

## US Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice: from Soviet era Containment to the era of the Arab Uprising(s)

Marianna Charountaki<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

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This paper aims to pursue a brief but enlightening comparative study of US discourse and practice as applied by the Presidencies towards the Middle Eastern region since World War II up to the present day in order to evaluate the current status of US foreign policy on the occasion of the Arab uprisings and with the intention of disclosing the centrality of the 'national interest' in the formulation of US foreign policy making. The "Arab Spring" and the transformation of the Middle East as a vital region for US interests has emerged as a golden opportunity for US strategy to reassess itself and reconsider both policies and tactics. The analysis argues that a gradual intensity characterizes both discourse and policies. I present arguments about five different phases US policy has undergone coupled with a discourse of 'Individual Realism' and 'Opportunistic Humanitarianism' that US foreign policy has been founded on and shaped by. Barack Obama's Presidency has not altered US foreign policy discourse or practice much; even more significantly, it does not seem to have left a sixth mark of its own.

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"The days when Churchill and Roosevelt could sit down over a bottle of brandy and settle the world's problems were long gone. Obama often found himself dealing with a host of emerging powers, configured in a variety of ways on a variety of issues. The Cold War doctrine may have been...more disastrous than this New World Order but it was a lot simpler".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Post-doctoral fellow at Reading University (UK), Her research interests range from international relations and foreign policy analysis to the international relations of the broader Middle East. She is the author of the book *The Kurds and US Foreign Policy: International Relations in the Middle East since 1945*, (Routledge, 2010) as well as articles like "Turkish Foreign Policy and the Kurdistan Regional Government", *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Volume XVII, Number 4, (Center for Strategic Research: Winter 2012), pp. 185-208.

## 1. Introduction

The "Arab Spring", initiated by societal revolts, is a term to designate 'regime change' on the road to regional democratization, starting on December, 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Tunisia. This has either taken the form of an absolute civilian uprising as was the case in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen or militarized uprisings as was eventually the case with Libya and Syria. Surprisingly, the dimensions of this incident, which spread throughout the MENA (Middle East & North Africa) region, are striking. Whether fabricated or result of the people's will to seek for rights, justice and freedom, the Arab uprisings are not a recent phenomenon, but date back to the Iraqi War (2003) and Saddam Hussein's 'regime change' as a result of domestic turbulence incited by Saddam's absolute rule and a Kurdish revolt encouraged and supported by external forces. The new reality that makes the difference thus is not the lack of any regional or international interference, but the successive outbreak of a series of revolts in different regions simultaneously. What is more, these revolts from Egypt and Libya to Syria represent different cases in which demands for a fair and just order against authoritarianism, poverty and the guarantee of civil rights in the lack of a clear strategic vision on behalf of the insurgents has also been critical, especially when the representation of the citizenship appears fragmented between Islamic and fundamentalist groups and the more nationalistically-oriented segments of the society. Remarkably, the Arab uprisings fit within the context of the US discourse for the "support for democracy"<sup>ii</sup> and "respect for human rights"<sup>iii</sup> as it was formulated in George W. Bush's Plan for the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI, November 2003) that provisioned for the transformation of the Arab and Muslim World, in need of change, in order to promote US interests in the region.

This research builds on my previous extensive study of US foreign policy in general and towards the Middle East in particular.<sup>iv</sup> Even though the literature on US foreign policy is rich, there is scarcity of extensive scholarly work in the analysis of the Arab uprisings and especially in its interplay with the US foreign policy discourse and practice, due to the fact that it is an emergent phenomenon, still in progress.<sup>v</sup>

Most of the writings stem from media outlets so far and are confined either to scholarly accounts of the happenings that have taken place in each country of interest or future prospects that favour specific regions or actors.<sup>vi</sup>

This analysis aims to reflect on US foreign policy practice and the theory that forms its discourse, since World War II through a comparative study of the US presidencies that have shaped each period. Therefore the scope of this study is to question the continuity or change in US foreign policy discourse and practice since the Truman administration during the Cold War period up to the post-Cold war era, and ascertain the consistency between the US foreign policy practice and its discourse prior and after the 9/11 attacks up to the outbreak of the 2010 events in the Middle East. Looking at US foreign policy discourse, the analysis singles out the role of US 'national interest', which appears entangled with the US strategy. How these different phases of the US presidencies affect US interests and how US priorities impact on the current situation in the Middle East *vis-à-vis* the Arab uprisings will be analyzed. Finally, one should also bear in mind that the Arab uprisings have been to date occurred under a single administration and therefore they occupy less analytical space, yet their significance seems already to be shaping the future of the Middle Eastern landscape.

Given the limited available relevant literature, and because of the contemporary nature of the subject-matter, my evidence is drawn from reports and US official documents and statements, including presidential remarks in major speeches, as well as books authored by US policymakers –members of the US administration.

## **2. The Cold War Period: The Supremacy of the 'National Interest'**

From the Democrat Harry S. Truman's Doctrine (1945-1953) to the Democrat Barack Obama's foreign policy orientation, not many changes of significant importance appear to have altered the scope of the US foreign policy discourse and practice. What has changed, though, is the gradual intensity which characterizes US foreign policy practice.

President Truman shifted the United States from a *détente* policy to the containment of the Soviet communism as outlined in the "X" article of George Kennan's Long Telegram (February 1946), further institutionalized through the Middle East Defence Organization and Middle East Command, as well as later on in the Baghdad Pact in 1955, on the grounds of his 'Balanced Program' and the National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68, 30/09/1950). Truman got the US involved in the Korean War without congressional approval (August 1950).

Similarly, the Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961) would intensify US involvement in world affairs and in the Middle Eastern region in particular by encouraging the overthrowing of Middle Eastern regimes via covert operations taken on by the US intelligence services. The 1953 *coup d'état* in Iran is a case in point. This was also the case with the Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–1969), who intensified US engagement in the Vietnam War. Johnson seems to have suffered the same fate as George W. Bush (2001-2009) whose reputation was damaged badly due to his decision to declare an enduring and costly war against Iraq (2003).

Eisenhower also initiated a nuclear deterrence policy to end the Korean War with China. In the same vein as his predecessor, Eisenhower's Doctrine (5/01/1957) was also identified by the same US foreign policy imperatives of promoting the US liberal and democratic values worldwide and Soviet containment.<sup>vii</sup> The Democrat John F. Kennedy (1961-1963) continued Eisenhower's containment policy, expanding it in Latin America and elsewhere. The 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion operation is indicative of this approach, while he also tried to implement a non-proliferation policy during his short-lived term of office.

In this sense, it is clear that US foreign policy discourse and practice as pursued by the different presidencies throughout this period convert rather than divert, with very minor variations as they were all preoccupied with the same interest in international stability under US leadership; the preservation of the *status quo* and the balance of power, especially in the oil-rich Gulf region; the confrontation of revisionist powers such as the Soviets and the ideology of communism; the protection of the flow of petroleum to the West and the expansion of world trade, in addition to the importance of democracy and the armaments control as well as the recognition and support of the state of Israel. Therefore, an alliance with other nation-states as counterbalances was imperative for the US foreign policy strategy.

According to Truman, "one of the primary objectives of the foreign policy of the US is the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a life free from coercion...to help free people" "through their own efforts"<sup>viii</sup> to maintain their free institutions and national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose totalitarian regimes on them". As "preeminent among nations", the US would work for the "limitation and control of all armaments" and "the expansion of world trade on a sound and fair basis".<sup>ix</sup>

Likewise for Eisenhower, “the US was called to take the status of a world power...as our destiny”<sup>x</sup> and President Johnson stated on 23 May 1967 that “the US was committed to supporting the political independence and territorial integrity of all nations of the area”.<sup>xi</sup>

Based on this same notion of Wilsonian rhetoric –that is, the “belief that the US is exercising power legitimately only when it is doing so on behalf of someone or something else”<sup>xii</sup> –coupled with *realpolitik*, Richard Nixon’s Republican policies (1969-1974) are identified by the same intensity to “support growth in Africa, Asia and Latin America, freeing the world, transforming the Soviet system and strengthening democracies through cooperation”.<sup>xiii</sup> This indicates that US foreign policy pivoting toward Asia and other regions than the Middle East is not a new paradigm. Every single corner of this planet has been the focus of US foreign policy, and as such it is articulated in the analysis of the US National Security Strategy reports of Barack Obama’s administration. Equally, Obama’s opening to China can be traced back to Nixon’s first visit to the People’s Republic of China in 1972. Nixon’s policy of *détente* in his relations with the Soviet Union and China sealed, with SALT I and leading to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, demonstrates the employment of the ‘soft power’ policy which Obama seeks to pursue today. The Republicans’ commitment to the Middle East process and Israel’s security;<sup>xiv</sup> the understanding that the US could not act alone if it claimed global leadership,<sup>xv</sup> which resulted in the rapprochement with both China and the Soviet Union as well as Nixon’s achievement in ending US involvement in the Vietnam War (1973) as Barack Obama did with the War in Iraq (December 2011) and finally Nixon’s ‘Twin Pillars’ doctrine (1972) all imply a continuation of the US objectives aiming to maintain unaltered US foreign policy strategy as it was reinforced under the tandem Nixon –Kissinger.<sup>xvi</sup>

Nixon’s presidency signals a second turning-point for US foreign policy in international politics following the post-World War II period as the first change in US foreign policy from a prolonged political distancing from world affairs into an indirect political involvement. US foreign policy practice was not only escalated under Nixon’s proxy policies but US interest in non-state actors, either of religious or ethnic orient, is also probably rooted in this period. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that US foreign policy begun to engage with issues involving non-state entities, following acts of religious and nationalist movements on an international level.

The orientation of US foreign policy towards specific state and non-state players in order to preserve the international and regional *status quo* was presented through Nixon's security strategy.

Following the foreign policy practices of his predecessors, Nixon's commitment to the US 'national interest' was communicated within the same framework of US discourse of "practicing a balance of power, combining idealism...that is... American values of consistency, conviction and public support...and pragmatism" since "in the formation of foreign policy, both 'security and morality' should be combined".<sup>xvii</sup> Nixon's rational policy, based more on the balance of power against the use of force *vis-à-vis* his policies of the reduction in the arms arsenals of both US and USSR and the use of regional powers as bases to facilitate US objectives in the wider region, reminds one of Bill Clinton's or Barack Obama's favour of 'low politics' policies, both of whom, however, finally succumbed to assertive policies. The policy of counterterrorism was not developed under the latest US presidencies, but emerged due to a need to institutionalize the combat against terrorism, especially after incidents such as the 1972 hijacking of a US aircraft to Algeria. In this context, the creation of the 'Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism' and 'the Working Group on Terrorism' (25/09/1972), chaired by the State Department, was aimed at confronting religious radicalism and terrorist acts.<sup>xviii</sup>

The Watergate scandal (1974) that brought to power the Republican Gerald Ford (1974-1977), succeeded by the Democrat Jimmy Carter (1977-1981). This period is identified by the same US foreign policy discourse and practice of promoting democratization and human rights on the one hand and counterinsurgency policies on the other, along the same lines as President Obama's foreign policy.

Thus, the policy of non-proliferation, the reduction in military expenditure as was delineated in SALT II (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks), the multilateralism depicted in the Camp David Accords (17/09/1978), and the establishment of The Carter Center, which won him the Nobel Peace Prize (2002), just as Obama won in 2009, goes hand in hand with the arming of the Mujahiddin in Afghanistan covertly begun by Present Carter and continued openly by President Reagan, including aid to the Contras in Nicaragua as well as the armament of the anticommunists in Ethiopia and Angola and the establishment of strategic bases, let alone the creation of the Rapid Deployment Force in the Gulf. All these elements disclose a similarity among the tactical strategies of all these presidents' administrations.

The rise of Khomeini's Shiism (as another expansionist ideology) in Iran (1979), the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December of the same year, and the Iran hostage crisis (1979-1981) intensified the militarization of US foreign policy, which reached its peak in Gulf War I (1980-1988). The US continued to pursue the same policies of containing both Soviet communism and radical religious ideologies, along with supporting the sovereignty of Israel.

During Reagan's presidency (1981-1989), the same speeches were to be heard, extolling America as "the greatest force for peace anywhere favouring the spread of democracy throughout the world and recognizably consistent with the national interests of the US".<sup>xxix</sup> Reagan used the same rhetoric of democracy and human rights based on US realistic objectives.

Indicative of the continuation of US foreign policy practice was the White House's traditional two-track policy toward Libya and Iran. That is, "the administration's elimination of one Middle East source of terrorism while it was trading arms with another".<sup>xxx</sup> Both the Carter and the Obama administrations launched a two-track strategy of pressure and incentives to negotiate with Iran.<sup>xxxi</sup> In addition, Obama's Libyan policy does not seem to differ much from the Reagan Administration policy to eliminate Qaddafi, in place since the 1986 bombing of Libya (Operation El Dorado Canyon, 15/04/1986), and justified by US accusations of his support for terrorist groups which had struck against American diplomats. President Reagan is said to have gone so far as to describe Qaddafi as the "mad dog of the Middle East" and a "cancer to be cut out".

According to Reagan, Americans "seek peaceful avenues before resorting to the use of force... [but] none succeeded" a discourse central to the US rhetoric before the declaration of the Iraqi War (2003).<sup>xxii</sup> On his side, George Shultz, when National Security Adviser, would state that "the United States had a legal right to use military force against states that support terrorism" in the same vein as George W. Bush or Obama after the 9/11 attacks.<sup>xxiii</sup> However, the repetition of this wording is not surprising given that Reagan's Vice President was George H. W. Bush (1989-1993). The attack on Libya was said to be linked to the US determination for "a chance to begin a new phase in the American counterterrorism struggle –the direct use of military force".<sup>xxiv</sup>

Similarities between the discourses of both presidencies, those of Reagan and of Obama, can be also extracted from the former's National Security Strategy objectives (January 1988) to "restore America's economic strength", to "restore America's military strength", to "restore the nation's international prestige as a world leader" and finally to "restore pride among all Americans". This sort of "reset policy" was what Obama tried to pursue directly after Bush's administration. Yet, Obama's extensive use of the international community for the implementation of his strategy is what makes the difference.

Indeed, Reagan admitted that "the fundamentals of the US strategy change little from year to year (as) our interests and objectives are derived from enduring values". In this sense he pursued the "elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces and cut US and Soviet strategic offensive arms by 50 percent", which can be viewed within the same context as Obama's "reset" towards Russia and his non-proliferation policies.<sup>xxv</sup> Bush, in the same vein as all his predecessors, would also support the stance that "approaching the 21st Century, the fundamental values that have guided the US for over two centuries have not changed. Our basic national interests and objectives and the requirement for American leadership are still the same. But our strategy has changed to position us better to lead in a world which has changed as well".<sup>xxvi</sup>

The post-cold War era, marked by an explicit US political interventionism with the direct use of force *vis-à-vis* Gulf War II, ushered in a third change for US foreign policy practice.

It was evident that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a unipolar international system, coinciding with rise of a series of ethnic and radical politico-religious oriented non-state actors, was taken seriously into consideration even by national foreign policies. This illustrates why foreign policy-making was no longer entirely monopolized by state entities, since newly emergent state and non-state entities arose, which also shifted the attention of International Relations away from its exclusive dominance by interstate relations.<sup>xxvii</sup>



### 3. The Post-Cold War Era: Democracy *Versus* War

The onset of George W. H. Bush's Presidency (1989-1993) was marked by the same US rhetoric concerning US responsibility "to make kinder the face of the Nation and gentler the face of the world". The Republican President would state in his inaugural address that "America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle". It seems then that US foreign policy continues to lie in a realist agenda for the pursuit of its interests founded on moral principles. The difference with Bush, though, was that he launched a "new engagement...a new activism... that gets the job done".<sup>xxviii</sup> In this context, national defense strategy fundamentals comprised deterrence and defense, a turn towards which Obama has also recently been pursuing, as well as forward presence, crisis response and again reconstitution. Deterring nuclear attacks as the US foreign policy's top priority can be traced throughout this period.<sup>xxix</sup>

Bush's National Security Directive 26 (NSD, 2 October 1989) as well as NSD45 (20/08/1990) merely repeated the American traditional security interests.<sup>xxx</sup> The importance of the Middle East, the containment of states holding nuclear weapons and supportive of terrorism as well as the use of direct force were central to his strategy. National Security Directive 54 (15 January 1991) confirms that the United States would use military force against any power with interests inimical to vital US security interests, such as access to Persian Gulf oil or the security of key friendly states in the region in the same way as Carter's Doctrine (23/01/1980) had dictated a decade ago.<sup>xxxi</sup>

#### 3.1 The "Indispensable Nation"<sup>xxxii</sup>

The arrival of Bill Clinton in the US Presidency (1993-2001) coincided with the fourth major change in US foreign policy. Even though George Shultz had stated in the 1980s that the US had a legal right to use military force against states that supported terrorism, Clinton expanded the notion of containment of global terrorism against both state, such as a nuclear Iran, and non-state actors, associating them with terrorist groups. According to Clinton, "US strategy is founded on continued US principled engagement and leadership abroad".<sup>xxxiii</sup> Obama also incorporated in his foreign policy discourse the same ideas, with the exception that his policies were more targeted, in contrast to Clinton's limitless "engagement and enlargement".<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Hitherto, Clinton's discourse for the "spread of democracy, human rights and respect for the rule of law not only reflect American values, but advance the [US] security and prosperity as core objectives of the US strategy [since] US international leadership [lies in] the power of [these] democratic ideals and values" is found unaltered.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Even though Bill Clinton's foreign policy agenda appeared more pacifistic, focused on the balance of power and the spread of democratic values and economic development, still the US administration's long term practical policies were identified by the same policies of Iraq's and Iran's dual containment. Martin Indyk considered Iran's containment a *sine qua non* policy given US perceptions of Iran's willingness to acquire nuclear and conventional weapons, to undermine the Arab-Israeli peace process, and to promote terrorism on a worldwide scale. On this basis, US foreign policy discourse was radicalized further, with Clinton stating that "when our vital interests are challenged, or the will and conscience of the international community is defied, we will act—with peaceful diplomacy whenever possible, with force when necessary".<sup>xxxvi</sup> It is striking how the two Democrats' policies resemble one another, considering that President Obama also started with a pacifistic discourse in Cairo (2009) until the Libyan war (2011) and the extensive use of drones. Indeed, in his 2010 National Security Strategy, Obama would also argue in favour of "diplomacy but if necessary [and] the use of force" as tools for the implementation of his strategic goals.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Clinton's Iraq Liberation Act (1998) was the platform for George W. Bush's doctrine (17/09/2002) of preemption against state and non-state actors in the context of the US war on terror, which gave different dimensions to the US policies of multilateralism, the promotion of democracy through regime change, and the intensification of militarization through an all-out use of force, which strikes US foreign policy practice's fifth and last change. This does not mean, though, that Bush was not also committed to the same discourse as his predecessors, that is, "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are one".<sup>xxxviii</sup> Surprising events such as the 9/11 attacks expanded the connotation of foreign policy analysis, marked, and thus shaped the US foreign policy discourse and practice for the years to come.

The post-Cold War era revealed the advancement of the study of foreign policy, disregarded until the 1950s, while the rise of a series of ethnic and politico-religious radically oriented groups and the influential role of non-state actors in foreign policy-making changed the notion of the foreign policy.

As has already been explored, the US policy of counterterrorism is not a new phenomenon that rose after the events of 9/11 but had already emerged since the 1970s. Starting with the 'Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism' and the 'Working Group on Terror' under the auspices of the US State Department in 1972, the gradual militarization of the US discourse and policies in the aftermath of Nixon's tenure was confirmed with Carter's arming of the Mujahiddin in Afghanistan and Reagan's Iran Gate (1986) scandal. Thus, the very US policy of direct use of force during the 1980s and 1990s can be said to have brought about the 9/11 attacks. It is not accidental that the combat of the US occupation troops on the ground of the holy lands of the Prophet had been the main component of Osama Bin Laden's rhetoric. The post-Cold war period marked the institutionalization of the direct use of force under George H. W. Bush's Directives, (NSD26, and NSD45), the Presidency of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush's doctrine of 'preemption' against state and non-state actors in the context of the US 'War on terror'.

Thus the Cold War period with Carter's Doctrine dictated the use of direct military force against any power with interests inimical to vital US security interests and was carried on by George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton's presidencies where the importance of the Middle East, the prioritization of the containment of both state and its expansion to non-state possessors of nuclear weapons and supporters of terrorism, along with the use of direct force, crystallized the frame in which US foreign policy and discourse was developed in the post-Cold war environment considering the seismic impact of 9/11.

#### **4. The 9/11 Attacks and the New World Order**

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on 11 September 2001 shaped the US foreign policy practice under both the Bush and Obama administrations. Regardless of to what extent Bush sought "to create a balance of power" initially,<sup>xxxix</sup> he failed to do so, and no matter how willing Obama was to deviate to a great extent from his predecessor's policies, his policies have proven so far the linear nature of the unchanged US foreign policy. This rectilinear movement (with the occasional circling back) has identified US foreign policy practice and discourse since World War II, albeit slight divergences observed in Obama's administration decision for a military operation in Libya (29/03/2011), in the use of drones and the death of Osama bin Laden as well as his inability to close the Guantanamo Bay detention camp after Congressional objections.<sup>xi</sup>

Ultimately both administrations were preoccupied by the same squandering of resources in two wars, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the overthrow and hanging of Saddam Hussein on the one hand and killing of Osama Bin Laden on the other. Despite thus the different rhetoric as it will be explored further down, the same policies have been actually applied so that we can argue about changes in tactics but not in foreign policy strategy overall where an explicit continuity is apparent so far.

Likewise, Obama's shift to Asia also does not signal a new strategy in view of President Clinton's "Integrated strategy—a New Pacific Community" already established in the 1990s, apart from his policy in Southwest Asia focused on deterring threats to regional stability from Iraq and Iran.<sup>xii</sup> Similarly, China—as the largest source of US imports—was placed in the center of George W. Bush's strategy to promote a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region.

According to Condoleezza Rice when Secretary of State, "the last eight years have also challenged us to deal with rising Chinese influence; [therefore] it is incumbent on the US to find areas of cooperation and strategic agreement with Russia and China".<sup>xiii</sup> Bush's aim to "refocus [the US relationship with Russia] on emerging and potential common interests and challenges" is illuminating.<sup>xiii</sup>

The war on terror as a continuation of the US enmity to radicalism in its religious forms is an extension of the US antipathy towards Soviet communism and formerly to Arab nationalism. As bad the USSR used to be, was now both Iran and Iraq under Bush's presidency (2001-2009), in addition to North Korea as members of an axis of evil threatening international stability. The US Manichean rhetoric of the good American against 'rogue' actors molded the New World Order, which was primarily constructed on an all-out use of force in the name of humanitarian interventionism.

Following in the steps of the Democrat Truman, George W. Bush overrode the UNSC and declared war against Saddam's Iraq on 20 March 2003. The containment of global terrorism and the destruction of WMD—which had been already pointed as a major threat to the US security by the previous administration—were not new policies but an intensification of Bush's father's practices. The war on terror, which Obama minimized to target only "Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associated forces" monopolized the US foreign policy agenda in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>xiv</sup>

## **5. The Arab Uprisings and Barack Obama's foreign policy: Shifting from an Old to a New Paradigm?**

"For 60 years, the United States pursued stability at the expense of democracy in the Middle East -- and we achieved neither. Now, we are taking a different course. We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people".<sup>xlv</sup>

As much as Obama started his campaign as an anti-war candidate, the President's taking office coincided with a war in Iraq, a sweeping financial crisis (2008) and a war against Al-Qaeda and its affiliated networks as a result of the previous administration's response to 9/11.<sup>xlvi</sup>

These global events that meant to frame the years to come did not only made it difficult to rebalance foreign policy along with domestic politics, but also did not allow Obama's foreign policy outlook to diverge much from his predecessor's policies.

What has probably changed is the scale and intensity of the pursuit of the US core 'national interest'. Even though Obama has succeeded in ending the war in Iraq, he increased US forces in Afghanistan. Even though he signed a New Start arms control treaty with Russia (2009), still he continued with more zeal the strategy of counterterrorism –shifted from counterinsurgency as was practiced in Iraq –and the extensive use of drones. Even though Obama called for a new beginning between the Muslims and the US (Cairo Speech, 4/06/2009), he intervened in Libya, sanctioned Iran (2011) and opposed the Palestinian Authority's bid for statehood through the NSC (September 2011). While the Democratic President succeeded in killing Al-Qaeda's founder, acts of terror still occur, with the most recent one being the bombing of the Boston Marathon (15/04/2013).

Whereas the President has stated that "the unrest in the Arab world has allowed extremists to gain a foothold in countries like Libya and Syria" the Reagan administration was long before preoccupied with Libya and US fears of its associations with extremist forces like Hezbollah, Syria or Iran.<sup>xlvii</sup>

The Arab Uprisings, from Tunisia, to Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Syria constitute another 9/11 as a surprising event that came to alter once more the Middle Eastern political setting.

Regardless of Obama's administration discourse on America's pivot to Asia, Obama's Presidential Study Directive [11] "political reform in the Middle East and North Africa" on August, 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 as a need to guide the administration's response to the regional events indicates the importance of the region for US foreign policy.<sup>xlviii</sup> Likewise, Obama's focus in his UN speech (25/09/2012) on the containment of a nuclear-armed Iran, the importance of Israel's and the Gulf's security in tandem with the stability of the global economy, other than democracy and human rights (only raised in his second term), reveal the perpetuation of the same US foreign policy goals towards the region.

Following George W. Bush's Greater Middle East Initiative Plan (November 2003), aimed at regional democratization<sup>xlix</sup>, Obama ordered officials "to study ways of promoting change in the Middle Eastern countries [since] the Obamians saw the events...as the beginning of transformational changes...and a new era [where] authoritarian leaders like Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak were no longer forces for regional stability. Their regimes were shaky [therefore] the US could serve its own long term interests by identifying itself with the forces for change". And this is the Muslim Brotherhood. After Tunisia, Obama argued "this old paradigm was broken". For the first time, Obama intervened to put pressure on Mubarak's regime to resign as a policy serving both "idealism through the pursuit of democratic change and realism would win popular support in a country of strategic importance. "Obama went before TV cameras to announce he had told Mubarak that an orderly transition to a representative government 'must begin now'...when reporters asked Robert Gibbs – the White House Press Secretary -- what the President meant by 'now'... he replied 'now means yesterday'".<sup>l</sup>

## **6. Epilogue: The US 'National Interest' through the Lenses of the "Arab Spring"**

In previous findings I have argued about the superiority of the US 'national interest' over a series of domestic or external structures to formulate US foreign policy.

I perceive US 'national interest' as America's broad interests –other than its objectives, which are interconnected with the ideology and practice of US foreign policy, and aim at the survival, military dominance and the spread of democracy, economic prosperity and peace as the driving forces behind the US foreign policy actions.<sup>li</sup>

Bill Clinton distinguished three different categories, namely the "vital interests, those of broad, overriding importance to the survival...the national interests...and the humanitarian...[where] our nation may act because our values demand it" but ultimately they all appear to merge.<sup>lii</sup> According to Rice, "the national interest is replaced with humanitarian interests or the interests of the international community". But the "sharp line between power politics and a principled foreign policy based on values would be a disaster for American foreign policy as American values are universal".<sup>liii</sup>

What is being then called 'dualism' appears to be nothing more than rhetoric vital to the explanation of foreign policy practices in need of rationalization and such rationale(s) are in turn grounded on a nationalistic discourse. I thus name this inter-dependence as 'Individualistic Realism' coupled with 'an Opportunistic Humanitarianism'.<sup>liv</sup> It is individualistic because it is self-centered and opportunistic because it is tactical.<sup>lv</sup> Thus, the first term suggests that "individuals may be state or non-state actors pursuing their foreign policy agenda aiming at the achievement of their interests to the maximum without regard to the dictates of the international environment to the extent that they target to remain intact from the need to be shaped by it" whereas the second implies "an occasional call for humanitarian values [as adjusted] to their national needs".<sup>lvi</sup> The US then adopts a humanitarian approach adjusted to its interests for the legitimization of its actions.

Condoleezza Rice would interpret this same perception as, "the old dichotomy between realism and idealism has never really applied to the United States, because we do not really accept that our national interest and our universal ideals are at odds. For our nation, it has always been a matter of perspective.

Even when our interests and ideals come into tension in the short run, we believe that in the long run they are indivisible".<sup>lvii</sup> This is what she would call 'Unique American Realism'.<sup>lviii</sup>

Though US realism is one of absolute and “enlightened self-interest”, the US strategy is unique.<sup>lix</sup> What Obama’s administration realized only with the 2010 events of the Arab uprisings, which is that the “support of democratic transitions is a strategic necessity”<sup>lix</sup> and that US long term interests could be only served by identifying itself with the forces for change, Rice as George W. Bush’s National Security Adviser, had long since argued.

“For six decades, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, a basic bargain defined the United States’ engagement in the broader Middle East; we supported authoritarian regimes, and they supported our shared interest in regional stability. After 9/11 it became increasingly clear that this old bargain had produced false stability. There were virtually no legitimate channels for political expression in the region. But this did not mean that there was no political activity. There was in madrasas and radical mosques. It is no wonder that the best organized political forces were extremist groups”.<sup>lxi</sup> In this sense Barack Obama’s reorientation toward transforming US policy from maintaining the regional balance of power into the promotion of democratic development in the Middle East as a top US priority is a fundamental interest in place since the previous administration.

It is thus observed, as idealists would argue, an interaction and an often tense relation between US foreign policy’s realistic policies coupled with its idealistic discourse; these factors codetermine US national interest throughout the period(s) under examination. The “Arab Spring” came thus as another event to confirm this perspective. Perhaps Obama’s administration, coming on the heels of that of George W. Bush, was both no longer supportive of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East while remaining unwilling to alter long-standing policies; the provision for a humanitarian discourse implemented through the means of military intervention for the protection of the citizenship reflects another aspect of this same interrelation between ‘Individualistic Realism’ and Opportunistic Humanitarianism. Following the Iraqi War (2003) and the ongoing Afghan civil war, the US 2011 humanitarian military intervention in Libya with the support of NATO and the international community as allied forces determined to topple Libya’s ruler, Muammar al-Qaddafi, let alone Syria, do not differ much in terms of discourse and intentions reflected in past US foreign policy practice.



## 6.1. The cases of Libya and Syria

In the case of Libya, a coalition began a military intervention in Libya to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 in response to armed conflict during the Libyan Civil War on March, 19<sup>th</sup> 2011. In the case of Syria, Obama would argue in the same vein that the “US should take military action against the Syrian regime”. Similarly, “there will be no American boots on the ground and action will be limited...designated to deter the Syrian government gashing its own people”.

Following the discourse of the previous presidencies, Obama argues that “We are the United States of America and cannot take a blind eye...[and] ignore chemical weapons attacks. Failing to respond...would increase the risk that chemical weapons could be used again. They would fall in the hands of terrorists who might use them against us. This would pose a serious threat to our national security”.<sup>lxii</sup>

Although the same discourse was adopted in the case of Syria, US policies were far more controlled, contrary to the US administration’s desire to continue George W. Bush’s neoconservative strategy of ‘regime change’ in the Middle East as reflected in the his GMEI program.

The lack of support on the part of the international community *vis-à-vis* France and United Kingdom’s hesitance; Bashar Al Assad’s regional and international alliances; Syria’s close vicinity to Israel along its borders where a potential war is considered a threat; and certainly the reawakening of Russia’s aspirations for greater influence in the broader region give possible explanations for the US foreign policy attitude towards Syria.<sup>lxiii</sup> Let alone Moscow’s rearming of Syria in addition to the limitations posed on the US foreign policy by the rise of Islamic radicalism in view of the assassination of the U.S. ambassador – Christopher Stevens –to Libya (11/09/2012), the lack of engagement with different groups composing the grass roots of each society, the fighting of extremism and finally Obama’s favouring problem solving of domestic over foreign policy issues.

## 7. Conclusion

US foreign policy since the onset of its engagement in international affairs has not changed dramatically. Its steady involvement has thus kept her engaged in most of the regions where US interests are at stake up to today. The relation between US practice and discourse is undisrupted as the one sought to legitimize the other.

In that sense their relation has grown equally to the extent that today an assertive foreign policy practice is followed by an ultra-pacifistic discourse.

A consistency between words and deeds was observed throughout the different periods even when US foreign policy practice and discourse were often subjected to changes from one term of office to the other during the same administration, considering the inputs that each time arose from the environment.

Hence, with the most evident rule that different developments dictated different tactics or even strategies, however they appeared always consistent with the US national interest. This inflexibility could probably also explain the lack of a long term vision on behalf of the US strategy, with each incident being dealt with on a case-to-case basis in an effort to “adjust any given environment to its own needs rather than adapt itself to international events”.<sup>lxiv</sup>

The emerging of a series of new actors on the other hand, either of state or non-state status, and the empowerment of the regional ones have altered the existing balance of power with the most explicit paradigm being the transformation of Middle Eastern political setting.

Hitherto US Presidencies appear to have continued more or less the linear –in the sense of uninterrupted –US foreign policy with controlled fluctuations. The case thus of Barack Obama’s presidency, which seems to be mired in inertia and lacking a clear orientation, raise questions of the extent to which Presidencies enjoy the freedom of imposing their own agenda *vis-à-vis* scholarly claims that “Washington has changed Obama far more than he has changed Washington”.<sup>lxv</sup> The Syrian crisis is a case in point where the US administration was driven by the same desire to implement its discourse and thus policies but their employment ended up being impossible.

This had also been evident with the formulation of George W. Bush's foreign policy, as probably the starting point in contemporary politics, driven by the bipartisan neoconservative team in the US administration, the interests of which *propos* has also raised questions about their alignment policies with the US core national interests.

In that sense the lack of concrete policies and a coherent and long term US strategic vision of how to preserve these enduring US interests appears damaging for the US image, whilst at the same time it has weakened the Middle Eastern states exactly because neither targeted action nor a firm commitment to a clear strategic long term vision seems to exist. This indecisiveness and uncertainty has trapped US foreign policy –depicted even in Barack Obama's rhetoric between the two terms –in a Catch-22. The bigger loser, though, appears to be the Middle Eastern polities that are being dragged day by day to anarchy and the state of paralysis counter to the axioms of freedom, justice and rights. The current state of affairs though constitutes an *impetus* for the US foreign policy to reassess its objectives and the environment in which those are implemented.

The takeover of US foreign policy by the War on Terror has proven dangerous for US national interests in the Middle East. This obsession has started to gradually drive US influence out of regional political alliances, with the most recent case in point being the Syrian crisis. Thus, the impact of 9/11 and its results can be observed today in the confined US Middle Eastern foreign policy choices. Barack Obama's reset policy of gradual diversion from regional Middle Eastern to Asia Pacific politics or the administration's turn to domestic politics has left US Middle Eastern policy in an impasse. The US has to seize the moment, or lose the opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of its strategies in the Middle Eastern region currently in turmoil. The passing from the era of the Founding Fathers when realist policies were pursued through ethical lenses indeed, to the 43<sup>rd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> Presidencies of the Republic when circumstances are outweighed by realism, makes this imperative. Barack Obama's attempts to achieve a rapprochement with Iran and a resolution of its nuclear issue as well as recent declarations of the US administration's intention to withdraw from Afghanistan by 2016 and "to shift our [US] counterterrorism strategy...to more effectively partner with countries where terrorist networks seek a foothold" should be viewed as positive developments within this context.<sup>lxvi</sup>

The US paradigm in reaction to the Arab Uprisings following Obama's administration policies to support democratic change and a policy of humanitarian intervention, challenged by the re-emergence of Russia and China in regional politics, cannot but in due course reinforce reevaluation of the role of both international and regional actors in the formulation of regional politics as well as US strategy *per se*.

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<sup>i</sup> James Mann, *The Obamians: the struggle inside the White House to redefine American power*, (Viking Adult: 2012), p.190.

<sup>ii</sup> Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa", Third Major Speech, (The White House: 19/05/2011) in <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa> (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>iii</sup> Barack Obama, "President Obama's 2012 address to UN General", cited in *Washington Post* (25/09/2012) in [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-09-25/politics/35497281\\_1\\_libyan-people-benghazi-diplomatic-facilities](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-09-25/politics/35497281_1_libyan-people-benghazi-diplomatic-facilities) (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>iv</sup> Marianna Charountaki, *The Kurds and US foreign policy: International Relations in the Middle East since 1945*, (Routledge, October 2010).

<sup>v</sup> Fawaz A. Gerges, *The end of America's moment? Obama and the Middle East*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>vi</sup> Katerina Dalacoura, "The Arab Uprisings Two Years On: Ideology, Sectarianism and the Changing Balance of Power in the Middle East", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 15, No 1, (2013), pp. 75-89; Allen L. Keiswetter, *The Arab Spring: Implications for US Policy and Interests*, Middle East Institute, (13/01/2012); Mahmood Monshipouri and Ali Assareh, "The New Middle East and the United States: What to Expect After the Uprisings?", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 3, (2011), pp. 121-138. Colin H. Kahl and Marc Lynch, "U.S. Strategy after the Arab Uprisings: Toward Progressive Engagement", *The Washington Quarterly*, (Spring 2013).

<sup>vii</sup> Eisenhower would state, referring to a few centuries ago, that "it is well to remind ourselves that our basic national objective in international affairs remains peace—a world peace based on justice. Such a peace must include all areas, all peoples of the world if it is to be enduring". Since then, he stressed "the immense importance of the Middle East...if the nations of that area should lose their independence, if they were dominated by alien forces hostile to freedom, that would be both a tragedy for the area and for many other free nations whose economic life would be subject to near strangulation". Eisenhower continues that "all this would have the most adverse, if not disastrous, effect upon our own nation's economic life and political prospects". Finally "the national integrity of other free nations is directly related to our own [US] security" in Dwight David Eisenhower, *Eisenhower Doctrine* (January 5, 1957) in <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3360> (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>viii</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Speech at the Capitol, Inaugural Address*, (20 January, 1949).

<sup>ix</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Speech to the 89th Congress (1965–1967), A Select Chronology and Background Documents Relating to the Middle East*, US Senate, Foreign Relations Committee, (Washington DC 1967), p. 29.

<sup>x</sup> Robert M. MacIver, *The Rampart We Guard* (New York, Macmillan, 1950), pp. 107–108.

<sup>xi</sup> Ralph Magnus, *Special Analysis, "United States' Interests in the Middle East: political strategic interests"*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (Washington DC, October 1968), p. 30.

<sup>xii</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (Jan. - Feb., 2000), pp.47, 49.

<sup>xiii</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little Brown, 1982), p. 713.

<sup>xiv</sup> According to the 'US-Israeli agreement' (November 1971), the US would provide Israel with 'technical information and assistance that would allow Israel to produce advanced weapons components itself', *New York Times* (4 August 1971).

According to President Obama "when I consider Israel's security I also think of a nuclear armed Iranian government that has called for Israel's destruction" in Barack Obama, Speech, "Remarks of President Barack Obama to the People of Israel", (The White House: 21/03/2013) in <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/21/remarks-president-barack-obama-people-israel> (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>xv</sup> Peter Dickson, *Kissinger and the Meaning of History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 84.

<sup>xvi</sup> Nixon employed regional states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia "to protect American interests in the area...to stop the Soviets, ensure US access to Gulf oil, and achieve stability through the establishment of pro-Western regimes" in Teicher, Howard, and Gayle Radley Teicher, *Twin Pillars to Desert Storm: America's Flawed Vision in the Middle East from Nixon to Bush* (New York: Morrow, 1993), p.23 And "deprive the USSR of maritime access" in Henry Kissinger, *For the Record: Selected Statements, 1977-1980* (Boston: Little Brown, 1981), p.152.

<sup>xvii</sup> Kissinger, *For the Record*, op. cit., pp. 79, 83, 87.

<sup>xviii</sup> Dickson, *Kissinger and the Meaning of History*, op. cit., pp. 91, 93, 95.

<sup>xix</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Washington Conference of the American Legion", *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, Vol. 1 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 22 February 1983), p. 271.

<sup>xx</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, "Target Qaddafi", *The New York Times*, (22/02/1987).

<sup>xxi</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack and Ray Takeyh, "Doubling down on Iran", *The Washington Quarterly* (Autumn 2011).

<sup>xxii</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, "Target Qaddafi", op.cit.

<sup>xxiii</sup> George Shultz, Speech, Defense University, (Fort McNair, 15/01/1986) in *ibid*.

<sup>xxiv</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ronald Reagan, *National Security Strategy of the US*, (The White House: January 1988) in <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1988.pdf> (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>xxvi</sup> George H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the US*, (The White House: 1/01/1993) in <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1993.pdf> (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>xxvii</sup> See Marianna Charountaki, *The Kurds and US foreign policy*, op. cit., p.71. And Marianna Charountaki, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the Kurdistan Regional Government", *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Volume XVII, Number 4, (Center for Strategic Research: Winter 2012), pp. 185-208.

<sup>xxviii</sup> George W. Bush, *First Inaugural Address*, (20/01/ 1989).

<sup>xxix</sup> George H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the US*, (1/01/1993), op. cit.

<sup>xxx</sup> George H.W. Bush, "US Policy towards the Persian Gulf", *National Security Directive 26* (unclassified document), (Washington: The White House, 2/10/1989) in <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsd/nsd26.pdf> (last accessed August 2013). George H.W. Bush, "US Policy in Response to the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait", *National Security Directive 45* (unclassified document), (Washington: The White House, 20/08/1990) in <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsd/nsd45.pdf> (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>xxxi</sup> George H.W. Bush, "Responding to Iraqi aggression in the Gulf", *National Security Directive 54*, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsd/nsd54.pdf> (Washington: The White House, 15/01/1991) (last accessed August 2013).

<sup>xxxii</sup> "America stands alone as the world's indispensable nation". Term used by Bill Clinton in his *Second Inaugural Address* (20/01/1997).

- xxxiii Bill Clinton, National Security Strategy of the US, (The White House: 1/12/1999) in <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2000.pdf> (last accessed August 2013) compared to Barack Obama, National Security Strategy of the US, (The White House: May 2010), in <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2010.pdf> (last accessed August 2013).
- xxxiv Bill Clinton, National Security Strategy of the US, (The White House: 1/02/1996) in <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1996.pdf> (last accessed August 2013) and James Mann, *The Obamians*, op. cit., p.218.
- xxxv Bill Clinton, National Security Strategy of the US, (1/12/1999), op. cit.
- xxxvi Bill Clinton, First Inaugural Address, (21/01/2993).
- xxxvii Barack Obama, National Security Strategy of the US, op.cit.
- xxxviii George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address, (20/01/2005).
- xxxix George W. Bush, National Security Strategy of the US, (The White House: 17/09/2002) in <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2002.pdf> (last accessed August 2013).
- xl "In 2011 he sent a SEAL team into Pakistan to kill Osama without informing any of the Pakistan's leaders" in James Mann, *The Obamians*, op. cit, p.86.
- xli Bill Clinton, National Security Strategy of the US, (1/02/1996), op. cit.
- xlii Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest: American Realism for a New World", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 4 (Jul. - Aug., 2008), pp. 4-5.
- xliiii George W. Bush, National Security Strategy of the US, (17/09/2002), op. cit., p.27.
- xliv Barack Obama, *The Washington Post*, "National Security Speech", (National Defense University: 23/05/2013).
- xlv Condoleezza Rice, Remarks of Secretary of State, American University of Cairo, (20/06/2005) in <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm> (last accessed August 2013).
- xlvi George Friedman, *The Next Decade: empire and republic in a changing world*, (New York: Anchor Books, January 2012), p.41.
- xlvii Ibid.
- xlviii Mark Landler, "Secret Report Ordered by Obama Identified Potential Uprisings", *The New York Times*, (16/02/2011).
- xlix "Former Vice President, Dick Cheney, argued that Obama in his second year, in many ways represented a continuation of George W. Bush's administration" in James Mann, *The Obamians*, op. cit. p.15.
- l Ibid, pp. 264, 258, 266-267.
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- lii Bill Clinton, National Security Strategy of the US, (1/12/1999), op.cit.
- liii Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest"... , op. cit., pp.47, 49.
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- lv According to Parsi, "Prior to Iranian engagement in Afghanistan... US Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley... adopted rules to regulate how Washington should interact with rogue states such as Iran". "Hadley Rules" signified no more than a tactical collaboration with rogue states since the US overall strategy towards these states would remain intact in Trita Parsi, *A single roll of the dice: Obama's diplomacy with Iran* (Yale University Press, 2012), p.41.
- lvi Ibid, op. cit., p. 73.
- lvii Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest"...op. cit., p.25.
- lviii Ibid, pp.3, 21.
- lix Barack Obama, National Security Strategy of the US, (The White House: May 2010), in [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf) (last accessed August 2013).
- lx Hillary Clinton, "Clinton says U.S. must embrace Arab Spring despite dangers", *Reuters*, (12/10/2012).
- lxi Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest"... , op.cit, p.13.

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<sup>lxii</sup> Barack Obama, Weekly Address, (7/09/2013) in <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy/syria>, (last accessed April 2014).

<sup>lxiii</sup> Arguments about a secret agreement (26/01/2013) between Moscow and Washington over the Middle East stress Obama's readiness to hand over part of the US influence in the Middle Eastern region in exchange for Russian guarantees for the "Jewish State's" protection in Thierry Meyssan, *Однако* (Russian Magazine, Odnako) "Which is the US strategy towards the Middle East"? in <http://www.voltairenet.org/article182037.html> (last accessed April 2014).

<sup>lxiv</sup> Marianna Charountaki, *The Kurds and US foreign policy*, op. cit., p.84.

<sup>lxv</sup> Fawaz A. Gerges, *The end of America's moment?...*, op. cit., p.91.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Barack Obama, *The Washington Post*, "Remarks at the United States Military Academy", (West Point, 28/05/2014) in [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/full-text-of-president-obamas-commencement-address-at-west-point/2014/05/28/cfbcdcaa-e670-11e3-afc6-a1dd9407abcf\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/full-text-of-president-obamas-commencement-address-at-west-point/2014/05/28/cfbcdcaa-e670-11e3-afc6-a1dd9407abcf_story.html) (last accessed May 2014).