preemptive attacks against enemies that threatens U.S. security and that U.S. will act on the basis of their own interest and actions will be adjusted accordingly.⁷⁰ According to FPA systemic level analysis, views the international system as a venue that presents limitations on foreign policy. Since states are guided by their prime objective of securing their national security it is therefore a dilemma when U.S. obtains a preemptive policy. This undermines the political sovereignty of other states and in the view of mechanism five b the preemptive policy is a mean for U.S. to uphold their position in the system. In this context, one can argue, that the only way for U.S. to preserve their power in this situation is by maximizing their power through the right to attack other states that could, in the perception of decision-makers, present a threat for U.S. in the future.

On the surface the NSS seems like a document of peace and prosperity. Its three key arguments are focused on creating corporation with allies, seeking peace by spreading democracy all over the world and assuring peace in troubled regions. However what has later been proven by fact is that, the points in the NSS that has been used in practice, is the use of military power to ensure national security and to strengthen U.S. interests. The conclusions above are drawn by. In his essay he explains the nature of Bush's NSS in 2002 and views the key points in order to explain what problems the NSS might have in terms of real politics. Gaddis says, that some of the problems with the NSS are multitasking, the welcoming and maintaining of the moral high ground.⁷¹ In detail Gaddis believes, that the success of an invasion in Iraq relies on the coalition's ability to multitask, meaning fighting wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq at the same time. Furthermore it depends, according to Gaddis, on the welcome of U.S. troops in Iraq. If the people of Iraq do not respond well to the invasion, then

⁶⁹ NSS, 2002, p. 15

⁷⁰ Gaddis, 2002, p. 340

⁷¹ Gaddis, 2002, pp. 340-341

there would be a whole range of problems that U.S. did not face in Afghanistan earlier on. Here it must be noted that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld worked on the war planning on Iraq with the assumption that the Iraqi people would welcome U.S. soldiers as liberators.⁷² Finally Gaddis says, that a successful operation depends on U.S. being able to communicate that they have the moral right and authority to invade Iraq and enforce democracy in the region. The essay is written in late 2002, and therefore before the invasion of Iraq itself. So the question becomes, on which basis, other than the NSS document, does Gaddis draw these criteria for success?

In general terms the Bush Doctrine is mostly considered as a strategy, which is natural because the NSS is exactly that, namely a strategy. However Ivo Daalder & James Lindsay (DL) have in their article "America Unbound: The Bush Revolution" gone further by calling the Bush doctrine a revolution. DL accounts for Bush's desire to be proactive not reactive, and furthermore to rely on coalitions of the willing.⁷³ The authors also reflect upon Bush's need to reject the balance of power and instead try to unite great powers in a cause for eliminating terrorists and thereby enhance the national security of U.S. DL explains that they see two main beliefs that the Bush revolution rests on. First is that, the only way to make sure that America is safe is to remove all limitations put on U.S. by friends, allies and international organizations.⁷⁴ U.S. cannot trust any countries to protect them since they, DL argues, are not interested in helping anyone other than themselves and their own security. These arguments by DL are clearly located within the MR toolbox of analyzing international relations. As mechanism one states: "*Structural anarchy (...) is the essential feature of the contemporary system, and it gives rise to the security dilemma: in a self-help system one nation's search for security often leaves its current and potential adversaries insecure, any nation that strives for absolute security leaves all others in the system absolutely insecure.*"⁷⁵ In this quotation the points made by DL can clearly be seen, as feasible from a FPA point of view. The pursuit by U.S. of absolute security is only obtainable by using a unilateral approach to foreign policy in general.

The NSS report released in 2002 paved the way for a different approach to foreign policy in the years ahead. In its opening statement it reads: "*Defending our Nation against its enemies*

⁷² Woodward, 2004, p. 62

⁷³ Daalder, 2003, p. 344

⁷⁴ Daalder, 2003, p. 344

⁷⁵ Ikenberry, 2005, p. 15

is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government".⁷⁶ This notion fits well with the assumption of mechanism one. The pursuit of national security is the top priority and one that must be achieved before any other goals can be focused on. The decisions Bush and his administration made in the following years were somewhat seen as controversial. Bush explains, in his memoir, the reasoning behind the decisions made: *"I had vowed to do what was necessary to protect the country (...) my most solemn duty, the calling of my presidency was to protect America"*.⁷⁷ Bush did operate from a belief that his main task at hand was to protect the country. His beliefs and fears towards the security of U.S. as being in danger influenced him, in collaboration with his advisers and the rest of the administration, to be very aggressive in the forming of a new foreign policy. The critique of this argument is that the perception that the administration gave to the world was that of a nation that wanted to spread liberty and democracy, and this were the primary focus.⁷⁸ However it would be rash to assume that national security was not on the top of the list of priorities, mainly because of the individual influences that played a significant role in the planning of a new national security strategy. Rø concludes, that while Bush did accept that U.S. went to wars in self-defense, he never argued privately or publicly that U.S. should go to war only to promote democracy.⁷⁹ Therefore, even though Bush might have held some idealistic beliefs, he then made some rather rational choices, or at least some advised and influenced choices. It is also important to note, that the decisions was not made by Bush alone, as I will return in depth to later in the analysis. Gaddis sees the NSS report from 2002 as maybe the most important formulation of a new grand strategy for American foreign policy in more than 50 years. He says, that he believes, that there is an argument to be made about Bush executing the idealistic project that Woodrow Wilson had started 80 years earlier, namely that of the spread of democracy to distant corners of the world.⁸⁰ This is quite a statement and in my view an undocumented one. While Bush publicly gave an impression of being idealistic he himself said in 1999: *"A president must be a clear-eyed realist"*.⁸¹ There is, in my view, no real evidence to suggest that Bush had a Wilsonian grand ambition of changing the world into a global democracy, and I therefore disagree with Gaddis assessment in this specific regard. Conflicting opinions about this NSS report exists, obviously. However, when looking in retrospect, the order of priorities were listed in a way where national security ranked the

⁷⁶ NSS, 2002, p. i

⁷⁷ Bush, 2010, p. 15

⁷⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 78

⁷⁹ Rø, 2013, p. 79

⁸⁰ Gaddis, 2002, p. 341

⁸¹ Mazarr, 2003

highest,⁸² on a meeting with senior staff about the strategy ahead in terms of especially Iraq, with participation of Rumsfeld, Rice, Powell and others the word “democracy” appeared on bullet point eight, of eight total bullet points.⁸³

The War on Iraq

The justification

*“The hard fact is that as long as Saddam is in power, he threatens the security of his own people, the peace of his region, and the security of the world”.*⁸⁴ This statement by former president Bill Clinton shows, that even in 1998 Iraq was a concern for U.S. politicians and that the conflict with Iraq goes further back than just to 2003. There are diverse views on why U.S. in March 2003 chose to engage in a military conflict with Iraq. While some believe it was a neo-conservative branch of the Bush administration that pushed U.S. to war, others believe it was primarily because of the political and economic ramifications involved.

As recognized that, the conflict with Iraq goes several decades back, the impact 9/11 attacks had on the shaping of U.S. foreign policy making will be examined. As Bush notes: *“Then 9/11 hit, and we had to take a fresh look at every threat in the world”.*⁸⁵ There were a wide range of threats against U.S. in the wake of 9/11 such as hostile governments, nations that violated international law and dictators that pursued weapons of mass destruction. According to Bush, Iraq combined all those threats.⁸⁶ The observation of Iraq in the aftermath created fear and a need to actively pursue security because of the perceived threat that Iraq posed to the national security of U.S. This fear was especially created because U.S. had intelligence that suggested that Iraq had or was close to having WMD's.⁸⁷ This fear, which was also recognized by the administration itself, caused the decision-makers to decide in the light of the fear that they had when dealing with Iraq. When applying mechanisms two and three to this process it is interesting to look at some of the reasoning behind the decisions made.

According to information from within the Bush administration, the fear of rogue states obtaining WMD's made significant impact on Bush's actions in planning for the foreign policy ahead, and his stance on Iraq policy especially.⁸⁸ After 9/11 the national security was highly

⁸² Rø, 2013, p. 80

⁸³ Woodward, 2004, p. 56

⁸⁴ Clinton, 1998

⁸⁵ Bush, 2010, p. 228

⁸⁶ Bush, 2010, p. 228

⁸⁷ Woodward, 2004, p. 354

⁸⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 83

prioritized and Cheney said: *"The standards of proof would have to be lowered - smoking gun, irrefutable evidence would not have to be required for the United States to act to defend itself"*.⁸⁹ This shows that, when you lower the mark for when an observation, a perception or a threat is a cause for concern, then you are inclined to be less tolerant and will seek to maximize your own national security in a more absolute way. Thereby I see that mechanism two and three combines with mechanism five in order to explain the reasoning behind decisions made, and then how they are carried out in practice. This also combines the individual level of analysis with the state level. As accounted for earlier, Snyder views the state as a result of the individuals that make decisions on behalf of the state. Mechanism two and three influences the decision-makers in a way that then influences the state as an international actor. The state strives for security and power and by upholding the political structure in a globalized international society they uphold the standards of how states act within the FPA tradition. In the case of U.S. it is clear that in the buildup for what eventually became the Iraq War, U.S. sought a multilateral approach to problem solving and crisis management. However, it was always clear, that if U.S. could not achieve a multilateral approach, they would be prepared to act unilateral. As a matter of fact, the war planning for Iraq was based on the thesis that U.S. would have to fight the war unilaterally.⁹⁰ In order to see the state as an actor and to see some of the overall ambitions of the state, let us look back at the NSS strategy from 2002 where it reads: *"Today, the international community has the best chance since the rise of the nation-state (...) to build a world where nations compete in peace instead of continually prepare for war"*.⁹¹ U.S. here states, that they as a nation wish to compete in a secure environment without the constant fear of war. They see the international system as a tool to achieve this goal. When looking at the foreign policy making on a systemic level, U.S. encourages, at least publicly, the use of international cooperation in order to uphold peace and security. In their NSS report they also acknowledge that in order to achieve their own goals they need to work together with the world society. *"We are also guided by the conviction that no nation can build a safer, better world alone"*.⁹² U.S. as a nation here declares that they believe in international systems like U.N., NATO and others alike. U.S. accepts the premise of balance of power, and that in order for U.S. to obtain and preserve power there has to be a level of power distribution to other

⁸⁹ Rø, 2013, p. 83

⁹⁰ Woodward, 2004, p. 58

⁹¹ NSS, 2002, p. 9

⁹² NSS, 2002, p. iii

nations and international organizations.⁹³ The NSS report also acknowledges the political structure of the international system as it reads: *"In building a balance of power that favors freedom, the United States is guided by a conviction that all nations have important responsibilities"*.⁹⁴

To sum up on this point, the three different perspectives on the conduct of U.S. government in this period leading up to the Iraq War is all entangled because of the structure of 1) the state and 2) the international system. Individual decision-makers played an enormous role in the decision to go to war with Iraq but they acted within a set of rules and a structure already predetermined by history and tradition.

War planning and decision-making

The decision-making process and actual war planning for the ongoing conflict with Iraq did take years. From the beginning of his presidency, Bush and his inner circle worked on a plan to deal with Iraq. Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Vice-president Dick Cheney and National Security advisor Condoleezza Rice were at the center of the power structure along with a few other key members of the administration and the CIA director George Tenet and military General Tommy Franks. When analyzing this group of individuals who planned, and decided on which strategies to execute, it is important to consider some of the factors involved when individuals decide on foreign policy and matters of national security.

As known the quest for the spread of democracy was one of the arguments made in terms of justification for the Iraq War. Many of the decision-makers in U.S. at the time believed that democracy would be implemented in Iraq shortly after U.S. attacks. This expectation was however biased because the decision-makers ignored a number of facts such as the diverse composition of the public in Iraq, religion, culture, history and other aspects when they made their assessment of the chance of democracy in Iraq.⁹⁵ This, in FPA, is viewed as wishful thinking bias, meaning that leaders tend to have unrealistic expectations to the outcome of their foreign policy decisions.⁹⁶ It seems that there were two main priorities towards the War. First, the ambition of national security and second the spread of freedom and democracy. It is important to consider that the second goal was the one that was spoken of the most in public. However, according to Woodward as previously shown, inside of the administration the

⁹³ NSS, 2002, p. iii

⁹⁴ NSS, 2002, p. iii

⁹⁵ Mintz, 2010, p. 41

⁹⁶ Mintz, 2010, p. 41

national security and Americas interest definitely had the most weight when deciding on how to proceed in the Iraq matter. The fact that the war planning had been going on since 2001, in 2003 in the immediate buildup to the Iraq War, which according to leading military generals in U.S. army would take at least 90 days⁹⁷ meant that any evidence that came up that suggested that Iraq did not act in a way that objectively could be perceived as hostile was in large part ignored by U.S. government.⁹⁸ This shows, that Counter-wishful thinking also was playing a role in the decision-making within the administration. Mechanism four, which is about the power of counter-wishful thinking, suggests that some of the reports that were presented by Chief of U.N. inspectors in Iraq Hans Blix posed some rather subtle conclusions.⁹⁹ After inspecting Iraq for several months Blix concluded that: “ *the inspectors (...) had searched all over Iraq for several years without finding any traces (of WMD’s)*”.¹⁰⁰ Blix also argues, that he of course couldn’t guarantee that WMD’s was not present in Iraq, he and his team of inspectors did however not find any, nor did they find any trace of any.¹⁰¹ As history shows, U.S. did go to war with Iraq despite of the hesitant reports by U.N. inspectors. This shows, that Counter-wishful thinking was in effect in the Bush administration. U.N. told the Security Council that Iraq had been cooperative on almost every level, even though there were some minor problems. When looking at this from mechanism four’s point of view it is clear, that actions taken by Iraq towards U.N. is either ignored or simply perceived as being an attempt to trick the enemy into believing change has been made. This perception of information gathered in Iraq and presented by U.N. to U.S., is clearly counter-wishful in its nature, it also shows the fear that have been described that inclines decision-makers within the administration to think in a counter-wishful way.¹⁰² In essence, the fact that U.S. in the 1990’s had underestimated the progress of Iraqi nuclear programs made them overcorrect on this issue in 2002-2003 and they perceived all actions by the Iraqi leadership as hostile and thereby, they set themselves on high alert with the fear of an imminent threat as being present, even though the evidence and intelligence somewhat suggested otherwise.¹⁰³

Neo-conservative paradigm

Bush was known as a president that relied heavily on advice from different policy advisors. In this administration in particular there was a significant part of the president’s advisors that

⁹⁷ Woodward, 2004, p. 135

⁹⁸ Mintz, 2010, pp. 41-42

⁹⁹ Rø, 2013, p. 90

¹⁰⁰ Rø, 2013, p. 90

¹⁰¹ Rø, 2013, p. 90

¹⁰² Rø, 2013, p. 91

¹⁰³ Rø, 2013, p. 94

subscribed to the neo-conservative direction of politics including Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz. After the 9/11 attacks the political climate was just right for some of the neo-conservative values and policy beliefs to be put into motion.¹⁰⁴ The neocons believed that peace would never come to the Middle East unless they stopped regime corruption and stopped projecting their hatred against Israel.¹⁰⁵ Neocons also believed that a postwar Iraq with democracy and a social middle class and so forth would stabilize the whole region. Tan argues that this assumption was not based on empirical findings whatsoever, but more a hope, based on pure fantasy.¹⁰⁶ Tan further argues, that Saddam did not pose an imminent threat to the national security of U.S. and that the fact that an attack on Iraq could drag on for years was not kept in mind during the planning of the war on Iraq.¹⁰⁷ Tan explains, that the war was based on the assumptions of the most optimistic outcomes. This leads again to the term of wishful thinking bias from the FPA. Tan argues, within this framework as I see it, because he argues that the administration, partly because of its neo-conservative beliefs, did ignore evidence and also obtained false evidence that easily could have been avoided, in order to create an image of Iraq as an imminent global threat.¹⁰⁸ Opposed to this notion about neo-conservatives having influenced the shape of U.S. foreign policy as they wish, Lieber argues that it is a conspiracy theory among left wing writers.¹⁰⁹ Lieber disagrees with the assumption that Bush was easy to influence and therefore not an actual decision-maker. He instead concludes that Bush showed that he was a capable and efficient wartime president in his period in office.¹¹⁰ The NSS from 2002, on which I analyzed upon earlier, Lieber says: “*set out an ambitious grand strategy in response to the combined perils of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction*”¹¹¹ He dismisses the notion that there was a neo-conservative paradigm that shaped the foreign policy. He acknowledges that there were some neocons in the Bush administration, but argues that Bush, Cheney, Rice, Powell and Rumsfeld are not neocons¹¹², and that the highest ranking true neocon in the administration was Paul Wolfowitz who was deputy to Rumsfeld.

¹⁰⁴ Tan, 2009, p. 46

¹⁰⁵ Tan, 2009, p. 47

¹⁰⁶ Tan, 2009, p. 47

¹⁰⁷ Tan, 2009, p.50

¹⁰⁸ Tan, 2009, p. 51

¹⁰⁹ Lieber, 2008, p. 353

¹¹⁰ Lieber, 2008, p. 356

¹¹¹ Lieber, 2008, p. 356

¹¹² Lieber, 2008, p. 356

National Security Strategy 2006

The NSS report of 2006 sums up the successes and challenges presented in the years that passed since the NSS report of 2002. As I argued in the section on NSS 2002 in this project, one of the main elements of the 2002 NSS are preemptive strikes as a mean to protect the national security of U.S. Senior policy analysts Caroline Wadhams and Lawrence J. Korb (CL) identifies a danger within the concept of preemption because an identified threat always will be based on a perception of what *might* happen.¹¹³ This is furthermore underlined by the thinking in mechanism three, which describes that decision-makers always are uncertain of intentions of other actors and that acting from this point combined with inconclusive evidence leads to decision-makers acting from fear and a propensity to assume that a threat is near. The NSS also views this element, when it states that: *“there will always be some uncertainty about the status of hidden programs.”*¹¹⁴ This can be seen in direct context to MR three since the NSS works from an assumption, that even though WMD programs have not been discovered, that does not mean that they do not exist. Professor in Political Science Beth Fischer argues that if a government should pursue preemptive policy then the basic for this policy must be accurate evidence of both intentions and capabilities of potential adversaries.¹¹⁵ Fischer hereby argues that states cannot act on ‘the maybes’. Mechanism three recognizes the difficulties of observing intentions from other individual actors. It is therefore, according FPA state-level analysis, important to recognize the different actors within the state. Hereby stating, that if CIA has provided the decision-makers with inconclusive informations, it becomes a factor that influences foreign policy decision-making. This subject is addressed by Bush in his memoirs where he describes, that Saddam had pretended to possess WMDs because: *“he was worried about looking weak to Iran”*.¹¹⁶ As described in the previous section on Iraq, decision-makers had a major impact on the preemptive policy evolving to a preemptive war policy and that the decisions were based on inconclusive, and in some cases on direct erroneous information. Bush recalls in his memoir that it is hard for anyone to understand how infested the assumption of Saddam Hussein having WMD’s were among decision-makers and intelligence agencies.¹¹⁷ The NSS concludes, that one of the lessons learned is that the American Intelligence agencies must improve.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Korb, 2006, p. 1

¹¹⁴ NSS, 2006, p. 24

¹¹⁵ Fischer, 2012, p. 142

¹¹⁶ Bush, 2010, p. 269

¹¹⁷ Bush, 2010, p. 269

¹¹⁸ NSS, 2006, p. 23

CL argues, that one of the key elements in the NSS report is that it tries to evaluate on the consequences of the NSS in 2002, and because of this it is highly problematic that the NSS: *“reveals and absence of (...) lessons learned from the mistakes of the first term.”*¹¹⁹ CL argues, that a preemptive approach in foreign policy creates a security dilemma in the international society since states might feel threatened. It also raises a predicament since U.S. justifies this preemption, in theory, other states could justify it as well, which could lead to a collapse of international norms that prevent states from attacking other states for the purpose of self-gain.¹²⁰ Fischer argues, that U.S. war on Iraq was the first test for the Bush administration’s preemption policy, but the reactions, both domestic and internationally, viewed the controversial nature of this preemptive policy.¹²¹ In the introduction of NSS 2006, Bush concludes that U.S. has developed stable and cooperative relations during the four years that passed since the first NSS report.¹²² Fischer argues, that the international condemnation of the war on Iraq was a setback for perception of U.S. on the world stage.¹²³ According to MR Mechanism 7, decision-makers act from the assumption that all states act from their own national security interest. The NSS concludes: *“times require an ambitious national security strategy, yet one recognizing the limits to what even a nation as powerful as the United States can achieve by itself.”*¹²⁴ Hereby stating, that U.S. in the future will seek multilateral efforts, rather than unilateral, but that U.S. must continue to lead.¹²⁵ The NSS sums up that U.S. must maintain and expand their national strength, which includes a military strength without peer.¹²⁶ As stated in Mechanism six, decision-makers tend to view military as the primary means and overlooking the other resources available. The NSS report concludes, that the Bush administration has chosen a foreign policy that is consistent with the great policies of Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan.¹²⁷ CL agrees with the view on Mechanism six and argues, that the Bush administration has chosen the military means and that this foreign policy cannot be compared with these two former presidents, since they both sought to rely on other resources.¹²⁸

¹¹⁹ Korb, 2006, p. 1

¹²⁰ Korb, 2006, p. 3

¹²¹ Fisher, 2012, pp 141-142

¹²² NSS, 2006, p. i

¹²³ Fisher, 2012, p. 140

¹²⁴ NSS, 2006, p. 49

¹²⁵ NSS, 2006, p. i

¹²⁶ NSS, 2006, p. i

¹²⁷ NSS, 2006, p. i

¹²⁸ Korb, 2006, p. 3

As described in the section in this project on the NSS from 2002 the three key arguments in that NSS report revolved around cooperation, seeking peace through the spreading of democracy, which would enhance the national security of U.S. and assuring peace in troubled regions. The promotion of democracy is one of the first successes the NSS from 2006 describes: *“Since 2002 (...) the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq have replaced tyrannies with democracies.”*¹²⁹ According to Fischer, the Bush administration’s outspoken goal of promoting democracy reached a point in the years from 2002 to 2006 where it began to overshadow the primary goal, which always should be to protect the American people.¹³⁰ This statement by Fischer would, in the view of mechanism one be incorrect since the Bush administration clearly stated that they would seek to spread democracy to enhance the security of U.S. The security of U.S. is therefore, according to mechanism one, the key element but the spreading of democracy is one of the means to protect U.S. national security. CL argues, that the war on Iraq created better conditions for e.g. Al-Qaeda because a rising resentment against U.S. which created more instability in the region.¹³¹ Bush describes in his memoir that Al-Qaeda did seek to create a new safe haven in Iraq and that this made the mission for the American troops more difficult.¹³² Bush furthermore describes that he believes that the right thing to do was to remove Saddam, and: *“The region is more hopeful with a young democracy setting an example for others to follow.”*¹³³ The NSS report concludes, that the Bush administration: *“inherited an Iraq threat that was unresolved”*¹³⁴ and that even though U.N. Security Council, with Resolution 1441 on November 2002, called for the Iraqi regime to disarm, Saddam once again defied the international community.¹³⁵ Hereby stating, that the Saddam regime’s violation of international norms. According to FPA systemic-level analysis state behavior depends on the structure of the international system and one of the key elements in the systemic-level analysis is, that the relation amongst states is the primary interests of states. The NSS report hereby argues, that the national security of U.S. is endangered because of the Iraqi violation of international law. The NSS report reflects elements of both individual-, state- and systemic-level as they reflect on the successes and challenges U.S. faced in order to protect their national security in the years from 2002 to 2004.

¹²⁹ NSS, 2006, p. 2

¹³⁰ Korb, 2006, p. 4

¹³¹ Korb, 2006, p. 4

¹³² Bush, 2010, p. 268

¹³³ Bush, 2010, p. 267

¹³⁴ NSS, 2006, p. 23

¹³⁵ NSS, 2006, p. 23

Barack Obama and the 2010 NSS

Obama - a revised take on the post 9/11 foreign policy

To see in depth, the changes in foreign policy direction the Obama administration went in, I will examine the NSS from 2010 that states the goals and ambitions for the course of American politics. I will only deal with issues regarding foreign and security politics. One of the main differences from the NSS report from 2002 and the one from 2010 is the view on how to maintain and secure national security. The Obama NSS reads: *"Our long-term security will come from not our ability to install fear in other peoples, but through our capacity to speak to their hopes"*.¹³⁶ This view differs from Bush's view that American security was going to be enforced by seeking to democratize parts of the world that was a threat to U.S. security. The Obama NSS also states that they will pursue their own interest through the international system and by working hard to ensure the balance of power which enables states to feel more secure in a globalized world.¹³⁷ Mechanism eleven comes into play as an explanatory tool here because it tells that the awareness of the balancing of power will make decision-makers more aware of the costs of an offensive, aggressive foreign policy¹³⁸ and also make them more likely to seek less expansive initiatives. The fact that Obama sees the international system as the arena for making global security politics fits right in line with the systemic level analysis of FPA, where I also see the international system as a key actor, which put restraints on states and individuals in order to distribute the responsibility of the policy carried out between states. Obama believes in the international system and want to tweak it so it can more effectively meet the new challenges in respect to security that the world faces.¹³⁹ While the Bush administration is noticed, and especially Rumsfeld, plan the war in a unilateral context, Obama on the other hand wants to include the international community, also in hard decisions: *"Yet it would be destructive to both American and global security if the United States used this emergence of new challenges and the shortcomings of the international system as a reason to walk away from it"*.¹⁴⁰ The international community, the globalized world and the role of states seem to play a larger role in the Obama presidency, whereas in the Bush presidency the individual decision-makers was by far the most dominating figure in determining security policy.

¹³⁶ NSS, 2010, p. iii

¹³⁷ NSS, 2010, p. 1

¹³⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 63

¹³⁹ NSS, 2010, p. 3

¹⁴⁰ NSS, 2010, p. 3

It is important to note that there are different views on how and if the foreign policy changed in its nature during the Bush and Obama administrations. Maria Ryan draws the conclusion that the neocons of the Bush administration did enforce a more militaristic approach to foreign policy, but that it was merely a response to the attacks of 9/11.¹⁴¹ She continues by arguing that since Obama came into office he has carried on the policy that was made during the Bush administration, even though he uses quite different rhetoric. Ryan says that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan became Obama's wars, along with the political conflicts in Syria, Pakistan and other nations in the region.¹⁴² Finally Ryan concludes that the foreign policy of U.S. is not greatly affected by which party or which president is in charge. She says that every administrations top priority is to keep U.S. as the dominant force in the world, and that the neo-conservative influence was not an extreme tweak to American foreign policy: "*the policies advocated by the neoconservatives and their unipolarist allies were firmly within the mainstream historical tradition of American foreign relations*".¹⁴³ Hereby it can be concluded that Ryan sees the attack on 9/11 as a catalyst for the neocons policies to be carried out, but that this does not differ greatly from what another administration would have done in that case. Martha Crenshaw takes almost the same stance but nuances it some by saying that Obama has inherited a set of policies that he not necessary agrees with, but that he cannot escape this legacy because of the geopolitical climate.¹⁴⁴ She goes on by saying: "*Obama entered office with the declared intention of reconstructing American policy towards terrorism, but he has continued many of the policies of his predecessor*".¹⁴⁵ So here, two scholars who sees the transition from Bush to Obama as somewhat irrelevant in terms of how to conduct foreign policy in practice, not saying that there are not disagreements in beliefs, but that the policy is almost identical. On the contrary to these conclusions, Brzezinski states that Obama enforced a new way of decision-making within the administration on foreign policy issues, which was favorable to the outcome of decisions. He also believes that Obama has made an ambitious effort to redefine the foreign policy of U.S. in order to be able to cope with the challenges of the 21' century.¹⁴⁶ Brzezinski believes Obama has succeeded in this effort: "*He has done this remarkably well. In less than a year, he has comprehensively re-conceptualized U.S. foreign policy with respect to several centrally important geopolitical*

¹⁴¹ Ryan, 2010, p.188

¹⁴² Ryan, 2010, p.188

¹⁴³ Ryan, 2010, 189

¹⁴⁴ Crenshaw, 2011, p. 243

¹⁴⁵ Crenshaw, 2011, p. 243

¹⁴⁶ Brzezinski, 2010, p. 16

issues".¹⁴⁷ According to Brzezinski the foreign policy of the administration relies heavily on Obama's perspective and beliefs¹⁴⁸ that according to FPA individual-level analysis is plausible because the individual factors and capabilities a person has, is according to FPA, extremely influential in the decision-making process. Obama's team of decision-makers such as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Vice President Joe Biden and National Security Advisor James Jones are all influential parts of the decision-making process. However Brzezinski, and I agree, argue that there is little evidence to suggest that Obama is as influenced by his advisors as Bush was. Bush looked to Rumsfeld to plan and oversee everything in regard to Iraq and did hint that he did not want to be hands on involved with that process,¹⁴⁹ and although Bush said in his memoir that he was focused on surrounding himself with competent and competing advisors¹⁵⁰, he was known as an easily influenced president. The fact that Obama changed the foreign policy of U.S., which he in my view did, makes sense in the context that the support for an aggressive militaristic foreign policy was fading already in the second term of the Bush presidency. Also the core beliefs of an individual decision-maker plays a part in how he or she wants to shape the policies going forward. I however also acknowledge that Obama did inherit the wars in the Middle East and that he have had some challenges in finishing these wars, in order to start on his project of a reformation of the international system. Finally Brzezinski concludes that the overall project of reformation of the international system and U.S. foreign policy is vulnerable because Obama in his first term had to focus almost all his political power on domestic and financial issues, and therefore it is too early to conclude on his determination to changing the structure of the international system.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Brzezinski, 2010, p. 16

¹⁴⁸ Brzezinski, 2010, p. 17

¹⁴⁹ Woodward, 2004, p. 3

¹⁵⁰ Bush, 2010, p. 66

¹⁵¹ Brzezinski, 2010, p. 18

Conclusion

Conclusion on theory

This leads to another integral finding of this report, precisely that fear and perception was extremely important to the individual decision-makers. Fear is a term that according to MR is fostered by 1) Observations and 2) Uncertainty.¹⁵² Understandably there was a high level of fear in the Bush administration after the attacks on 9/11. U.S. received threats every day and because of the attacks they perceived the threats as being more seriously than they maybe otherwise would. Uncertainty fosters fear that is seen in several of the statements from the Bush administration and also in the actions they took afterwards. E.g. Cheney said *"we don't have all the evidence, we have 10, 20, 30 percent, we don't know much (...) We have part of the picture, and that tells us that he (Saddam Hussein) is actively and aggressively pursuing nuclear weapons."*¹⁵³ This tells, that Cheney even though he recognizes, that they do not have all the facts, he becomes pessimistic instead of complacent. This goes for many statements and actions as have previously shown in the analysis, however this is also a time for looking at the mechanisms that involve fear in a critical way. While the policy towards the Middle East fits with the term fear, when you look at other parts of the world where power balance and political disagreements with U.S. is also imminent, like Russia or China e.g. the tone and perception of actions is quite different. In the NSS from 2006 U.S. and in particular the Bush administration speaks of its friendly and prosperous relationship with Russia, and goes on by saying that democracy is important and that they will continue to support and encourage democracy in Russia.¹⁵⁴ The tone is quite different than when speaking of spreading democracy in the Middle East. The use of preemptive strikes and military actions of any kind is long gone when speaking of Russia. In the 2002 NSS the Bush administration also stated that there were a unique opportunity to work together with all major powers in the world and that they viewed Russia as one of those: *"The United States and Russia are no longer strategic adversaries."*¹⁵⁵ This alongside with the signing of the Moscow Treaty on May 24, 2002¹⁵⁶ underlines that U.S. now viewed Russia as an ally. The point trying to make is that mechanism three in particular faces a problem here, when looking at Iraq mechanism three says that the uncertainty of the actions of Iraq, makes the decision-makers inclined to act pessimistically, but in this case with Russia the Bush administration acted complacent and with trust. There

¹⁵² Rø, 2013, p. 49-50

¹⁵³ Rø, 2013, p. 86

¹⁵⁴ NSS, 2006, p. 44

¹⁵⁵ NSS, 2002, p. 26

¹⁵⁶ Moscow treaty, 2002

was no actual proof that the Russians would uphold the agreement. On a sensitive matter such as the arms reduction of the two countries, it would be plausible according to mechanism three that this uncertainty would foster fear. However this was not the case and Bush among others in the circle of decision makers stated: "*recent developments have encouraged our hope that a truly global consensus about basic principles is slowly taking place.*"¹⁵⁷ The perception of another states actions is perceived entirely different in these two cases, and by the same decision-makers. There are other examples of MR failing to account for other foreign policy decisions, than the ones that applies to the war on terror. Due to the nature of this project I cannot examine them all. But findings shows that MR, as it stands now, is best applied on this case that has been used for. Rø, the author of MR, agrees that it has yet to be empirically tested if MR works on foreign policy in general¹⁵⁸, and by this example given, it has shown a potential weakness to at least one of the mechanisms. In total MR is found very resourceful in order to explain some of the underlying processes behind decision-making, this because the tools increases the level of applicability in order to analyze specific events or actions. When analyzing on state or systemic level I have found FPA more resourceful than MR in terms of explanatory power. FPA recognizes international and state factors more comprehensively than MR and utilizes known theory on the subject more thorough. The use of these two theories has been highly beneficial for the project as this new way of combining theories have shown coherency between individual, state and international system in a way that could not be explained using older grand theories such as Liberalism or Realism.

Conclusion

When first starting the research for this project I worked based on an assumption that U.S. foreign policy had changed since 9/11. This assumption turned out in large part to be true. While many new initiatives were shaped and carried out, I also must conclude that the use of preemptive strikes is not something the Bush administration invented, it has a long history In U.S. foreign policy.¹⁵⁹ The change from focusing on U.S. domestic policy to foreign policy and with such an outspoken military focus must be viewed as a significant change in policy. How this change was brought about is another topic up for examination in this project. While it's recognize that neo-conservatism played a role in the Bush administration I also draw the conclusion that this was one of several factors that played a role in *how* U.S. foreign policy

¹⁵⁷ NSS, 2002, p. 26

¹⁵⁸ Rø, 2013, p. 17

¹⁵⁹ Leffler 1, 2011

changed. Neocons in the administration were as described not top level decision-makers, it has been shown that there are debates about who can be considered neocons or not. The highest ranking member of the administration that was a declared neocon was Paul Wolfowitz. The influence he and others had have been acknowledged, but do not see the change in policy as an expression of a new neoconservative wave of policies that now would be implemented. What is more plausible in my view is to conclude that the attacks on 9/11 created a momentum for a change in policy that was more aggressive. The decision-makers had to respond to the attack, and they did so in Afghanistan. With the NSS of 2002 they had opened the door for more military intervention, a decision that might have been harder to carry out if circumstances had been different in regard to terrorism. The fact that U.S. had been victim of a large scale attack on their own soil made it possible to promote a more militaristic offensive foreign policy strategy. Final hypothesis was that the failed Iraq war forced Obama into seeking a more multilateral approach to foreign policy, suggesting that this was not something he perhaps wanted to do. While the Iraq War is seen as a failure in U.S. foreign policy on a number of parameters, the hypothesis on whether Obama truly wanted the change within the international system is hard to one-sidedly conclude on. If history is to teach decision-makers anything then Obama *had* to change course. The question is if Obama would have sought this change if circumstances were different. When trying to answer this one must turn to Obama himself for answers. In the NSS from 2010 he displays real desire and beliefs in change of how to approach globalization and global processes on a general level: *"As a citizen, Senator, and President, I have always believed that America's greatest asset is its people (...) Our long-term security will come not from our ability to install fear in other people, but through our capacity to speak to their hopes"*¹⁶⁰ Obama demonstrates here that he as an individual as well as a leader and a decision-maker believes in cooperation and trust rather than fear and distrust. History will be the judge on whether he had the motivation and political influence to implement these changes and once again change the course of U.S. foreign policy.

Final conclusion on how decision-makers shaped and executed foreign policy decisions is as follows. I found that the three levels of analysis applied, which are individuals, states, and systemic analysis are all entangled. It is the observation from examining the findings that the individual decision-maker is highly important in shaping and executing foreign policy decisions. As noticed, in especially the Bush administration, a closed circle of decision-makers reshaped

¹⁶⁰ NSS, 2010, pp. li-iii

and implemented new strategies that had an enormous impact on the global society. In regard to especially the Iraq War the international system was somewhat disregarded by the administration in my view. This is something that has then later been reversed by Obama, and in the light of the conflicting visions and ambitions in the NSS from 2002 and the one from 2010 again must underline that the three levels of examining foreign policy all relate to one another. In short, decision-makers are important pieces to foreign policy in both theory and praxis, and the factors that can influence individual decision-makers are many and diverse as presented throughout the project. The further investigation of this process will carry on indefinitely as the individuals that act on the foreign policy arena will constantly change as well.

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