



American Unipolarity: Is it a Sustainable Model Towards a More Peaceful World Order?



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The collapse of the Soviet Union during the late 1980s and early 1990s brought an end to the cold war which had protracted itself for over fifty years leaving the United States of America as the sole global superpower thus inaugurating an unprecedented unipolar world order. Studying the short span of time between 1992 and 2004 while comparing it to the bipolar 1945-1992 and multipolar 1900-1945 eras of the past century has provided me with the opportunity to prove or disprove two key political science paradigms that have been widely debated for several generations.

The first paradigm concerns whether a unipolar world order is indeed more secure than bipolarity or multipolarity. My belief of the American unipolar world order being more secure is based on a realist view of the world. A realist view of the world assumes that incompatible goals and conflict are defining features of politics and therefore argues that actors focus on relative gains, relative power and security (Lamborn 542). By doing so state actors often behave recklessly in an anarchic fashion each pursuing their own interests at the expense of other states in a self-help type manner. State actors who may not have hegeonic ambitions become caught up in security dilemmas (Lamborn 543) whereby two or more states are worried about their competitors having amassed military capabilities that are a threat to their national security. This usually induces the worried state to increase its military capabilities thus creating the same security concerns for the other state(s) who in an upward spiralling fashion will continue to arm. This phenomenon sometimes leads to full scale war with millions of casualties as it did during the prelude of World War I and II.

Uncontestable unipolarity as in the case of America's current position in the world creates massive disincentives for other powers to challenge hegemonic rivalry thus eliminating the threat of world war. Furthermore, as in the case of Gulf War I, America will also be able to contain and/or confront geopolitical crises thereby reducing regional security dilemmas that during past multipolar eras would have certainly led to full scale regional conflicts. The end result will be an average smaller percentage of the overall world population killed due to war operations than in previous bipolar or multipolar eras.

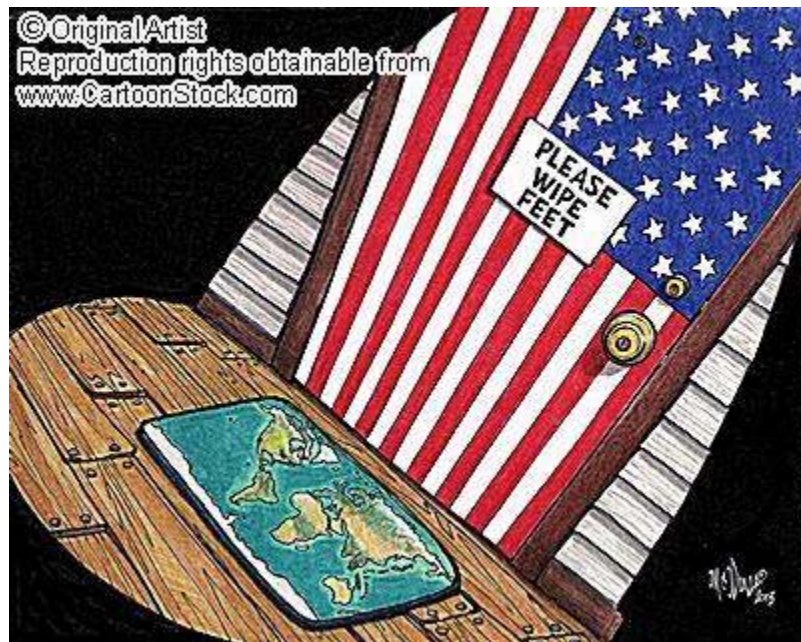
The second paradigm that I will discuss concerns whether the American unipolar World order, which came to be after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, meets the conditions necessary to sustain itself well into the future. America not only is dominant in all the forms of power that we have used to classify super powers of the past (Wohlforth) but in some areas is stronger than the rest of the world combined. The foundations of this unprecedented power are strong and are poised for ulterior growth as the future approaches.

AMERICA 1992 - 2004: THE FIRST UNIPOLAR WORLD ORDER HAS FOSTERED A MORE PEACEFUL INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Between 1992-2004 the world has seen the absence of the threat of global war as a result of a hegemonic challenge to the world order led by America from either a rival power or a coalition of disgruntled states.

Europe in its present state does not openly challenge American supremacy. Since 1992 most European states do not fear an immediate security threat and therefore do not see the need to comply with every whim of the American power as in the case of Germany and France during Gulf War II. However, they have fostered many costly social engineering programs while entrusting their safety almost entirely to the remaining American military forces that were initially intended to protect Western Europe from a Soviet invasion. Therefore, most European countries have chosen to further reduce their military expenditures thus taking a free ride on American power (Kagen). If European nations were to increase its military expenditures so that they could independently defend itself they would further damage their already stagnant economies.

stagnation disincentives associated with exiting that system. Nations may even publically denounce American hegemony and declare the aspiration to lead a competitive Anti-American coalition in a new multipolar world order as in the recent cases of France. However, I see this as an ambition placed far into the future, as a way for bargaining for better leverage within the global system (Wohlforth 5), or a combination of both. The European Union if it ever becomes a single cohesive super state will take decades to do so (Wohlforth 31). Even that would be too late given that demographic trends show that Europe is becoming smaller while the United States is poised to surpass the population of the entire Euro zone within fifteen years. That trend is significant because if that were to happen Europe would be significantly behind the US not only in productivity, percentage of working population, level of employment, technological innovation, military power, and cultural dominance but also population and gross national product as well.

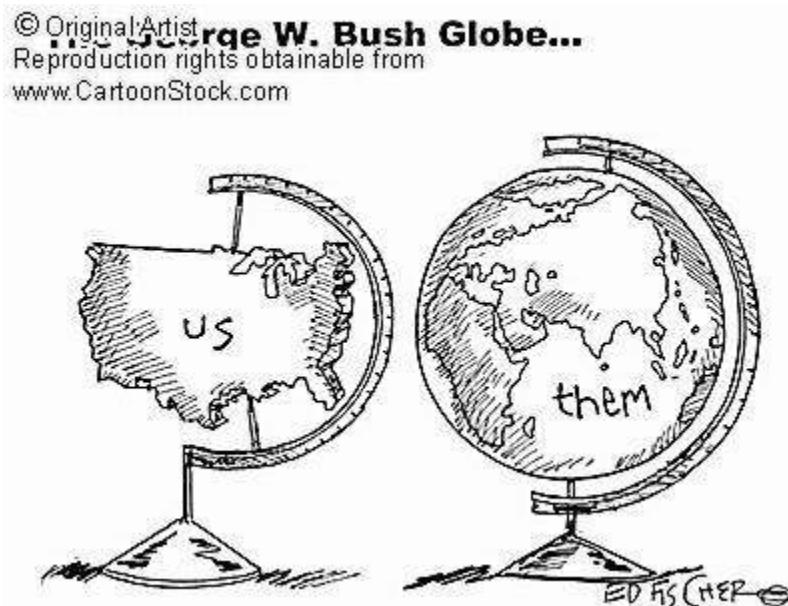


Ex.1. Please Wipe Feet. Political Cartoon. CartoonStock.com. 24 March 2004

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THE RISKS OF UNIPOLARITY: SECURITY DILEMMAS AND COUNTERBALANCING

Critics of my thesis state that unipolarity is not safer nor sustainable because it invites other powers to take on a defensive realist positions (Lamborn 537) whereby they carry forth linkage politics with other nations ultimately leading towards military confrontation as a way to counterbalance the unipolar power in question. This phenomenon can be witnessed with counterbalancing against Napoleon and Hitler. These two hegemonic powers of their time triggered large counterbalancing wars causing millions of deaths and their ultimate demises. My critics state that there is a real possibility of a group nations or the rest of the world forming an Anti-American coalition (CartoonStock 2) as a way to deal with their security dilemma brought on by American power but also due to the cultural affinity they share as nations (Huntington 411). The cultural affinity incentive could be as simple as plain envy or fear of American power and could be strong enough for them to override the economic and interdependence disincentives they face in challenging American supremacy. An example of this type of defensive realism by virtue of ideology or cultural affinity can be seen instrumental within the alliance between Cuba, China, the Soviet Union during the Cold War.



Ex. 2. US vs. Them. Political Cartoon. CartoonStock.com. 24 March 2004

HAS A SMALLER PERCENTAGE OF THE WORLD POPULATION DIED DUE TO WAR UNDER AMERICAN UNIPOLARITY?

In order to prove that the world is more peaceful it is necessary to devise a research model that tabulates as accurately as possible the yearly average of all civilian and military deaths due to war in relation to the global population within the following three distinct periods: 1992-2004 (unipolarity), 1945-1992 (bipolarity), and 1900-1945 (multipolarity). If unipolarity were to get the lowest yearly death rate then that will prove unipolarity being the most peaceful world order model correct. Any other result would prove otherwise in favor of bipolarity or multipolarity.

Within the above research it would be necessary to break down the data into military casualties and civilian deaths in order to understand whether unipolarity, bipolarity, or multipolarity are relatively safer for civilians or military personnel.

Within the above research it would be necessary to break down the data into casualties among democratic and autocratic countries in order to understand which order is relatively safer for whom.

Within the above research it would be necessary to break down the data into casualties among richer and poorer countries in order to understand which order is relatively safer for whom.

FACTORS THAT NURTURE SUSTAINABILITY: MILITARY SUPERIORITY, ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE

Since it would take too long to tackle all the facets of American power I felt that it would be enough to prove my theory if I were to answer questions in two key areas. First, I would need to prove that the military gap between American and other countries is getting wider or has remained the same thus creating a strong disincentive to compete militarily with the former. Second, I would need to prove that economic interdependence within the American led world order has increased or stayed the same thus creating a strong disincentive to leave the economic system led by the latter.

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HAS THE MILITARY LEAD OF AMERICA OVER THE REST OF THE WORLD INCREASED OR DECREASED BETWEEN 1992-2004?

In order to prove that the disincentives for an aspiring hegemonic power to challenge American primacy are too great to consider, the research model I propose must take into account national military budgets and overall capabilities for all countries between 1992-2004. A maintaining or increase of America's lead in these two areas in relation to its closest potential rival will prove my thesis. A decrease in American military advantage may signify that is possible in the future for a state or coalition of states to challenge American supremacy.

HAS ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN AMERICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD INCREASED BETWEEN 1992-2004?

In order to prove that the disincentives for an aspiring hegemonic power to leave the American led economic system, the research model I propose must take into account international trade figures for all countries between 1992-2004. An increase or lack of decrease in global trade tabulated in American dollars will prove that the majority of the world is satisfied with the economic world order and is not willing to risk destruction of their economies in an attempt to create a competing trading block to counterbalance American power. If world trade decreases during the above period then my critics would be right.

I believe that the research model designed above will prove that America has ushered a new era of unprecedented peace in the world and that as long as it maintains power in key areas it will be able to maintain a unipolar world order for years to come.

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