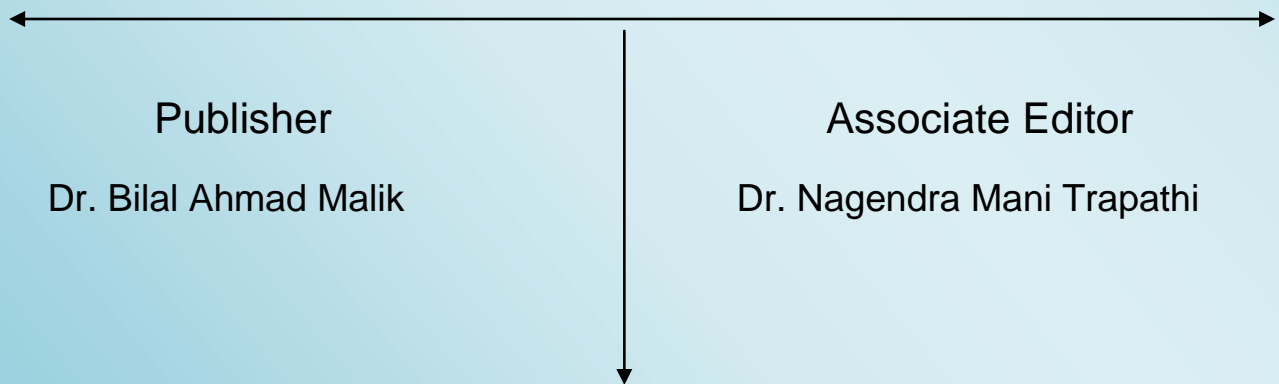


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## American Hegemony and the World Peace

SHEIKH JAVAID AYUB

**Abstract**

*The justification of the theory of 'hegemonic stability' has created much instability in the world. It has led to an onslaught on the poor states in the guise of "war against terror and Globalization" which have become full-fledged ideologies of the contemporary world. Holding the crusade of world peace, America acts like a policeman of the world with everyone backing its claim. The paper presents a critical view of the American Foreign Policy and her imperial designs which are hidden in her foreign policy. This paper elaborates the changing nature of American hegemony in international relations, and access the Bush Administration's determination to change the basis of US hegemony in the context of its proclaimed 'war on terror'. I argue that the Administration's grand strategy is self-defeating, and a major threat to the world peace.*

**INTRODUCTION**

What is Justice? Is the prominent theme of the debate of Plato's Republic. The most fascinating answer is provided by Thrasymachus that *Justice is the interest of the stronger*. In other words, might is right, a man ought to do what he can do, and deserves what he can get.<sup>1</sup> This definition seems to be the most appropriate definition when analyzed in the context of the present day world order. Thrasymachus has an immense influence and contribution in determining the present global system. The US imperial policy in the guise of altruism has resulted in making America a rouge superpower. Shielded by both military and economic power, America's quest for being at the apex of the world system has put the world peace at high alert. The *Preventive War* doctrine of the United States, announced in September 2002 under the shield of *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*,<sup>2</sup> implies that the United States will rule the world by force, and if there is any challenge to its domination-whether it is perceived in the distance, invented, imagined, or whatever- then the United States will have the right to destroy that challenge before it becomes a threat.<sup>3</sup>

When history is defined and controlled by power, the oppressor becomes the oppressed, the conqueror liberator, the tyrant despot a just ruler. History bears the testimony and is full of examples. An honest look would only generalize Thomas Jefferson's observation on the world situation of this day:

<sup>1</sup>. Sir Earnest Barker, *Greek Political Theory*, New Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 2004, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>. White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, released 17 September 2002, online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>.

<sup>3</sup>. Noam Chomsky, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversations on the Post-9/11 World*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005, p. 2.

*We believe no more in Bonaparte's fighting merely for the liberation of seas, than in Great Britain's fighting for the liberties of mankind. The object is the same, to draw to themselves the power, the wealth, and the resources of the other nations.*<sup>4</sup>

Woodrow Wilson called the First World War as the 'war for democracy'. During the democratic war about 65,000,000 men were mobilized and forced to participate, for a longer or shorter time. Of these men about 13,000,000- one in five died, approximately 22,000,000 - one in three were permanently disabled.<sup>5</sup> How many times the world was put on the path of destruction? In the name of peace, Atomic Bomb was dropped, putting world on a silent but dangerous volcano. To quote Arundhati Roy:

*The nuclear bomb is the most anti-democratic, anti-national, anti-human, outright evil thing that man has ever made. She further says, "If you are religious, then remember that this bomb is man's challenge to God. It is worded quite simply: we have the power to destroy everything that you have created. If you are not religious, then look at this way. This world of ours is 46,000 million years old. It could end in an aftermath."*<sup>6</sup>

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE WORLD PEACE

In the Cold War, whole humanity witnessed the most dangerous times of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when human rationality was put to acid test. It was not America but Vasili Arkhipov, a Soviet Submarine Officer who blocked an order to fire nuclear-armed torpedoes, at the tensest moment of the crisis, when the submarines were under attack by US destroyers. A devastating response would have been a near certainty, leading to a Total War.<sup>7</sup> Who initiated the mad rat race for destructive weaponry? Who invented the ideology that the Weapons of Mass Destruction {WMD} have resulted in balance of terror? What an irrational rationality! Is it to defend a certain catastrophe or to maintain a hegemonic superiority! Under the Bush administration, the threats have become even more serious. Bush planners extended Clinton's doctrine of control of space for military purposes to ownership of space, which may mean instant engagement anywhere in the world.<sup>8</sup>

If the hypothesis "WMD helps in maintaining balance - although of terror, why then some countries are invaded in the name of these weapons. When it would have been, more the WMD more the terror, more the terror, means a more balanced world-a balance of terror! The situation is not so simple but a tedious one, when America and her allies have WMD, it maintains peace and security and when others have, they are for destruction and every possessor besides them is evil. The dictum is 'we are good, no matter who we are and you are bad if you are not we'. To a simple question like, Why should United States spend massively on arms and China refrain? Max Boot, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, provided a simple answer: "we guarantee

<sup>4</sup>. Cited by Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival, America's quest for global dominance*, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup>. See Author's *The Ugly Side of Democracy, Greater Kashmir*, Srinagar: April 10, 2009.

<sup>6</sup>. Arundhati Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, London: Penguin, 2002, p.41.

<sup>7</sup>. Noam Chomsky, *Failed States*, Australia, : Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 8. See also *Hegemony or Survival, America's quest for global dominance*, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 74.

<sup>8</sup>. Noam Chomsky, *Failed States*, Australia, : Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 7.

security of the world, protect our allies, keep critical sea- lanes open and lead the war on terror,” while China threatens others and “could ignite an arms race”- actions inconceivable to United States.<sup>9</sup>

Iraq was invaded on the ideological myth of preventing proliferation of WMD, an act of great imperial design, which not only raised the hue and cry from different quarters but also changed the geography, geopolitics, history, and what not of the world. If prevention of proliferation was the real motive then how can it be understood that on 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2002, the UN Disarmament Committee adopted two important resolutions. The first called for stronger measures to prevent the militarization of space and thereby to avert a great danger for international peace and security. The second reaffirmed the 1925 Geneva Protocol “prohibiting the use of poisonous gases and bacteriological warfare”. Both passed unanimously, with two abstentions: the US and Israel!<sup>10</sup>

### BUSH DOCTRINE AND THE WORLD PEACE

‘Terrorism’ has done for the US what ‘Barbarianism’ for the Greeks, what ‘uncivilized’ for the British and what ‘Race’ for Hitler’s Germany. They all ruled and controlled other states by legitimizing these terms. The response to 9/11 attacks was furious. United States and her allies had declared forthrightly that they intended to carry out their war whether or not the UN or anyone else “catches up” and becomes relevant. It simply connotes that UN is relevant only if it says Yes to US’s Yes and No to US’s no. The UN, thus , got reduced to an ineffective acronym and was not even asked to mandate the air strikes.<sup>11</sup> Medeline Albright once said, we will behave multilaterally when we can, and unilaterally when we must.<sup>12</sup> Under the immense pressure of “Bush Doctrine”, the New Europe {those European countries who supported the war on Iraq} succumbed to the US. The Bush’s statement ‘you are either with us or against us’ resulted in making US to act like a policeman of the world, saluted by all those who went with the US in this war of imperialism. Before the Iraq invasion, Latvia’s foreign minister explained that we have to “salute and shout, Yes sir, We have to please America no matter what the cost.”<sup>13</sup>

When Bush announced the air strikes on Afghanistan, he said, “we are a peaceful nation” and his friend Tony Blair echoed him, we are a peaceful people.<sup>14</sup> Speaking at the FBI headquarters a few days later, President

<sup>9</sup> . Ibid. P11.

<sup>10</sup> . Noam Chomsky, *Failed States*, Australia, : Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 8. See also *Hegemony or Survival, America’s quest for global dominance*, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> . Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival, America’s quest for global dominance*, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 121.

<sup>12</sup> . See Noam Chomsky, 2000, ‘US Iraq Policy: Motives and Consequences’, in *Iraq Under Siege: the Deadly Impacts of Sanctions and War*, Pluto Press, London. P. 54.

<sup>13</sup> . Andrew Higgins, *Wall Street Journal*, 18 March 2003.

<sup>14</sup> . Bush’s Remarks on US Military Strikes on Afghanistan, *New York Times*, 8 October 2001, p B6.

Bush said, ‘this is the calling of the United States of America. The most free nation in the world. A nation built on fundamental values; that rejects hate, rejects violence, rejects murderers and rejects evil. And we will not tire.’<sup>15</sup>

Here is a list of countries that America has been at War with- and bombed-since World War Second: China (1945-46, 1950-53), Korea (1950-53), Guatemala (1954,1967-69), Indonesia (1958), Cuba (1959-60), the Belgian Congo (1964), Peru (1965), Laos (1964-73), Vietnam (1961-73), Cambodia (1969-70), Grenada (1983), Libya (1986), El Salvador (1980’s), Nicaragua (1980’s), Panama (1989), Iraq (1991-99), Bosnia (1995), Sudan (1998), Yugoslavia (1999), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003) and now in Libya.

Besides it the United States is an old hand at regime change.<sup>16</sup> One may ask when security of other countries like Russia, China, France, Japan etc has never been in threat how come only United States face grave security threats from evil states? Russia faces a more volatile situation in Chechnya, Dagestan, but how many times has Russian troops invaded other countries for posing threats to her security? It may be simply answered that the issue is not about security or Good vs Evil as it is about space, about maintaining hegemony.<sup>17</sup> Humanitarian intervention, war against terrorism and preventive war doctrine along with globalization are the mantras for sustaining hegemony. It is because of these activities conservative International relations specialists like Samuel Huntington and Robert Lervis hold the opinion that US policies were creating a situation in which much of the world regarded the United States as a “rogue state”, a threat to their existence.<sup>18</sup>

India, during this crucial phase of the World Politics, became the darling of the United States. She acted as Washington dictated. New Delhi became a full partner in the so called ‘war against terrorism’. Presenting herself as a victim of the terrorism, India, with an open chest supported the new American policy. Demands for the permanent membership of India in the Security Council, were raised not only by India but by various circles in the Bush’s New Europe. Pressure was mounting on France to be replaced by India in the Security Council. The US was showering her favor on India at a time when thousands of Muslims were being slaughtered in Gujarat. The mass killings of Muslims in India never catch the attention of the US. Isn’t it a double standard morality, a hypocrisy?

Now when the US is moving out from Afghanistan, leaving behind a War torn Afghanistan caught again in a more brutal civil war, creating a power vacuum which India and Iran would struggle to fill. And most of all, Pakistan feared India. As a growing economic and military powerhouse, India is believed to have numerous intelligence programs inside Afghanistan to spread its influence.<sup>19</sup> Pakistan, a failed state, feels very uneasy at

<sup>15</sup> . Remarks by President George W. Bush at an Anti –Terrorism Event,’ Washington, DC, Federal News Services, 10 October 2001.

<sup>16</sup> . Noam Chomsky, *Imperial Ambitions: Conversations on the Post-9/11 World*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005, p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> . Arundhati Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, London: Penguin, 2002, p.247.

<sup>18</sup> . Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival, America’s quest for global dominance*, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007, p. 37.

<sup>19</sup> . Bob Woodward, *Obama’s Wars*, London: Simon and Schuster, 2010, p. 4.

the growing Indian influence in Afghanistan that is why Pakistan holds India responsible for its trouble in Baluchistan.

Pakistan's claim is ascertained by few elements in India who believe and share common perception of the BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party). Rajya Sabha MP Arun Shourie who urged in wake of 26/11 Mumbai attacks that "we take to eyes for every eye and an entire jaw for any damaged tooth- that since Pakistan sponsor's cross borders terrorism in Kashmir (and in other areas) we should be aiding dissidence in Baluchistan."<sup>20</sup> And also by the statement of Brahandagh Khan Bugti, the grandson of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, now heads his faction of JWP with new brand of Baloch Republican Party stated that his party would welcome assistance for its struggle even from India, this statement has been taken as acknowledgement of Indian involvement in Balochistan.<sup>21</sup> Pakistan government shares the perception that Ashraf Ghani, the president of Afghanistan, backed by India has fomented trouble in Balochistan. Even Pakistan's former foreign secretary Salman Basheer told his former Indian counterpart Shiv Shankar Menon that India should delink the composed dialogue process from action on terrorism, otherwise Pakistan will produce three Indian Ajmal Kasabs who were involved in terrorist activities in Baluchistan. Although the Prime Minister of India has categorically denied any involvement in Baluchistan and said that India has nothing to hide.<sup>22</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Nothing can excuse or justify terrorism, whether it is committed by religious fundamentalists, private militia or by any recognized government. But the response of the United States to, what they call as terrorist acts, has put the world peace at high risk. One may ask, has United States intervention in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and presently in Libya brought any signs of peace? Even after ten years of fighting in Afghanistan the Taliban has control over most parts of Afghanistan. The support base for Taliban has increased manifold. No doubt, the United States upholds democracy and liberty, but many troubles in the contemporary world may be traced to the efforts to give reality to the American dream of making democracy a universal system, her culture a world culture, her economic system a world economic system. From their positive side these principles seem quite nice but on the negative side, these same characteristics may account for the qualities which Thomas Bailey and others have noted in their analyses of the attitudes of the American people toward foreign affairs\_ their "spirit to spread-eagleism"; their bumptiousness and exaggerated confidence in themselves; their "blind optimism," which together with their idealism tend to give them a false picture of the world and to lure them into moral crusades; their inability to grasp the intimate relationship between foreign policy and military power and between foreign and domestic and affairs; their selfishness and shortsightedness; their caprices and fluctuations in mood , which create

<sup>20</sup> . The Indian Express, July 29, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> . The Hindu, July 22, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> . Hamid Mir, India and the Baloch Insurgency, The Hindu, July 28, 2009.

uncertainties abroad regarding American intentions and determination<sup>23</sup>. Only the evils will not condemn the 9\_11 attacks on the USA. The attacks killed three thousand innocent people. To bring solace to their souls, America took lives of millions of people in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and the souls have yet not found solace. The world has become more dangerous and the world peace a far removed concept. American policies have turned more onto the enemy side than it has won the hearts, this implies that world peace need not such mentality, ideology and leadership.

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<sup>23</sup> See Thomas Bailey, *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948.



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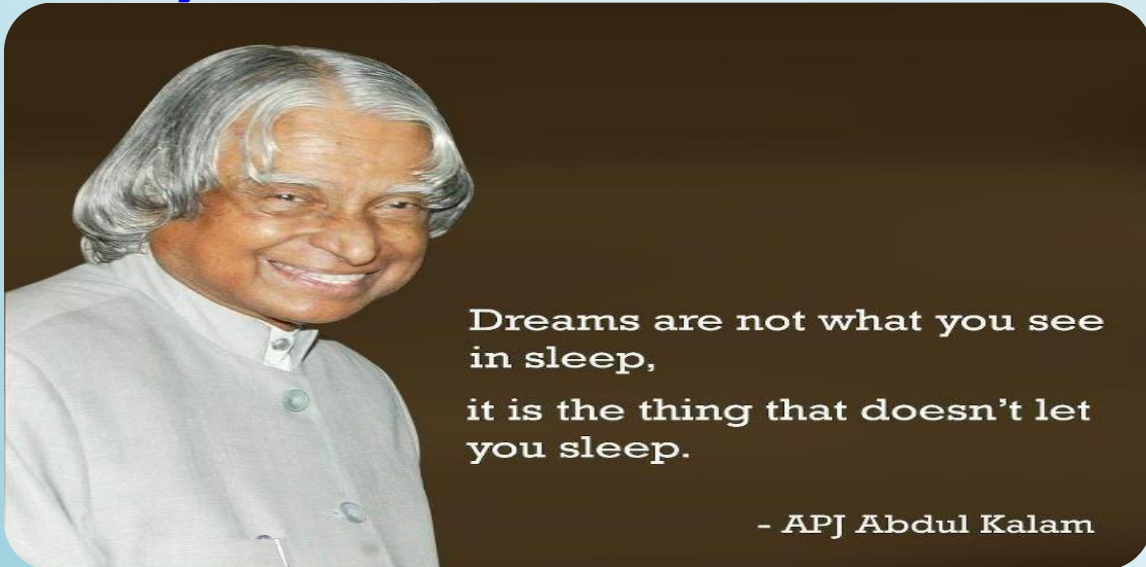
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Dreams are not what you see  
in sleep,  
it is the thing that doesn't let  
you sleep.

- APJ Abdul Kalam