

**American Power in
the Twenty-First Century**

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- Power? The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
- 41 Immanuel Kant, "To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (1795), in idem, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*, ed. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1983), pp. 107–43.
- 42 Charles Kupchan, *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).
- 43 For evidence see Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies*.
- 44 Peter Rudolf, *Krise der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen? Über den Umgang mit den USA* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2002), p. 8.

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The Bush Doctrine: A Chinese Perspective

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The Bush Doctrine as the Culmination of the US Post-Cold War Grand Strategy

On June 1, 2002, during an address at West Point, US President George W. Bush announced to the world "the Bush Doctrine." The doctrine consists of three basic elements. First, the United States will no longer rely solely on "Cold-War doctrines of containment and deterrence." Instead, it will actively pursue the strategy of "preemptive strike," "take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge." Second, the United States will work hard to export democracy, since "the requirements of freedom apply fully to Africa and Latin America and the entire Islamic world." Finally, the United States would keep its military supremacy beyond challenge, "thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace."¹ In September 2002, Bush signed the "National Security Strategy of the United States," which formalizes these three elements of the "Bush Doctrine": preemptive strike, the promotion of democracy, and military supremacy.

It was widely reported in the Western press that the so-called Bush Doctrine has strong roots in the American neoconservative thinking and movement. Paul Wolfowitz's aborted 1992 "Defense

Planning Guidance" already contained the three elements of the Bush Doctrine mentioned above. In 1997, "Project for the New American Century" was founded by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, and Robert Kagan.² As early as 1997, Irving Kristol, the father of US neoconservatism as well as the father of William Kristol, already predicted that:

One of these days, the American people are going to awaken to the fact that we have become an imperial nation, even though public opinion and all of our political traditions are hostile to the idea. It is no overweening ambition on our part that has defined our destiny in this way, nor is it any kind of conspiracy by a foreign policy elite. It happened because the world wanted it to happen, needed it to happen, and signaled this need by a long series of relatively minor crises that could not be resolved except by some American involvement.³

It seems no accident that George W. Bush awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Irving Kristol on July 9, 2002. Also, it may not be surprising to discover that "preemptive strategy" was a key Roman imperial strategy, as forcefully argued by Cicero:

how can you believe that the man who has lived so licentiously up to the present time will not proceed to every extreme of insolence, if he shall also secure the authority given by arms? Do not, then, wait until you have suffered some such treatment and then rue it, but be on your guard before you suffer; for it is rash to allow dangers to come upon you and then to repent of it, when you might have anticipated them . . .⁴

Certainly, there are no shortages of classical scholars among the neoconservatives.⁵

How did Chinese intellectuals perceive and respond to the Bush Doctrine? Of course, there are many divergent viewpoints, but the main perspective can be identified easily: they emphasized the continuity of the Bush Doctrine with Clinton's foreign policy, and considered the Bush Doctrine as the culmination and maturation of the US post-Cold War grand strategy.

We can better appreciate the Chinese view by contrasting it with the pronouncements of some leading opinion-makers in Europe. For example, a leading German public intellectual and philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, emphasized the novelty of the Bush Doctrine: "The United States has, with the Iraq War, . . . given up the role of a guarantor of power in international law; with its violation thereof she sets future superpowers a disastrous example . . . Let's not kid ourselves: America's normative authority lies shattered."⁶ In other words, Habermas and many other European intellectuals tend to perceive the Bush Doctrine as a break with President Clinton's foreign policy.

Why is the Chinese view of the Bush Doctrine different from that of Europeans? Is it simply because China opposed NATO's intervention in Kosovo as well, while Habermas and many others supported it? Of course, for many Chinese, there never was the "normative authority of America" that Habermas talked about. In this chapter I want to outline some deeper geopolitical and philosophical reasons behind the Chinese perspective on the Bush Doctrine as the culmination of the US post-Cold War grand strategy.

Geopolitical Reasons for the Chinese Perspective

The Cold War ended in Europe, but it has not yet fully ended in East Asia. Few Western newspaper readers know that the Korean War has never ended – there was only a cease-fire agreement, no peace treaty. The distrust among all major powers in the region is deep. Many states worry about China as a rising economic and political power. China worries that Taiwan will seek independence with the backing of the US and Japan. In this geopolitical environment, China naturally is more sensitive about American aggressive unilateralism than Europe.

The Chinese view about the continuity between the Bush Doctrine and Clinton's foreign policy seems to be confirmed by the neoconservatives themselves. For example, Kaplan and Kristol stress that "Bush would hardly be acting without precedent if he acted unilaterally against Saddam. After all, President Clinton

resorted to force without U.N. approval on several occasions, each time receiving the support of Daschle and his fellow Democrats." They also quote Richard Holbrooke as saying: "Act without the Security Council, or don't act at all."⁷

The Chinese cannot fail to remember Madeleine Albright's proud words: "We are the indispensable nation, we stand tall – we see further into the future." Zbigniew Brzezinski, a former democratic national security adviser, explained the purpose of the US grand strategy as follows: "to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals [Europe] . . . to keep barbarians from coming together." From the Chinese perspective, the Bush Doctrine is only one step further along the same direction of American grand strategic thinking.

What are the Chinese counterbalancing efforts to set against the unipolar power of the United States? At least four of them can be identified:

- 1 using China's power in the UN Security Council to seek peaceful solutions;
- 2 supporting the euro by diversifying China's foreign currency holding;
- 3 developing Asian trade and monetary cooperation;
- 4 developing trade and security cooperation with Russia and the neighboring states in Central Asia (Shanghai Cooperation Organization or Shanghai Six).

Of course, the Chinese counterbalancing effort is very limited so far. Indeed, China has generally been keeping a low profile in international affairs for the purpose of not being perceived as a "threat." This can be seen vividly in the UN Security Council's resolution veto records (see table 9.1).

As indicated in the table, China has used her veto power only five times since she became a member of the UN Security Council (and almost all her vetoes are in some way related to the Taiwan issue), in contrast with the frequent use by the Soviet Union/Russia (120 times) and the US (76 times).

However, China's "low profile" policy does not mean that her view of the Bush Doctrine and US grand strategy has no real

Table 9.1 UN Security Council veto records

Country	Vetoes	Comments
USSR/ Russia	120	Soviet Union vetoed 79 times in first 10 years of UN. Only 2 vetoes since collapse of Soviet Union in 1991: Cyprus (1993), Bosnia (1994)
US	76	Blocked 35 resolutions criticizing Israel. Blocked resolution alone 53 times
UK	32	23 of UK's 32 vetoes have been on resolutions also vetoed by US. Vetoed a resolution alone only 7 times. All solo vetoes were on Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe)
France	18	13 of France's 18 vetoes have been on resolutions also vetoed by US and UK. France vetoed 2 resolutions alongside UK, both on Suez crisis (1956)
China	5	1946–71, Republic of China (Taiwan) occupied Chinese seat, which used veto once to block Mongolia's application for UN membership. In 1972 China vetoed resolutions twice: Bangladeshi membership, and Middle East. In 1997 blocked the sending of 155 UN observers to Guatemala to verify a cease-fire. In 1999 China blocked extension of mandate of UN Preventive Deployment Force in Macedonia

policy effects. Indeed, the increasing cooperation between China and the EU may be the most important response to the Bush Doctrine on the part of both China and the EU.⁸

Philosophical Reasons for the Chinese Perspective

The Chinese view on the continuity between Clinton and Bush is based on the observation that neoconservatism shares with

liberalism the vision of the United States as a "Redeemer Nation" with "Special Providence." Moreover, both Clinton and Bush based their foreign policy on the theory of "democratic peace" and "human rights trump national sovereignty," as evidenced by the second element of the Bush Doctrine mentioned above.

To appreciate the continuity between neoconservatism and liberalism, we need to realize the forward-looking nature of American neoconservatism, which is in sharp contrast with British conservatism. In the words of a leading British conservative thinker, Michael Oakeshott:

What is esteemed [in conservatism] is the present; and it is esteemed not on account of its connections with a remote antiquity, nor because it is recognized to be more admirable than any possible alternative, but on account of its familiarity. . . . To be conservative, then, is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant . . . the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss.⁹

It is revealing that Irving Kristol, the father of American neoconservatism, explicitly rejected Michael Oakeshott's respect for the present. Kristol declared that Oakeshott

is irredeemably secular, as I – being a Jewish conservative – am not . . . It is impossible for any religious person to have the kinds of attitudes toward the past and the future that Oakeshott's conservative disposition celebrates. Our Scriptures and our daily prayer book link us to the past and to the future with an intensity lacking in Oakeshott's vision.¹⁰

Therefore, US neoconservatism is in fact forward-looking, even revolutionary! It is no surprise that it shares with American liberalism the so-called democratic peace theory.

The "democratic peace" theory was proposed by Princeton political scientist Michael Doyle in the 1980s and gained prominence among US policymakers in the early 1990s as a justification for exporting democracy. It holds that "Liberal States do maintain peace among themselves" while "these republics would

engage in wars with nonrepublics." The reason that democracies do not go to war with each other is that "Institutional features lead to caution," since the consent of citizens is required under democracy.¹¹ Doyle claimed that his "democratic peace theory" originated with Kant's 1795 essay "Perpetual Peace." However, he fundamentally misunderstood Kant's thesis. As Kant explains:

the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether or not war is to be declared, it is very natural that they will have great hesitation in embarking on so dangerous an enterprise. For this would mean calling down on themselves all the miseries of war, such as doing the fighting themselves, . . . having to take upon themselves a burden of debt which will embitter peace itself and which can never be paid off on account of the constant threat of new wars.¹²

It is clear that Kant's reasons for maintaining that republics are more reluctant to go to war are twofold: citizens had to fight themselves and they had to bear the burden of public debt. Neither of these two reasons fits today's "democracies," which have large professional armies and the capacity to issue debt to foreigners. Kant's theses cannot explain, especially, the foreign policy of the United States, given its status as the largest professional military power in the world and the largest debtor country.

The "democratic peace" theory is wrong empirically. As Kenneth Waltz pointed out, the fact that the US have toppled or undermined democratically elected leaders (such as Salvador Allende of Chile and Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic) "cast[s] doubt on the democratic peace thesis."¹³ But, more importantly, Doyle's claim that "liberal states do maintain peace among themselves" while at the same time "these republics would engage in wars with nonrepublics"¹⁴ totally misrepresents Kant's idea: Kant's two reasons for the republics' reluctance to wage war do not tell us anything about the nature of the enemy.¹⁵

It is rather surprising that Doyle's dubious interpretation of Kant's ideas has gained such a wide acceptance in academic and policy circles. Perhaps the only answer to this puzzle is that the "democratic peace theory" may be used to justify the imperial

project. Doyle himself noted that “the protection of cosmopolitan Liberal rights thus bred a demand for imperial rule that violated the liberty of Native Americans, Africans and Asians.”¹⁶ But, as Georg Cavallar points out, Kant in fact argues against the European imperial project by asserting that the cosmopolitan rights of hospitality must not be enforced: “The natives can turn strangers away on condition that this does not cause their death. The [European] strangers in turn are obliged to behave ‘in a peaceable manner’, and if they don’t, the natives act ‘wisely’ if they place restrictions on them.”¹⁷

Doyle ignores Kant’s fifth thesis in “Perpetual Peace,” which states that: “No States shall forcibly interfere in the constitution and government of another state.”¹⁸ Why? Kant’s answer is very clear: “the interference of external powers would be a violation of the rights of an independent people which is merely struggling with its internal ills. Such interference would be an active offence and would make the autonomy of all other states insecure.”¹⁹ Though Kant did not consider the Prussian state of his time as a republic, he did not want foreign interference in the internal affairs of Prussia, as indicated by his opinion that “a people which occupies extended territories in Europe may feel that monarchy is the only kind of constitution which can enable it to preserve its own existence between powerful neighbors.”²⁰

It is interesting to observe that Kant’s noninterference principle is remarkably similar in spirit to the Chinese “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” These principles were first put forward by the late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai when he met an Indian delegation in December 1953. At the first Asia–Africa conference (the Bandung Conference) held in April 1955, Premier Zhou Enlai reiterated these principles, whose spirit was incorporated into the declarations of the conference. In 1982 these Five Principles were written into the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China:

- 1 mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- 2 mutual nonaggression;
- 3 noninterference in each other’s internal affairs;

- 4 equality and mutual benefit;
- 5 peaceful coexistence.

As China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs explains:

Both history and the current international developments since World War II have shown that practices of defining friends and enemy according to differences in social system and values through forming “camps”, “groups”, “the big family” and “alliances” invariably fail. Only by observing the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence can normal state-to-state relations be maintained and a just international order be established. The establishment of a new international order based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence will surely safeguard world peace and promote common development and human progress.²¹

Obviously, the Chinese “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” are the opposite of the Bush Doctrine of preemptive strike, democracy export, and military supremacy. This certainly does not mean that China should not democratize. China must face the challenge of democratic innovations both in economic and political spheres. Frantz Fanon wrote: “If we wish to turn Africa into a new Europe, . . . then let us leave the destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us.”²² The best response to the Bush Doctrine is for the new generation of Chinese intellectuals, policymakers, and common people to develop new institutions of democracy and market economy, thereby contributing to the progress of human civilization beyond the narrow horizon set by Bush and his like.

Notes

- 1 Cited from Lawrence Kaplan and William Kristol, *The War over Iraq: Saddam’s Tyranny and America’s Mission* (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2003), p. 74.
- 2 See their website: www.newamericancentury.org.
- 3 Irving Kristol, “The Emerging American Imperium,” *The Wall Street Journal* (August 18, 1997).

- 4 Cited in Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 21.
- 5 See Saul Bellow's novel *Ravelstein* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2000), pp. 58–9, for a story about Paul Wolfowitz's relation with Allan Bloom. Also, Donald Kagan, the father of Robert Kagan, is a leading scholar of the Roman Empire at Yale.
- 6 See Jürgen Habermas, "Was bedeutet der Denkmalsturz?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (April 17, 2003), p. 33.
- 7 Kaplan and Kristol, *The War over Iraq*, p. 90.
- 8 The policy paper adopted by the European Commission on September 10, 2003, sets out a framework that is intended to guide EU policy and action towards China over the next two to three years. The paper identifies six priorities for relations in the coming years, including sharing responsibilities in promoting global governance, supporting China's transition to an open society based upon the rule of law and the respect for human rights, and promoting China's economic liberation domestically and externally. The paper also contains a number of concrete proposals with a view to enhancing EU–China relations in key areas, including economic and trade relations and China's internal reform process. See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/china/com_03_533/com_533_en.pdf.
- 9 Michael Oakeshott, "On Being Conservative," in Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (London: Basic Books, 1962).
- 10 Irving Kristol, *Neo-Conservatism: The Autobiography of an Idea* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), p. 373.
- 11 Michael Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), pp. 1151–69.
- 12 Immanuel Kant, *Political Writing*, ed. H. S. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 100.
- 13 Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," in G. John Ikenberry, ed., *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 34.
- 14 Doyle, *Liberalism and World Politics*, p. 1159.
- 15 See Georg Cavallar, "Kantian Perspectives on Democratic Peace: Alternatives to Doyle," *Review of International Studies*, 27 (2001), p. 233.
- 16 Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 272.
- 17 Cavallar, *Kantian Perspective*, p. 241.
- 18 Kant, *Political Writing*, p. 96.

- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid., p. 183.
- 21 "Build a New International Order on the Basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" (November 17, 2000), at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao/3602/3604/t18016.htm.
- 22 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Evergreen, 1966), p. 255.