

**"US Foreign Policy After the Election: Will it  
Make a Difference Who Wins?"**

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# US Foreign Policy After the Presidential Elections: Will it Make a Difference Who Wins?<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract:

Since the end of the Cold War, the US's dominant place in the global economic and security orders has strengthened. But these orders face dramatic change. International economic institutions are re-grouping in the wake of recent currency crises and the Seattle meeting of the WTO. Kosovo, East Timor and Chechnya have demonstrated the increasingly difficult dilemma of how international security systems balance respect for a state's sovereignty with popular demands for humanitarian intervention by other powers.

Following his election in November, the new U.S. President will face foreign policy decisions which could result in fundamental changes, ranging from quasi-isolationism and aggressive unilateralism at one end of the spectrum, to the U.S. pursuing an engaged 'international citizen' and multilateralist role at the other. Which path will the new President follow?

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## (1) Introduction

Elections have still to be held. I intend to make no prediction about who is likely to win. I am happy to leave that question to electoral pundits. Rather I am going to attempt to say something about the current substance and trends in US foreign policy and then ask what directions these might take under a new George Bush Jr Republican administration on the one hand or a Democratic administration under Al Gore on the other. In similar vein I do not propose that this presentation represent a cook's tour (no pun intended) of the US position on a range issue-specific hot spots in world affairs. That can be left to the security specialists. Rather I want to look at the larger structural questions that will help determine the form and direction of US foreign policy in general, irrespective of the political stripe of the administration.

The biggest of these questions is clearly the context of a post Cold War system that has yet to emerge in any clear form other than to call it the 'age of globalisation'. I am going to say something about the dreaded G word--this thing called globalisation--in as much as it determines, and in turn is determined by, US foreign policy behaviour. Either presidential candidates will have to deal with this context on coming to office. They will inherit similar constraints and problems, in all probability adopt similar policy responses and, it should be said, with no guarantee of securing superior outcomes to the Clinton administrations of the last eight years.

The Clinton legacy tells us much about what to expect after November 2000, so I will look at this from both Republican and Democratic perspectives. The current spin that both sides are putting on this legacy is instructive for our deliberations today. Needless to say, the competing views of the Clinton legacy form the basis of current Republican and Democratic thinking for future foreign policy. However, flagging my overall conclusion at the outset of this presentation, notwithstanding some inevitable atmospheric and stylistic change of direction, we should expect overall continuity rather than dramatic change to characterise US foreign policy after the elections.

But there is some issue-specific product differentiation to be identified between Bush and Gore. Where the election outcome will make a difference to US foreign policy is in the responses of a new administration to several key policy issues in the international economic

and politico-security domains; especially in their respective attitudes towards the question of how we 'manage' or 'govern' globalisation at the international level. It is here that attitudes towards the international institutions, especially the IMF, World Bank, WTO and regional organisations such as the EU, NAFTA and APEC will become important. Similarly, some product differentiation towards several key politico-security relationships--notably those with Russia, China and Europe (NATO)--are likely to emerge under different administrations

## **(2) Globalisation is Different. And for the USA Too.**

The globalised era is different from any we have previously known. For sure, there are substantial similarities with previous eras of economic and technological change, especially the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> But it is not simply more of the same, only this time more so.<sup>4</sup> We are only just beginning to appreciate the impact of the information and communications revolutions (the ICTR) on international relations in general and on diplomatic and foreign policy practice in particular. Globalisation, notwithstanding strong historical parallels and the clichéd nature of many descriptions of the 'new economy', is different to earlier times. These changes cannot be discussed in detail here save to note that while in simple percentage terms, trade may not be much more liberalised and in legal terms finance not much more deregulated than prior to 1914, the volumes of activity, the number of actors involved, the speed at which transactions takes place, and the impact that they can have globally (often beyond the policy control of traditional state centred bureaucratic elites) are sufficiently qualitatively different from 100 years ago to allow us to think of them as representing revolutionary change.<sup>5</sup>

The key issue for my presentation today, however, is the role of the United States in the globalisation process and its impact on its foreign policy. Yet at the risk of one more

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<sup>3</sup> See Kevin H. O'Rourke and J. J. Williamson and, Globalisation and History: The Evolution of the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Economy, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1999; Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, 'Globalization: What's New? What's Not?', Foreign Policy, Spring 2000, 104-19.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Higgott and Simon Reich, (1998) 'Globalisation and Sites of Conflict: Towards Definition and Taxonomy', Working Paper No. 1, University of Warwick, Economic and Social Research Council Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, available at [www.csgr.org](http://www.csgr.org)

historical analogy, the position of the United States is vastly different to 100 years ago too; or indeed even prior to the end of the Cold War just a little more than a decade ago when Paul Kennedy was making huge (indeed inordinate) mileage out of his simplistic historical comparisons between the collapse of previous empires on the one hand and the pending demise of the USA as a hegemonic power on the other.<sup>6</sup> In fact, rather than 'imperial overstretch'--Kennedy's term for describing the US condition--we have seen a consolidation of US preponderance. This does mean that we should accept the worst hubristic tendencies of Francis Fukayama's proclamation of 'the End of History'.<sup>7</sup>

Rather we should recognise the degree to which the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the Cold War has seen the US come to occupy a position of what Stephen Walt calls 'unprecedented preponderance'.<sup>8</sup> According to World Bank figures, the US with 4 percent of the world's population produces 27 percent of the world's economic output (22 percent when adjusted for PPP).<sup>9</sup> With 4 times the US population Japan and China produce less than half that amount. The US also leads the way in scientific and technological research and has a defence budget equal to 'the next six countries combined'.<sup>10</sup> The US has been strengthened not only by its position as the prototype 'new economy' in the era of the ICTR, but also by the under-performance of the other parts of the world; notably Japan, post 1997 crisis Asia and, albeit to a lesser extent, Europe. These factors given the US a substantial lead over all other competitors.

In addition to its brut economic and military power, US hegemony is also under written by what Joseph Nye calls its 'soft power'.<sup>11</sup> In his now well understood argument, hard power is exercised through economic and military statecraft; soft powers arise from the ability to

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<sup>5</sup> See David Held et al, Global Transformations, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999. Richard Higgott and A J Payne, 'Towards a New Political Economy of Globalisation?' in Richard Higgott and Anthony Payne (eds) The New Political Economy of Globalisation, Volume I, Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Decline of the Great Powers, New York: Random House, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Frances Fukayama, The End of History and the Last Man, New York: Basic Books, 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen M. Walt, 'Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy', Foreign Affairs, 79 (2) 2000: p. 64.

<sup>9</sup> The Financial Times, 23, December, 1999, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Walt, p. 64.

attract rather than to coerce. Nye, and many others of both a Republican and Democratic persuasion, hold American values to be the principal instrument of soft power. Under conditions of economic globalisation the values that represent the essence of this soft power are thought to be the growing global impact of the neo-liberal understanding of trade liberalisation, financial deregulation and corporate governance, combined with a Lockean individualist understanding of democracy. In tangible form examples of the instruments of soft power, are to be found in the socialisation processes undergone by more than half a million foreign students that come to the US each year (most of whom go home impressed) and the cultural influences of Hollywood and Macworld.

The implications of this unrivalled strategic position are of the utmost significance for an understanding of what US foreign policy might look like over the next few years. Notwithstanding what they might have done with it, the makers of recent US foreign policy have had a freedom of economic and politico-strategic action unthinkable during the era of Cold War discipline. Indeed, it is argued by some realists we would soon come to miss the Cold War<sup>12</sup> and that its very absence has led to an increasing lack of discipline in US foreign policy in the closing decade of the twentieth century as those ties that held it closely to its allies have gradually loosened.

Of course, such freedoms are not without their disadvantages. The US cannot wield power in an unrestrained manner for fear of alienating other major actors in the system. Indeed, negative responses to US policy over the closing years of the twentieth century can be seen not only with Russian and Asian opinion<sup>13</sup>, but also amongst traditional post world war two allies such as France and Germany, who consider that on a number of occasions US preponderance under conditions of globalisation has led to non-cooperative behaviour on the part of the Clinton administration that has damaged the post Cold War consensus. They argue that the unilateral US power, especially in the economic domain, is not conducive to the enhancement of global cooperation at this point in time. French President, Jacques

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph S Nye, Bound to Lead, New York: Basic Books, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> John Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold war, International Security, 15 (1) 1991.

<sup>13</sup> See Richard Higgott, The Asian Financial Crisis: A Study in the International Politics of Resentment, New Political Economy, 3 (3) 1998.

Chirac, commenting on the growth of US 'hyperpower', has been critical of what he sees as the increasing recourse to isolationism and unilateralism on the part of the US.

This lack of cooperation and indeed leadership of the global economic and security orders is, realists and liberals alike would argue, not surprising. There is little that the US currently wants from the international system that it cannot get from unilateral action. In security terms, the US does not face those kinds of geopolitical challenges that were ever present throughout the twentieth century. Such 'enemies, if we can use that term, that the US currently has--Iraq, North Korea, Yugoslavia--while vexatious, are hardly capable of mounting a serious threat to US security. In the economic domain, the international institutions do not provide the sort of compliance with US opinion that it feels they should. As a consequence, the international institutions rank low in a US order of priority. Their reform, deemed so important in other parts of the world, is secondary to US interest and *diffuse reciprocity* as the guiding norm of US international economic diplomacy for much of the post world war two era has given way to a greater preference for *specific reciprocity* during the Clinton period.

This position is reflected in a further factor arising from US 'preponderance'. Throughout the 1990s foreign policy matters have fallen even lower down the list of interests of US public opinion than has even normally been the case. George Bush Jr's famous inability to name three Heads of State is unlikely to prove an electoral handicap when, even amongst those members of the wider US community that actually have views on foreign policy questions, support for an activist foreign policy has declined.<sup>14</sup> This view is reinforced by the diminished concerns about issues such as defence spending, foreign aid; the salience of international institutions such as the UN and World Bank; and support for traditional allies such as NATO, Taiwan and South Korea. This too should come as no surprise given that Clinton ran on his now (in)famous domestically driven--'Its the economy stupid'--ticket at the last election. The next two sections consider the competing views of the Clinton legacy. The principle interest in international matters amongst the wider US public is primarily its concern over the impact of globalisation on their own welfare and job security.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For a details of a recent poll on the foreign policy interests of the US population see Walt, p. 65.

### (3) The Clinton Legacy: The Republican View

From a Republican perspective the general charge levelled against the two Clinton administrations is that they have squandered the political benefits of 'winning' the Cold War. They have been uncertain how to use America's unprecedented economic and military superiority. As a former Under Secretary of State to Bush and Reagan argues, the Clinton administration has been found to be '...hesitating, then over committing and regularly failing to match means with ends.'<sup>16</sup> While globalisation (especially the deregulation of trade, the liberalisation of financial markets and the privatisation of state assets) the world over has increasingly reflected a US neo-liberal agenda for how the world economic order should evolve, this has not also been reflected by a similar US ability to define a 'new internationalism' in the global politico-security order.

Clinton, they say, has lacked a commitment and adherence to his own stated priorities. For example, rhetorical commitment to international trade reform under written by principles of free trade have not been matched in practice. There are a range of trade specific issues-areas identified by the Republicans where this has been the case: as in the demand for managed trade relations with Japan. and in the failed attempt to launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations (MTN) at Seattle in November 1999. While there are several ways to explain the fiasco that was Seattle--paralysis in the WTO following the difficulties of appointing a successor to Renato Ruggiero and the less than stunning diplomatic skill of his successor, Mike Moore; the increasingly effective opposition of the NGOS to a new MTN; the opposition of many developing country delegations to what they saw as their marginalisation from the decision making in the WTO talks process themselves--but, the major explanation offered by the Republicans was Clinton's unwillingness to alienate a range of domestic protectionist constituencies, especially the unions, within the USA. Leave aside here the question of whether the Republicans would have done it better or differently, the charge that Clinton played politics with the WTO trade agenda has substance. Moreover, it is consistent with his behaviour on other policy issues.

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<sup>15</sup> Aaron Bernstein, 'Backlash: Behind the Anxiety over Globalization', Business Week, 24 April, 2000; see also Gary Burtless, Robert Z. Lawrence, Robert E. Litan, Robert J. Shapiro, Globaphobia: Confronting Fears About Open Trade: Washington: Brookings, 1998

<sup>16</sup> see Robert Zoellick, 'A Republican Foreign Policy', Foreign Affairs, 79 (1) 2000, pps 63-78.

Second, deeds have not matched words for Republicans in the security domain either. In situations such as Kosovo, the Clinton Administration, they argue, despite overwhelming military superiority has been too tardy in using the big stick, as opposed to simply waving it, with rogue states such as Yugoslavia and Iraq. As such they have failed to provide political and security leadership to US allies and coalition partners in a manner dissimilar to George Bush Senior's success in the Gulf War.<sup>17</sup> So much for Clinton's promise of 'Assertive Multilateralism' they argue.

Republican's also identify a gap in the relationship between Clinton's strategy thinking and his operational response to relationships with other great powers. Specifically, he has been too quick to accommodate China. The on-again, off-again, now on-again attitude towards Chinese membership of the WTO has led not only to confusion and resentment, but has undermined efforts to instil an urgency in China to undertake structural economic reform--for which read 'opening its economy to the US'. Similarly, he has been too willing to ignore corruption and cronyism in Russia, the impact of which has been to undermine the intellectual strength and popular political support within Russia for the 'free market model'. As a consequence, democratic reform has been hindered rather than helped.

Finally--ignoring the fact that it was largely ever thus in the USA, and with no seeming sense of their own political interests--Republicans argue that Clinton's foreign policy has been driven by naked domestic political calculation. The outcome, only to be expected say Republicans, has been a damage to US international credibility and a growing resentment amongst its partners towards US foreign policy positions. Thus, by way of important rationalisation, they have been entitled to use their Congressional majority to suspend bi-partisan support for foreign policy and await the arrival of a Republican president.

#### **(4) The Clinton Legacy: The Democrat View**

Needless to say, the Gore Campaign is anxious to demonstrate blue water between its agenda and that of the current president. Gore wants to be seen as his own man; Republican attempts

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<sup>17</sup> Zoellick, p. 66. This is, of course, a selective reading of US policy in the Gulf War. See Andrew Cooper, Richard Higgott and Kim Nossal, 'Bound to Follow? Leadership and Followership in the Gulf Conflict' *Political Science Quarterly*. 106 (3) 1991: 391-410.

to depict the 1990s as the 'Clinton-Gore era' are not working. However, Gore's people do offer a defence of foreign policy under Clinton. In so doing, they set much greater store by the structural constraints that have conditioned Clinton foreign policy than do the Republicans who, not surprisingly, would want to attribute a much greater degree of agency (that is freedom for truly autonomous policy action) to the Clinton administration than is perhaps the case. The political calculation in this style of criticism is to be expected, but I think we can go analytically beyond this narrow judgement.

Republican critiques fail to appreciate, or at least are unwilling to acknowledge, how overall changes in international relations under conditions of globalisation and the end of the Cold War have indeed affected US foreign policy options in a number of ways. Firstly, and most notably, while the US has been a major spur to, and beneficiary of the economic liberalisation and financial deregulation that has characterised the global economy in the last quarter of the twentieth century, it too has been affected, if less significantly maybe, in ways similar to less powerful nations by the fundamental change in the relationship between *state power* and *market authority*.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, Republican critiques fail to take account of the degree to which they, themselves have constrained presidential foreign policy making capability in a range of areas--by Congressional budget cutting actions for international affairs or tying decisions on key foreign policy issues to domestic political considerations. While Clinton's handling of Congress has been inept on a number of important foreign policy occasions, he has had to live in his second term with a hostile majority 'nativist' Republican Congress--to which it is claimed two thirds of those elected in 1994 did not even possess passports<sup>19</sup>--and who not only saw no priority for foreign policy concerns but instead a clear short term political advantage to be gained by obstructionist behaviour.

Moreover, Democrats argue, that in his commitment to encourage democracy abroad and intervention against major abusers of human rights (no matter how ineffectively at times) Clinton has, in a traditionally bi-partisan way, aspired to advance a world order in keeping

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<sup>18</sup> See Susan Strange, The Retreat of the State, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Walt, p. 65.

with American values. Similarly, the Clinton administration has, again whether judged successful by a Republican opposition or not, maintained a forward military presence in Europe and Asia as a deliberate strategy to assist in the keeping of the peace. Notwithstanding the ethnocentric and rose-tinted nature of his reading of the Clinton legacy (a reading that would be challenged in most European capitals) Walt notes:

'In Europe, the Clinton administration has held NATO together despite growing centrifugal tendencies and intense policy disputes...masterfully orchestrated NATO's expansion into Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic ... [and] ... guided NATO through its military interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo, despite numerous inter alliance disputes. ... These achievements are especially impressive considering how hard it is now to keep the alliance together.'<sup>20</sup>

In somewhat less ethnocentric vein, Walt does concede that the loosening of US influence in Europe may be as much to do with a growing recognition amongst European policy elites that they need to take more control over their own regional security concerns than it is any disinterest or ineffectiveness on the part of US policy. Similarly, his reading of the relationship with China is one that sees the cooperation that has developed, slow as it may be, is in effect the best that could be expected under the circumstances, especially given the extreme sensitivity of the Chinese leadership to its status as a major regional and international power.

On the other hand, Walt's reading of the deteriorating relationship with Russia is not dissimilar to that of the Republicans. He does, however, see a range of mitigating circumstances; notably the failure of the Russian political community to deal seriously with their own problems. As he correctly notes, there is a limit to what can be done within the boundaries of another sovereign country.<sup>21</sup> For all his faults, it is difficult not to see Yeltsin as better than any of the alternatives on offer at the time throughout the second half of the 1990s. Supporters of the Democratic foreign policy record under Clinton would also point to several other achievements that can be laid at Clinton's door; perhaps most notably the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention.

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<sup>20</sup> Walt, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> Walt, pp. 68-70.

## (5) Weighing Republican and Democratic Judgements of the Clinton Legacy

The previous two sections provide synopses of the competing judgements of the Clinton administration currently in play in the run up to the November presidential election. It is difficult to secure an objective analysis of the Clinton era from two such partisan perspectives. Sitting here in London and away from the political melee, however, we should be able to do better. Indeed, in preparing this presentation I have tried to identify the core that is common to both analytical perspectives on Clinton. It is to be found, to my mind at least, in the tragic disjuncture between the rhetoric and reality of his time in office. The initial ideological vision and aspirations at the beginning of his administration--especially in his recognition that traditional understandings of power politics were not appropriate to a new 'post Cold War era' and in his stated desire to establish an 'assertive multilateralism'--contrast sharply with the rapid dissent into more conventional *realpolitik*. As Walt notes:

'Under Clinton, the United States consolidated its Cold War victory by bringing three former Warsaw Pact members into its own alliance. It shored up East Asia and readied itself for a possible competition with a rising China while encouraging Beijing to accept a status quo that favoured the United States. It rejected the land mines treaty and opposed the creation of an international criminal court while moving steadily closer to NMD. It forced allies to bear a greater share of the burden in Europe and East Asia while insisting on leading both alliances. And, together with its NATO allies, it asserted the right to intervene in the sovereign territory of other states even without Security Council authorisation. *Clinton may cloak US policy in the rhetoric of "world order" and general global interests, but its defining essence remains the unilateral exercise of sovereign power*<sup>22</sup> (my emphasis)

In short, when thinking of what policy might look like under a new presidency, the presidency of William Jefferson Clinton will be a hard act in *realpolitik* for any Republican administration to outflank.

The other defining characteristic of Clinton's tenure in office has been the short term domestic political instrumentalism of his foreign policy. Notwithstanding that the Republicans have not made it easy for him, Clinton has invariably taken advantage of US preponderance to secure the short term domestic gain rather than underwrite a longer term international interest. Moreover, the urge to secure advantage in the domestic partisan

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<sup>22</sup> Walt, p. 78.

political battle has not always proved successful; most notably in his loss of fast track trade negotiating authority (rare indeed for a president), the defeat by Congress of his proposal for a Comprehensive Test Ban treaty in 1999 and in his appeal to domestic opinion that scuppered the Seattle WTO Ministerials.

Indeed, it is in his attitude towards multilateral institutions, as even supporters such as Walt are prepared to concede, that Clinton demonstrates better than anywhere else the degree to which he departed idealism for *realpolitik*.. As the remainder of this paper attempts to demonstrate, it is a legacy that will have important longer term implications not only for US foreign policy but for actors other than the US in the reshaping of the governance structure of the economic and political orders after him.

#### **(6) Entering the Global Age? US Foreign Policy After November 2000**

I have suggested that there is a mixed legacy from the Clinton era. Republicans have been critical of it, Democrats largely supportive. This should come as no surprise. But to the non-partisan observer what is interesting in the last instance, I would argue, is that the difference between these two analyses is not as great as the competitive rhetoric suggests. At its bedrock, there is more *realpolitik* to the Clinton era than either Republicans or most Democrats would like to concede. Of course, realist international relations scholars and foreign policy analysts would expect this.

'Americans do not like to think of themselves as practising *realpolitik*, ... [but] ... they do like being number one. ... Clinton's strategy is hegemony on the cheap, because that is the only strategy the American people are likely to support. ... the Clinton administration has been well suited to an era when there is little to gain from foreign policy and much to lose.'<sup>23</sup>

So what judgements should we draw about the potential shape of US foreign policy after the November election from this comparative analysis of the Clinton legacy? Again, I try to let the words of the two parties, in the run up to the election, speak for themselves, but I first flag my own view.

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Given the context of a continued US preponderance in the technological, economic and politico-security domains under conditions of globalisation, given the *realpolitik* essence to be found in the behaviour of the last administration, given the relative insignificance of international affairs for the US population in general and the limited domestic political gain to be had from it in particular--and, notwithstanding current Republican assertions that they will be different--we should, broadly speaking, expect more of the same. I list below nine similarities that would be at the core of post November 2000 US foreign policy irrespective of which candidate triumphs.

(i) Both parties exhibit a liking for power and profess a strong commitment to a fairly common understanding of what constitutes America's national interest. To put it crudely, and notwithstanding the difficulties of identifying the concept of a US 'interest' after the collapse of Soviet power, both recognise that the USA has enemies (real or imagined) against which to guard.

(ii) Both parties espouse the rhetoric of international leadership and coalition and alliance building--if not 'assertive multilateralism'--in international relations. While Republicans and Democrats alike might like to complain about many of the international institutions, alliances and regimes that traverse the global landscape, if many of them did not exist, both recognise it would be necessary to invent them.

(iii) Both parties recognise the need to embrace the changes that are emerging as the result of revolutions in information and communications technologies. This is the key change coinciding with the end of the Cold War. Both parties recognise that the US to-date has been the principal beneficiary of the information revolution. These revolutions give rise to further emerging similarities at points (iv) through (vi) below.

(iv) Both parties recognise the growing importance of non-state actors in world affairs (in both the corporate and the social domains.) The need to include MNCs and especially NGOs in foreign policy decision making processes, as they take advantage of the new modes of communication to make their voices heard, is a major change in contemporary diplomacy.

(v) Both parties recognise that finance and commerce (in that order nowadays) will structure the security agenda in a way that distinguishes the era of globalisation sharply from the era of the Cold War. That is, both parties recognise the shift in the relationship between *state authority* and *market power* under conditions of globalisation and a lesser role for governmental and inter-governmental institutions vis a vis markets.

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<sup>23</sup> Walt, p. 79.

(vi) In sociological jargon, both parties are adapting to the evolution of *networks of structured power and interest* at the level of a global (as opposed to national) civil society that has been an outgrowth of the communication revolutions. Yet again, in similar fashion to the dilemmas posed by the growth of NGOs--apart from recognising the emergence of these networks--policy makers in both parties are unsure exactly how to respond meaningfully to them.

(vii) Both parties recognise that what Nye calls soft power--the power of American ideas--in the information age can now be as important an instrument of US hegemony as hard power of the more traditional kind.

(viii) Notwithstanding the ascendancy of neo-liberalism over the last twenty years, both recognise that alternative understandings of capitalism and economic management--be they a continental European 'social democratic' version or an Asian 'developmental statist' version--still have powerful intellectual support and empirical applications.<sup>24</sup> As a consequence both Republicans and Democrats see the US private sector as a powerful weapon in this remaining ideas battle; a battle that both parties assume, as an act of faith, the US will eventually win.

(ix) Both recognise the growing disjunction between the state as the repository of sovereignty and rule making and the deterritorialisation and increasing importance of non traditional threats to security--such as international terrorism, environmental degradation and organised crime (especially in the domains of drug trafficking and money laundering). But both are less quick to recognise the degree to which the US is as much a cause as a victim of some of these trans-territorial problems.

How do these broad understandings translate into concrete policy applications and, more to the point today, into potential differences between the putative foreign policies of the two Presidential contenders?

Notwithstanding the general areas of agreement, differences are to be found in the way that Republicans and Democrats define national interest and the manner in which they would wish to reconstruct the existing international system to take account of the effects of globalisation. Two recent sets articles in *Foreign Affairs* by senior advisers to the respective candidates capture the essence of this difference nicely. The following analysis draws on them to tease out some differences of view and policy. Condoleeza Rice, strongly tipped as Secretary of State if Bush wins, flagged the nature of a Republican understanding of national interest in the following way:

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'[to] ... ensure that America's military can deter war, project power, and fight in defence of its interests if deterrence fails; to promote economic growth and political openness by extending free trade and a stable international monetary system to all committed to those principles, including in the western hemisphere; to renew strong and intimate relationships with allies who share American values and can thus share the burden of promoting peace, prosperity and freedom; to focus US energies on comprehensive relationships with big powers, particularly Russia and China, that can and will mold the character of the international political system; and to deal decisively with the threat of rogue regimes and hostile powers, which is increasingly taking the forms of the potential for terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)'.<sup>25</sup>

The language of her understanding of interest in the *Foreign Affairs* piece very much reflects a traditional, security first, agenda. By contrast three senior advisers to Al Gore (W. Bowman Cutter, Joan Spero and Laura D'Andrea Tyson) placed much greater emphasis on the need to respond to the structural impact of what we might call the new political economy of globalisation. Notwithstanding that they accept that economic interest should be subordinate to security interests, the challenges they see facing a new American president contrast with those of Rice. These are:

'... first, to grasp the fundamental changes in the global economy; and second to respond by fostering the conditions and institutions required for a world in which the United States can remain secure and prosperous. The central task ... is to help develop a new system of global economic relations--a task made essential, rather than simply desirable, by the enormous and irreversible changes now sweeping the world.'<sup>26</sup>

For the purposes of my argument, the important difference is less the subject matter than the tenor of the language of these two templates for foreign policy after November 2000. Democrats, as evinced by Bowman *et al.*, are by temperament more committed to cooperative and institutional problem solving at the international level than Republicans. This is to be seen best in two areas of foreign policy: (i) the differences over how to manage the international economic order under conditions of globalisation and (ii) relations with the

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<sup>24</sup> See Richard Higgott and Nicola Phillips, 'After Triumphalism: The Limits of Liberalism in Asia and Latin America', *Review of International Studies*, 25 (2) 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Condoleezza Rice, 'Promoting the National Interest' *Foreign Affairs*, 79 (1) 2000, 46-7

<sup>26</sup> W. Bowman Cutter, Joan E. Spero and Laura D'Andrea Tyson, 'New World, New Deal: A Democrat Approach to globalization', *Foreign Affairs*, 79 (2) 2000, P. 81

other major global actors--in no particular order, China, Japan, Russia and the European Union.

***(i) Governing Economic Globalisation***

The Gore team, in principle at least, call for the strengthening of institutions like the IMF, World Bank and the WTO as a way to deal with global economic problems. It might not be 'assertive multilateralism', but multilateralism it is. By contrast, Republicans, as forcefully stated by Rice, are much more committed to the rhetoric of national interest and much less interested in what she calls the consolidation of the 'illusory norms' of international behaviour.<sup>27</sup> While she asserts that a Republican foreign policy will be 'internationalist', she does not define what that is, except to say that it will be grounded in 'the national interest' not the interests of 'an illusory international community.'<sup>28</sup>

To be fair, this is not a call for isolationism *per se* rather than a question of how to relate to the rest of the world. In language reminiscent of Ronald Reagan prior to the end of the Cold War, Bush Jr and his team are calling for engagement with the world but with a narrower sense of national interest and in a much more unilateral manner than the Gore team. But this seemingly semantic difference does cast alternative policy shadows over the reform of the international economic architecture. To-date, Al Gore appears to say the right things on the global governance agenda (for non Americans at least). Republicans have much less to say.

If Gore, and his team, are to be taken at face value, he wants to move the Democrats away from the growing recourse to unilateralist trade activity as a way to secure compliance from other countries with US law in a range of trade related areas. He wants to work out a strategy and consensus for difficult and politically sensitive issues in the international trade regime, such as services and agriculture. The Democrats say they want new multilateral approaches to issues like human rights, labour rights and the environment. Indeed, the Democrats now claim to recognise that the United States is 'disproportionately responsible'<sup>29</sup> for many environmental problems that are invariably cross border in both causes and solutions.

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<sup>27</sup> Rice, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> Rice, p. 62.

Recognising that it is the absence of a multilateral international organisation to deal with environmental problems that has caused the environmental movement to focus its challenge on the WTO, they now identify the need to build an environment-specific regime. Democrats thus advocate a Global Environmental Organisation to head off further damage to trade liberalisation and to enforce environmental agreements along the lines of the Montreal protocol to slow ozone depletion.

Given the changing structural conditions, 'global round' approaches to trade negotiations more generally are seen by Democrats to have largely outlived their usefulness. There are a number of reasons for this. Trade negotiations are more technically complex and the actors involved more numerous and varied in their aims and aspirations. As a consequence trade negotiations 'in the round' are also becoming more difficult for the US to control. But Democrats concede that increased transparency and greater involvement of interested non state actors in these processes are needed if the growing backlash against globalisation is to be mitigated. They are now of the view the WTO as not the proper forum for these issues.

But, not only in the trade domain, also in the financial domain the next Democratic president, as his advisers argue, should 'pledge America's commitment to the World Bank and the IMF, emphasizing their importance while recognising the need for further reform'.<sup>30</sup> As in the trade domain, the need to engage civil society and to cope with the volatility of cross border financial flows has become much more pressing, especially in the wake of the financial crises of 1997-8 and the market volatility emerging from the dot.com revolution. Indeed, a specific regime for dealing with the impact of the digital revolution is also mooted.

The real issue for the observer of these Democratic policy pronouncements, of course, is less the appropriateness of such positions--many of which are now deemed to be 'common sense' positions in Europe--as much as the credibility of the Democrats to act in a manner that is consistent with their rhetoric. To this extent at least, Gore is damaged by his association with Clinton; certainly with observers outside of the US if not necessarily with the wider US population. This is not the problem when observing the Republicans who, as yet, have said very little on these key issues.

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<sup>29</sup> Cutter, Spero and Tyson, p. 94.

<sup>30</sup> Cutter, Spero and Tyson, p. 94.

For the Republicans there appears to be little more to the current global governance agenda than making the world safe for Merrill Lynch. They are certainly not much interested in advancing a multilateral governance agenda of the type associated with the 'post Washington Consensus.'<sup>31</sup> Republican attitudes to the international financial institutions appears to be driven more by unilateral US interest and less by the development of consensual multilateral norms. Even the limited concessions that Democrats now make regarding the contribution of the US to global warming look like major concessions compared to what has been heard from, and what might be expected under, a Republican president cum Texas oilman who, should he win in November, will have come to office pushing cheap energy as a campaign theme.

Moreover, for Republicans global economic reform is tied into to the security agenda in a much tighter way than for the Democrats. Rice demonstrates the strong Republican concern for what she sees as the neglect of the armed forces. There will be a clear priority for major force modernisation under a Republican administration that is not as strongly articulated by the Democrats. Rhetorically, Gore is greener and more institutionalist than Bush; while Bush is more hawkish than Gore. This can be seen in the competing views of the two teams on great power relationships.

**(ii) *Great Power Relationships***

Republicans will tie the trade agenda to its politico-security agenda with China much more than will the Gore team who have indicated a desire to continue Clinton's policy of constructive engagement but without endorsement of human rights abuses. Unlike Republicans, they would be less inclined to use trade as weapon in this relationship nor try to ban the export of dual use technologies, which they see as pointless and economically self defeating. Unlike the Clinton administration, Rice does not see China as a *status quo power*, but a *great power* with unresolved regional aspirations, especially towards Taiwan and in the South China Sea. Thus, it is as a 'strategic competitor' not as a 'strategic partner' (of Clinton administration language) that the US must deal with China. Republicans, she argues, should

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<sup>31</sup> For a discussion see Richard Higgott, 'Economic Globalisation and Global Governance: The Anti Politics of the Post Washington Consensus', United Nations University Project on The United Nations System in the 21st Century, Paris: UNESCO, October 14 1999.

see that China does not challenge the status quo, especially over Taiwan.<sup>32</sup> Like Democrat's, Republican's will want to assist with (read, *force the pace on*) China's internal economic and political transition. However, if Rice has her way, and Republican rhetoric is underwritten in practice, then the US will 'confront Beijing' when interests collide, certainly more than was the case under Clinton.<sup>33</sup>

Notwithstanding that Japan is a formal ally rather than a strategic competitor, a similar reading of that relationship may be drawn--basically similar overall bi-partisan strategy but with tactical differences in policy implementation. Democrats argue for shielding the security relationship from commercial tension and treating Japan as a partner in global economic institutional reform as well as just a security ally. High level bilateral dialogue will be consolidated to make provision for airing complaints and avoiding confrontation; and Japan will be encouraged to play a stronger security role in the Asia Pacific. This view is stated more strongly, and with a somewhat different emphasis by Republicans who want much greater burden sharing in the Asia Pacific from Japan, although not necessarily a greater joint leadership role. It is also explicitly stated by Zoellick that a central aim of Japan policy is to deter China.<sup>34</sup>

In their relations with Russia there is even less to choose between the details of their respective policies. Democrats want to continue constructive engagement in the economic domain but with an emphasis 'wherever possible on multilateral institutions like the IMF'. In the context of a multi faceted policy, the security domain is the most important issue area (Russia is economically too small to destabilise global economy, as the default of 1998 demonstrated). Yet even for the Democrats, controlling Russia's nuclear arsenal 'must remain the central focus of American policy'.<sup>35</sup>

If Rice becomes the next secretary of state, the emphasis will be the same but the approach somewhat different. She thinks the US got too involved in Russia's internal problems. 'Lets

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<sup>32</sup> Rice, p. 56.

<sup>33</sup> Rice, p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> Zoellick, p. 75.

<sup>35</sup> Cutter, Spero and Tyson, p. 86

... [she says] ... get out of domestic politics and lets get back to state to state great power relationships'.<sup>36</sup> She is correct to suggest that by failing to grasp the nettle of the domestic corruption surrounding the Yeltsin administration, the US now has a credibility problem both within the USSR and also with the American population. 'Russia Fatigue' is a danger. But it is difficult to believe that she can really be serious about getting out of Russian politics. If one thing is certain under conditions of economic globalisation, it is that the divide that once used to define the distinction between domestic and foreign policy no longer exists. The relationship between foreign policy and economic sovereignty is not that simple nowadays.

The enhanced power of the markets (especially the financial ones) at the expense of state authority and the involvement of a range of non state actors (especially multinational corporations) combine to make her desire to separate the 'domestic' from the 'international' wistful at best. Republicans may be critical of what has gone before under the Clinton administration, but it is difficult to believe, should they be in office after November, that there policy will be fundamentally, as opposed to atmospherically, different. In addition, both Republicans and Democrats alike view the election of Vladimir Putin as a double edged sword (in more than one way).

On Europe, both parties recognise the major commonalities of interest that exist between the USA and the EU at the beginning of a new century, but it is clear that there are also significant substantive difference of policy approach in a range of areas. The outcome of the US presidential election will have bearing on a number of these. At a basic political level, a Bush victory will break the link between social democratic (Third Way) Europe and Democratic (Third way) Washington. The passing of 'Blintonism' might be a bad thing for Blairite Labour's trans-Atlantic foreign policy, but, to the extent that it might turn British interests again more towards Europe, it may be a good thing for the longer term 'European project'.

Specific policy areas, such as trade, demonstrate the commonality of the trans-Atlantic interest, yet difference of policy approach exist. US-EU trade and investment, based on trans-Atlantic cooperation in economic, political and security spheres, and which grew strongly during the Cold War, has lost little of its vitality over the last decade. Trans-Atlantic

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trade now accounts for close to 20 percent of each others exports and imports. Yet, policy differences and trade disputes grow; be it over hormone-injected beef, bananas, information technology, GM foods or the US recourse to unilateral extra-territorial economic sanctions, in defiance of a rules based trading system, for political purposes (as with non US firms dealing with Cuba)<sup>37</sup>

While international institutional settings, especially the WTO, have proved useful in resolving past problems, they seem less equipped to deal with current ones. The dispute settlement process at the WTO that were supported by both the US and Europe have turned US-EU disputes into strongly contested (and at times quite bitter) tests for trade rules and struggles for market access. Indeed, the amount of trade at stake is often of less significance than the political rhetoric.<sup>38</sup> Whatever the merits of the individual cases, and Europe often drags the chain on responding to WTO rulings, there can be little doubt that the US has attempted to turn the WTO into an instrument of coercive economic diplomacy.

Similar tensions can also be seen at the World Bank and the IMF where growing differences of philosophy between Anglo-American (neo-liberal) and continental European (social democratic) perspectives on economic management came into sharp focus throughout the closing years of the twentieth century. Notwithstanding a common desire to continue the process of global economic liberalisation, this difference is reflected in the competing views of how to deal with those left behind by globalisation. Specifically, there is a sharp philosophical difference over the role of social welfare under conditions of globalisation that prevails in the two systems.<sup>39</sup>

Similar philosophical difference can be seen in the US desire for a laissez faire approach to the regulation of electronic data, which contrasts sharply with a European preference for the

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<sup>36</sup> The Weekend Financial Times, 26-27 February 2000, p. III

<sup>37</sup> It should of course be noted that the Helms Burton Act (passed by a Republican dominated Congress) has only been loosely implemented by the Clinton Administration. For a good discussion of these issues Jonathan Bach, 'US-EU Trade', Foreign Policy in Focus, (Interhemispheric Resource Center and Institute for Policy Studies) 4 (37) 1999, pps 1-3

<sup>38</sup> Tariffs on beef and bananas account for 0.2% of EU-US Trade. Bach, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of these competing views see Ramesh Mishra, Globalisation and the Welfare State, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 1999.

protection of privacy. Yet other than platitudes about the importance of the relationship and the need to nurture it, neither Democrats nor Republicans have really spelled out how they propose to deal with Europe on such issues over the period of the next administration. The preceding questions are not trivial, and they are made all the more difficult because they are not simply issue-specific, they are also philosophical-cum-ideological.

A similar dilemma pertains in the security domain. Rice identifies the problem and does so in a manner that differs little from that of Democrats. As she correctly points out, in the absence of a Soviet threat and in the wake of the Kosovo intervention, a redefinition of the trans Atlantic alliance is required. While welcoming its enlargement, NATO, she argues, is in danger of losing its identity and sense of mission.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately Rice, and Democrat analysts alike, apart from asserting US interest in the process, are silent on how this identity and mission is to be regenerated.

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<sup>40</sup> Rice, p. 54

## Conclusion

This paper has made no attempt to provide a comprehensive review of the US foreign policy agenda. Rather it has attempted to look at the major constraints and opportunities that might face an incoming president inheriting the legacy of the Clinton administration. In so doing, it has addressed big picture, structural questions about the nature of US power in the post Cold War, globalised, era. It has demonstrated the importance of US preponderance in the economic and security 'hard power' domains, but also identified the salience of what Joseph Nye has labelled soft power. This hard power-soft power dichotomy is of considerable analytical utility for any discussion of US foreign policy after November; especially when looked at through Republican lenses.

Nye argued that US soft power works not only bilaterally, but also through its predominance in the international organisations if, but only if, US policy positions are morally based and committed to building a consensus around them. For the moment at least, it seems to be lost on Bush and his team that there is a limit to the utility of hard power in contemporary international, especially institutional, settings. In the context of Cold War disciplines, the use of hard power to influence policy may have been acceptable to most states who saw the US as preferable to the alternative. But what was good for Ronald Reagan in a Cold War context might not be so good for George Bush Jr now. Appeals to the days of the Reagan era might evoke a warm glow amongst contemporary Republican's, but the structural contexts are different. Bullying, in theory and practice, diminishes US soft power. The downside of current US preponderance is that it causes others to wish to balance against it.

While US soft power predominates 'counter balancing' may be avoided. But if other international actors think that the US is resorting too frequently to the use of hard power, especially in the economic domain, this situation may not prevail. Bush's foreign policy prognostications in the run up to the election are every bit as domestically politically instrumental as those the Republicans have rightly criticised Clinton for over the last few years. They offer little comfort to America's international partners. As Nye, admittedly from a Democratic perspective, recently opined '... it would be a pity if the unilateralist rhetoric of an election year led America to squander its soft power and to feed its enemies.'<sup>41</sup>

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More objectively, a recent study from the Institute of Diplomacy at Georgetown University demonstrates how an Administration in a perpetual state of mutual mistrust with Congress has been progressively unable to provide high quality statesmanship and diplomacy on a range of important foreign policy initiatives throughout the 1990s. Not only has the US had a minority Presidency--given the Republican majority in Congress--there has been a marked trend within Congress towards a reduced focus on, and the provision of increasingly constrained resources for, foreign policy matters. Expertise has declined in a number of ways. Notably, over the 1990s, 50 members of the Senate and 353 members of the House were newly elected. The impact of this has been to diminish the expertise and leadership potential of the once important Authorising Committees. Over the decade they have increasingly played second fiddle to the more narrowly, fiscally focused, Appropriating Committees.<sup>42</sup>

This could be a problem. The first decade after the Cold War was clearly the decade of economic globalisation. Foreign policy, in the more traditional, geopolitical sense is likely to matter more in the second post Cold War decade. For example, stalled peace talks in the Middle East, stalled peace processes in Northern Ireland, the demise of the CTBT and the aborted new MTN Round after Seattle will all ensure the heightened salience of foreign policy questions in American politics after the election.

But all these issue-specific questions are dwarfed by three big, related, and unresolved intellectual-cum-philosophical questions of the post Cold War era: (i) How to accentuate the positive and mitigate the negative effects of the US's unrivalled preponderance? (ii) What to think about the nature of contemporary state sovereignty--the central pillar that has underscored the international system since the Peace of Westphalia (in theoretical terms at least) and that has been brought into question by humanitarian interventions in Kosovo and East Timor? (iii) How to govern globalisation in such a way as to avoid massive polarisation between the haves and have not of this process? The Clinton era, driven by domestic

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<sup>41</sup> Joseph S Nye, 'To Project its Power, America Must Take the Soft Approach' International Herald Tribune. (details required)

<sup>42</sup> The Foreign Policy Struggle: Congress and the Presidency in the 1990s and Beyond, Washington DC: Georgetown University, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 2000.

political considerations, has provided no signpost for how to think about any of these wider issues and at this stage neither have the two contenders for his job.

Thus the basic conclusion of this analysis is not very original or startling. There will be considerable continuity to US foreign policy after the November 2000 election. Policy advisers on both sides of the fence, in their less partisan moments, clearly recognise the manner in which global economic and politico-strategic interests under conditions of globalisation are inseparable and that they have to be responded to as such. They also recognise that for all the isolationist impulses of American opinion, engagement with, not retreat from, the international agenda will be the order of the day. Moreover, both are committed, rhetorically at least, to the notion of US leadership. Where the difference between them will be found is in the manner in which they engage and the manner in which they attempt to lead.