

## TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS UNDER STRESS: EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

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*Abstract. In this article, attention is called on the American attempt to change the international rules of intervention, and the impact this choice has on transatlantic relations. Hegemonic theory of world politics is the theoretical framework of the analysis. At the same time, the evolutionary world politics model is adopted to understand change in world politics. In the first section of the article, a set of concepts for the analysis of the structure of government of the world political system is presented. The second section is about the current phase of hegemonic politics and the state of transatlantic relations. The third section analyzes the issue of external military intervention to change domestic regimes and President Bush's prevention doctrine. In the last section of the article, the attitudes and policies of the European Union and American governments on prevention are examined and confronted.*

Prevention is a tool to avoid unwanted consequences of human actions, social processes, structural conditions, and natural events. As far as the modern state becomes more complex and, hence, sensitive to unwished changes produced by unlawful and out-of-norm behavior of individuals and groups, the more it develops a variety of preventive measures and policies to deal with different kinds of problems. In politics, as in medicine, prevention is better tool to confront risks and menaces than reaction (i.e., defense, punishment and rehabilitation) when the risk of damage turns into incident. At the global level, interdependence has made the world system complex and, consequently, highly vulnerable to damages resulting from the occurrence of risks. Still, it can hardly be said that the structure of government of the world political system has appropriate measures, let alone policies, of prevention to deal with many problems that put the world at risk of disorder and serious scratches. This article deals with American and European attitude towards prevention as strategy to deal with the risk that

international disorder is created by problems of countries in conditions of economic backwardness, political violence and cultural conflict. In particular, attention is called on the European reaction to the American attempt to adopt military prevention as tool to get rid of the security risk caused by reckless governments. The argument of this article is that George W. Bush jr. has put before the world the proposal of bringing his preventive doctrine into the government strategy of the world political system. In explicit terms, the proposal of the American president is the following one: (a) military intervention to change the domestic regime of the state that seriously puts at risk the structure of government of the world political system is preventive action politically legitimate, and (b) in the case that such decision cannot be made by multilateral institutions, it is the responsibility of the state in the leading role of the world political system. The analysis of this argument is not intended to provide justification to the actions of the United States. It is aimed, instead, at investigating the current state of world politics and,

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especially, the present turbulent state of transatlantic relations.

The framework of the present study consists of the hegemonic theory of world politics and the model of evolutionary world politics. In harmony with these perspectives, a set of concepts on the structure of government of the world political system is presented in the first part of the article. These concepts provide us with the appropriate tools for analyzing current world politics and its possible change. In the second part, the Bush's doctrine of external military intervention to get rid of irresponsible domestic regimes is confronted with changes in intervention policy that are taking place in international politics. Lastly, the contrasting views on prevention (and intervention) existing on the two sides of the Atlantic are confronted to appraise the impact of the controversy on the future of the relations between European Union and the United States.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD POLITICAL SYSTEM

In the hegemonic theory of international politics<sup>1</sup>, the principal role of authority and government in the world is held by a single state. This role (named by political scientists in different ways such as global power, world power, global leader, and hegemonic power) is undertaken by a state after a general war in which it led to victory a coalition of states. The governments of the victorious coalition share international values and political views on the government of the system. They also sustain the hegemonic country in the actions for executing the shared strategy of government in the early phase after the war when the world government structure is reconstructed. The hegemonic government of the rebuilt world system persists as far as

the global leader has the backing of *important* states. These states control key resources and the most important economic regimes and public policies of the system. The role of the global leader is firm on condition that it fairly respects the rules, institutions and procedures of the world system. These were either taken from the past international system and adapted to the new conditions, or agreed upon by the global leader coalition, and instituted after the global war.

It is important to bear in mind that, unlike the structure of government of state political systems, the structure of government of the world political system is not founded upon a constitutional pact formally agreed and recognized by its members. Incidentally, the domestic constitutional pact, and the laws derived from it, usually has the function of correcting to some extent, but in the case of democratic regimes to a remarkable extent, the inequality of the individual subjects of the state political system. Furthermore, the constitutional pact defines how individuals participate in the policy-making process of the state. Although not governed by a formally approved constitution, the international system does not lack a structure of government conditioned by the rule of law as far as *de facto* power i.e., political power founded on the unequal distribution of military, economic and political resources among the states is conditioned by international law and the norms and procedures of international organizations. In the present world system, these are, above all, the United Nations and the international organizations of the world economic regimes. To summarize, the structure of government of the world political system consists of the roles,

<sup>1</sup> A synthetic list of the major analysts of this school includes Gilpin (1981), Kennedy (1987), Modelski (1983), Nye (1990), and Rasler and Thompson (1994).

institutions and procedures by which authoritative decisions are made and put into action to govern the world system.

Recognizing that the world system is governed by a structure of roles, institutions and procedures implies recognizing that it does not conform to what the communitarian view of international relations maintain<sup>2</sup>. This view perceives the world as a community of peers (the nation-states) who abide to shared principles and norms of international law. Moreover, this community is destitute of any state actor with authoritative role. It attributes authoritative role only to international organizations. On this base, the doctrine of multilateralism has been developed, and it is maintained that the world is governed only in the areas in which multilateral rules of government are agreed upon by the states. The importance of multilateralism is here acknowledged, but it is also maintained that the world has been always governed by a structure that, combining *de facto* power and international law, attributes authoritative role to a state supported by an international coalition. In current world politics, this state takes into account also the multilateral framework that has been emerging in the evolution of the political institutions of the world government structure.

It is worth adding here two remarks that are obvious but make clear what is ahead of the present stage of the world political institutions. First, the structure of government of the world system has a very low level of institutional differentiation and no meaningful judicial (let alone police) institutions to take care of the international legal order. For this character, the world political system is in sharp contrast with the states that developed their political systems

in the liberal constitutionalism tradition. On this regard, the role of warden of international order that the hegemonic power has in world politics is to remain active until a strong diversified institutional structure with judicial institutions, fully operational and independent from the states, is formed in the world system. Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal Court notwithstanding, this moment is hard to be seen in nearby future. Second, the hegemonic nature of the structure of government of the world system will last until a pact on the foundation and autonomy of the supreme political authority is introduced in the world institutional structure. The organization and distribution of powers of the world government should be defined in this pact, and financial resources should be allocated to government institutions in order to make them able to produce effective policies. Up to the present time, and probably for long time ahead, instead, the global power is the greatest contributor of financial resources to the world system programs and policies. Consequently, it is able to heavily influence international organizations and the world economic regimes.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the term *hegemonic* structure of government points out that the leading role of government in the international system is exercised with the others' consent, although not universal and uncritical consent. In particular, in the contemporary international system, the consent of the followers and the legitimacy of the authority of the global leader depend to a great extent on exercising hegemony within multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations and the most important international economic

<sup>2</sup> On the communitarian view of international relations see, for example, Cutler (1991), Held (1995), James (1992) and Murphy (1995). Also Hedley Bull (1987) and the so-called English School support the communitarian view but recognize that great powers have authoritative role.

regimes. Framing actions within multilateralism brings consent and additional resources to the global leader, and prevents its own exhaustion. Consent decreases, instead, when the global leader neglects multilateralism and violates the procedures of the world political institutions.

The United Nations is the most important international organization and multilateral institution of government of the world system. In harmony with the long-term evolutionary trend of the world political institutions, the United Nations have favored the growth of civilization of international relations, i.e. the use of non-violent means and practices to manage conflict relations. Furthermore, international crises and conflicts can be managed without leaving solution only to the coercive action of individual states. Therefore, United Nations rules and procedures are fundamental to the structure of government of the current world system. On the other hand, the change of the structure of government of the system entails the change of the rules and procedures of the United Nations, and might also cause the disappearance and substitution of this Organization with another one. In other words, to be functional, the United Nations and their rules and procedures have to correspond to the state of the political and social relations among states on which the structure of government of the world political system is founded. Consequently, the reform of the United Nations is possible only when great changes radically transform international relations and the world structure, eventually making the United States abandon the role of global leader. On knowledge of the past, however, it can be said that the United States have sometimes attempted and obtained to change the United Nations, informally (or *de facto*) and

without any explicit revision of the Charter, in order to reinforce their global role. Indeed, the Bush administration used the war in Iraq to change the structure of government of the world system by introducing the principle of intervention against destabilizing domestic regimes, and also to give to the United Nations the role of *post-facto legitimizer* of the preventive action of the global leader. In particular, the October 15, 2004, Security Council resolution on post-war Iraq normalization, which authorized the American-led multinational force in Iraq, is an important step towards this change.

Will the United States get the consent of a large coalition of important states on such important changes of the world government strategy? Will they be able to go through the muddle brought in transatlantic relations by their attempt? Will they be able to work out a new agreement with their 'old' allies?

#### TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS IN CURRENT WORLD POLITICS

The current phase of world politics and transatlantic relations is shortly analyzed here according to the model on international hegemony known as the theory of the cycles of world leadership in order to analyze, in the next sections, the transatlantic contention on prevention. The American political scientist George Modelski, who uncovered the cyclic pattern of selection and succession of the global leader, is the proponent of this theory of hegemonic and evolutionary world politics. One cycle of world hegemony/leadership is about one hundred years long, and consists of four regular (about a generation or twenty-five years long) phases that follow each other in this order: agenda-setting, coalition-building, macrodecision, and execution phase. In each phase of the cycle, world

politics is characterized by specific behaviors and interactions of the nation-states which cause the evolution of the world political institutions (Modelski, 1999 and 2001). In the agenda-setting phase, the global leader and its allies are increasingly opposed by other state and nonstate actors; new problems come up as potential objects of the global agenda, and new priorities are proposed by disappointed actors; existing alignments and alliances are confronted with the growing discontent of member countries; the power of the global leader progressively declines. In the coalition-building phase, power concentration decreases to a larger extent; opposition of individual states and groups of countries seriously challenges the global leader role; new powerful countries aspire to control world affairs, and change world political institutions; the existing coalitions are restructured, and new alignments give place to few organized coalitions. The subsequent macrodecision phase is a generation-long period of global warfare in which all the states form two coalitions that contrast each other with the objective of promoting their own agenda of government and global organization. Once the global warfare phase ends with the victory of a coalition, the coalition leader bears the global leader role and sets up his strategy and programs of world government in the last phase of the cycle, the execution phase, in which coalitions and alliances are organized to strengthen the post-war structure of government of the world political system.

Modelski studied the evolutionary mechanisms of global politics of the past millennium, but his analysis of the long cycles of global power competition and succession of global leaders covers only the last five centuries. During these centuries,

Portugal (1516-1609), the Dutch Republic (1609-1714), Great Britain (1714-1815 and 1815-1945) and the United States (1945-...) exercised global leadership. Each one of them was selected in the global warfare phase, and was gifted with the attributes (lead economy, open or democratic society, organization for global reach, and responsiveness to global problems) that fit to the role of the global leader for a cycle of world politics (See Table 1).

Attention is now concentrated on the contemporary phases of world politics in order to appraise the state of transatlantic relations. Around 1973, the post-war phase of the execution of the American programs of world leadership left room to the incoming phase of agenda-setting in which various expectations of change of the world system created conflict in the existing coalitions. In this phase, transatlantic relations became difficult well beyond the level of contention of the NATO typical issue of burden sharing. In fact, in the 1970s and 1980s, the European governments decided to differentiate themselves from the United States on a range of important international issues such as the reshaping of Pan-European relations and the change of Euro-Arab relations. In such and other contentious affairs, the European allies engaged themselves in autonomous actions and initiatives. In Europe, they acted as a single actor in the framework of the Helsinki Process and, later, opposed the American confrontation policy with the Soviet Union on the substantial issue of the Siberian gas duct and the symbolic affair of the Moscow Olympic games. In the Middle East, the European Community governments developed, firstly, special relations with the PLO and, later, a full-round European common policy towards the Middle East to

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of brevity, Modelski's theory is not further discussed here. A concise criticism of this theory can be found in Denmark (2000).

Table 1.

Agenda-setting (periods & problems)	Coalition- building	Macrodecision (global war)	Execution (world power & challenger)
			1516 PORTUGAL Spain
1540 Integration	1560 Calvinist international	1580 Dutch-Spanish wars	1606 DUTCH REPUBLIC France
1640 Political framework	1660 Anglo-Dutch alliance	1688 Wars of the Grand Alliance	1714 BRITAIN I France
1740 Industrial revolution	1760 Trading community	1792 Revolutionary/Napoleonic Wars	1815 BRITAIN II Germany
1848 Knowledge revolution	1878 Anglo-American Relationship	1914 World Wars I & II	1945 USA
1973 Integration	2000 Democratic transition	2025	2050

replace the unproductive Euro-Arab dialogue. Other examples of the growing dissent between the American and European governments were the policies dealing with the Vietnam War, the problems of Central America, and international economic and financial regulations. It is worth reminding also that in 1969 the governments of the European Communities launched the common foreign policy project, known as European Political Cooperation, and in 1973 released the important declaration on the European identity in world affairs that caused the resentment of the other side of the Atlantic.

At the present time, world politics is in the gray area of transition from the agenda-setting to the coalition-building phase. This change will be appropriately described and clearly understood only in a future time. By now, however, it is apparent that governments have important choices to make in circumstances as complex as are those in which they are under pressure to assess different views of world problems and

deal with different coalitions of countries that promote competing agendas of change of the world structure of government, such as the reform of the United Nations. In these circumstances, the United States and European governments face the strain of keeping on with sharing the same vision of the world political system while they recognize different priorities in the agenda of global problems, have different strategies of solving those problems, and even prefer different changes of the existing structure of government.

In this gray time of international politics in which delegitimation of the global leader strategy, power deconcentration, and political re-alignment are increasing, also social and cultural issues must be taken into account. Accordingly, adhesion to (and rejection of) the principles of democracy becomes crucial in maintaining existing alliances in the incoming coalition-building phase. According to Modelski and Thompson (1999), the American democratic alliance, formed after

World War Two, is forced to deal with tensions and pressures to change. Reconfiguration concerns the countries of the nucleus of the alliance, that is United States and the states of the European Union, and involves other countries as result of the enlargement of NATO, EU, the G7 (admission of Russia) and OCDE (Mexico, South Korea)<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, as the world political institutions keep moving toward the condition of democratic community, as the analysis of evolutionary world politics suggests, the structure of the world government is expected to introduce a sort of stabilized system of conflict management in which stable alignments would produce something like a system of party competition. Also non-governmental movements have gained access to the mechanisms of formation of global policies, and decisions on global issues are increasingly made within multilateral contexts that are not reserved only to governmental actors. Solution of political disputes will be probably facilitated as far as these negotiations are held within international organizations, but will become difficult and tense if the traditional method of polarity and power conflict, suggested by Waltz's (1979) and Huntington's (1996) interpretations, prevails.

On this regard, it is worth reminding that, as far as the usual process of leadership change is binding, the reconfiguration of the alliance of the global leader is accompanied by the building of the opposite coalition. From this coalition, the *challenger* of the present global power will come out. It is also to remind that the *challenger* came out from the *active zone* of

the world system, which, since 1500 to mid-1800, was Atlantic Europe. Around 1850, the most populated countries, greatest cities, and strongest centers of the productive power moved to the Pacific, from China and Japan to the Eastern part of the United States, and this area replaced Atlantic Europe as the *active zone* of the world system. Accordingly, the challenger to the present global power should come out from this part of the world. On account of great industrial potentialities, power politics motives, and causes of conflict with the United States over territorial issues (like Taiwan and the control of the Southern China Sea islands), China appears today as the most probable candidate to the *challenger* role. However, there are not enough reasons to force this hypothesis, except the apparent analogy of these circumstances with those of the past leadership transition that took place after competition emerged between the great powers of the active zone (i.e., the European great powers) and the ascending maritime, industrial and commercial global power (i.e., the United States). In addition, in the forecast analysis of the formation of the antagonist coalition, it is worth remarking that a wide alignment of discontented actors would consist of as different actors as the countries that oppose the *status quo* in the Asia-Pacific, the states and non-state actors that are frustrated by the current economic globalisation process, the countries ruled by classes that fear the consequences of the current democratisation process, and all those actors that incline toward cultural clash and fundamentalism. As Modelski and Thompson (1999, 134) remark, "*such a counter coalition could increasingly comprise global public or even secret*

<sup>4</sup> "...we might imagine the French state serving as a focus for issue-coalitions contesting the merits of policies sponsored by the United States, and as a source of alternative proposals or policy agendas. In the EU/NATO context, such an oppositional stance might find favor, for example, in Germany.... In the global/UN context, it might attract support from governments in Africa or the Middle East, for example, or from others responsive to arguments about "Anglo-Saxon" dominance" (Modelski and Thompson, 1999, 132).

*organizations focused on aspects of global politics, such as antforeign movements or groups attacking the American position in world affairs. A confrontation between such forces involving East Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Middle East could conceivably spark a larger conflict and a wider conflagration, especially if and when linked to a major power challenger."*

PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND  
OVERTHROW OF RULERS AND  
DOMESTIC REGIMES

Taking the above interpretation of the recent phases of world politics into account, the issue of prevention and military intervention to overthrow rulers and change political regimes is now analyzed to assess the transatlantic contention on prevention in the world political system.

In almost two hundred years, from 1815-2003, change of regime and/or ruler by external military intervention has been carried out 40 times (See Table 2). The figure is taken from the research by Tanisha Fazal (2001) on the period 1815-1992, and the analysis of the author of this article on the last ten years. In these years, only three cases are found: in 2000, the intervention of NATO forces in Kosovo/Serbia which caused the fall of the Milosevic regime; in 2001, the intervention of the United Nations forces in Afghanistan under the American command that cut off the Taliban regime; and in 2003, the war in Iraq that overthrew Saddam. Twenty cases occurred in the 48 years after World War Two; twenty in the former 131 years. It is obvious that military intervention to change the regime of a foreign country is frequently used in international politics. It is also apparent that the two great powers are responsible of the highest number of military intervention (51%) of the contemporary international system (Soviet Union intervened in Bulgaria

in 1947, Hungary in 1948, Romania in 1948, Hungary in 1956, and Afghanistan in 1978; the United States in Guatemala in 1954, Grenada in 1983, Panama in 1989, Serbia in 2000, Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003). On this knowledge base, one comes to the conclusion that, in the contemporary international system, safeguarding domestic regimes and constitutional sovereignty of the states from external intervention can be hardly counted as strong norm of international law and well protected political rule because the numerous cases of intervention that changed domestic regimes did not provoke the appropriate reaction of the institutions of the international political system. On the contrary, in the contemporary international system, the global leader, i.e. the United States, carried out military intervention, and allowed other states to do the same in order to change the regime of a foreign country.

Unlike many cases of the past, American intervention in Iraq and the American-led UN intervention in Afghanistan were decided in order to react to alleged threats to international security and the stability of the structure of government of the world system. Furthermore, unlike all other cases and the intervention in Afghanistan, which was decided as reaction to the connivance of the Afghan regime with Al-Quada responsible of the 9/11 attack, intervention in Iraq was decided by the global leader just on the political reason of the need to act for the sake of preventing the weakening of the structure of government of the world political system. Preventive intervention, in other words, was justified on the assumption of direct and inverse relation between the stability of the regime of the target state and that of the structure of government of the international system. Setting end to the former is necessary to safeguarding the latter, which is



Table 2.

Case no.	Year	Target State	Change R=regime L=leader	External Actor/s and main consequence of the intervention
1.	1821	Two Sicilies	R & L	Austria restores Ferdinand IV
2.	1823	Spain	R & L	Spanish monarchy restored by French
3.	1833	Portugal	R & L	Quadruple alliance restores Dom Pedro
4.	1848	Modena	L	Francesco V exiled after Austr-Sardinian War
5.	1849	Tuscany	R & L	France intervenes against Daniele Manin
6.	1849	Italy	L	Charles Albert exiled after Austro-Sardinian war
7.	1850	Papal states	R & L	France intervenes against Garibaldi
8.	1852	Argentina	R & L	Rosas ousted after La Plata war
9.	1870	France	R & L	Empire toppled after loss in Franco-Prussian war
10.	1908	Honduras	R & L	Nicaraguan intervention after Honduras losses war
11.	1909	Nicaragua	R & L	US intervenes to assure free elections
12.	1915	Greece	R & L	Entente allies oust King Constantine
13.	1918	Bulgaria	R & L	Regime toppled after WWI
14.	1918	Turkey	R & L	Government resigns after WWI
15.	1935	Bulgaria	R & L	Zveno Group deposed by Boris III
16.	1941	Iran	R & L	Reza Shah abdicates after Anglo-Soviet invasion
17.	1941	Iraq	R & L	Rashid Ali resigns after British intervention
18.	1943	Bulgaria	R & L	Regency council created to remain loyal to Germany
19.	1944	Romania	R & L	Atonescu overthrown; new regime in support of Allies
20.	1944	Finland	R & L	Rytu resigns in favor of Mannerhein after Soviet invasion
21.	1945	Hungary	L	Horthy ousted by Germany in favor of Szalasi
22.	1947	Bulgaria	R & L	USSR invades; establishment of communist regime
23.	1948	Hungary	R & L	USSR installs Communist government
24.	1948	Rumania	R & L	USSR establishes Communist regime
25.	1951	Nepal	R & L	Rebels from India restore Nepali monarchy
26.	1954	Guatemala	R & L	US intervenes to protect US property
27.	1956	Hungary	L	Nagy ousted by Soviet Union
28.	1974	Cyprus	L	Makarios temporarily deposed by a Greek-based coup
29.	1975	Cambodia	L	Lon Nol ousted by Chinese and Vietnamese forces
30.	1979	Uganda	L	Amin deposed after Tanzanian invasion
31.	1979	Rhodesia	L	Britain briefly retakes control to oversee elections
32.	1979	Afghanistan	R & L	Amin executed after Soviet invasion
33.	1979	Cambodia	R & L	Vietnamese intervention installs puppet government
34.	1982	Lebanon	R & L	Israel invasion to establish friendly regime
35.	1983	Grenada	L	US invasion to "protect medical students"
36.	1989	Panama	L	US invasion to oust Noriega and estradite on drug charges
37.	1990	Lebanon	L	Syrians force General Auoun to surrender
38.	2000	Serbia	R & L	NATO intervention in Kossovo ends Milosevic's regime
39.	2001	Afghanistan	R & L	US-led intervention of the UN ousted Taliban regime
40.	2003	Irak	R & L	US intervention ends Saddam Hussein's regime

Sources: 1. Tanisha M. Fazal, *War as a selection mechanism of states, regimes, and leaders*, Paper prepared for delivery at conference on Evolutionary Approaches to International Relations Theory, Bloomington, Indiana, December 4-6, 1998 [Cases from 1-37]  
2. Author [Cases from 38-40]

a public good of the world political system and assure the security of all the states. Was Bush's resolve to act in Iraq an unprecedented decision deprived of legal foundation and significant approval to its political legitimacy, or does it take into account recent changes in world politics and anticipates new approaches to critical problems of the incoming phase of world politics?

In the recent past, different forms of intervention have been practiced in world politics and different attitudes have been expressed by states on the acceptability and legitimacy of intervention. Here, it is proposed the argument that these attitudes signal inclination towards policy innovation in the practice of intervention. It is also maintained that the Bush doctrine of armed intervention against *rogue* regimes is an attempt to forward this innovation.

Three different reasons for practicing intervention in contemporary world politics are put under observation here. First, intervention for humanitarian purposes, that is, for either containing the consequences of civil wars and violent clashes between domestic groups or restraining the action of governments responsible for humanitarian crises. Consent on this form of intervention has been increasing over the recent past. International law experts have agreed rather quickly on the new doctrine of intervention for humanitarian purposes, and military intervention for humanitarian purposes has been rapidly accepted as legitimate international action on condition that it is multilateral action.

Second, concern for international action to contain the external, beside the internal, consequences of the policies of inefficient and reckless governments has been expressed in recent past. Corruption, poverty and repression that result from

actions (or inaction) of inefficient and irresponsible governments provoke problems, such as mass migration and transnational crime, that destabilize other countries and the whole system of international relations. Countries like Colombia (drug and crime), Albania (crime), Somalia, Serbia of the times of Milosevic, and Liberia in the recent past, are examples of countries that have been target of this form of external intervention. Undoubtedly, this view of the risk of international destabilization derives from the concept of interdependence among the states of the contemporary world as well as from the view that the principle of solidarity is increasingly essential in international society (Buzan, 2004). Putting an end to domestic humanitarian crises and preventing the external diffusion of related problems pushed groups of countries and international organizations, in different parts of the world such as Europe (the Balkans) and Africa (Liberia and Congo are recent examples), to intervene with actions of different nature such as economic assistance programs, technical support programs (as, for instance, assistance to local police) and also military operations, in countries in which repressive, inefficient and corrupt regimes were responsible of the explosion of local and trans-border problems. These actions are carried out by means of bilateral and multilateral agreements that usually involve the government of the target state. This condition notwithstanding, all these actions are forms of intervention in the domestic affairs of the target state that *de facto* or *jure*, occasionally or systematically, contractually or compulsorily reduce the authority of the government of the target state. It must be acknowledged also that these actions are interventive and preventive actions at the same time. Although protectorates and other

forms of external assistance and interference were used by states in the past, the double nature (prevention and intervention) of these actions is specific of contemporary world politics, and does not raise strong opposition but is supported by wide approval.

Third, the rise of global terrorism that culminated in the 9/11 attack on the United States (and later in the 11/3 attacks in Madrid) put on the agenda of the world political system the issue of robust reaction to terrorist movements (such as Al-Quada) and regimes (such as the Afghan regime of the Talibanis), which deliberately put international security under threat, and menace the stability of the structure of government of the world political system. Opposite to large consent on intervention for humanitarian purposes, and the increasing consent on actions to prevent the spread of problems from inefficient states to the international system, consent on carrying out military actions of prevention against the state that puts at serious risk the stability of the world political system is small and hesitant. The United States want wider and stronger approval also of these preventive actions, including military actions against *rogue states*.

After the United States governments have been declaring for many years their resolve to act against *rogue states*, the American president George W. Bush jr. decided to wage war against Saddam Hussein declaring that Iraq fitted to the figure of the country that doesn't accept the structure of government of the world political system and wants to change it by unconventional means, including terrorism and mass destruction. It is worth noting, however, that the American doctrine of prevention implies that, whatever the *rogue state* domestic characteristics (such as

dictatorship, repression, and inefficiency) and external behavior (such as sponsoring terrorism, conspicuous flouting of international law, and accumulating weapons of mass destruction), the decisive condition for preventive intervention is that the ruler of the *rogue state* menaces the stability of the world political system because irresponsibly, deceitfully and violently obstruct the dominant state of the system.

Given for granted that the Iraqi government aimed at building an over-sized military force but not armaments of mass destruction, available knowledge does not sustain the argument that this behavior was preparation to making aggression of other states. At the same time, it is worth reminding that scientific knowledge is ambiguous on the issue of over-armed dictatorial regimes such as the Saddam Hussein's regime. On one side, political science research data demonstrate that dictators are used to build up armed forces to make their regime stronger in order to deal with threats coming from the domestic environment rather than prepare the country to external military aggression. On the other side, as the democratic peace theory demonstrates, dictators are less predictable and controlled by domestic institutions than democratic leaders are. They can easily divert military strength from domestic targets to external aggression. States that perpetrate systematic repression internally are likely to exhibit aggression and violence internationally (see, for example, Caprioli and Trumbore, 2003). Indeed, the Iraqi regime is example of this proposition since, in the recent past, it waged war twice, on Iran and Kuwait.

Furthermore, when governments signed the UN Charter, they defined the condition in which military intervention and

war are legal acts. This condition, at the exception of self-defense, is the positive vote of the Security Council to respond to security threats against a state, member and non-member of the Organization. This condition does not apply to threats set to the structure of government of the system. For this reason, Bush looked in vain for the approval of the Security Council on intervention in Iraq without uncontroversial demonstration of the violation, by the Iraqi regime, of the Security Council resolutions on the mass destruction disarmament of the country.

Undoubtedly, the Bush's preventive doctrine maintains something different from the international law doctrine of preventive war. It doesn't care for the explicit preparation of war against a foreign country. According to Bush's preventive doctrine, it is necessary and legitimate to destroy the military capabilities, and change the ruler, of the state that seriously and recklessly puts at risk vital functions of the structure of government of the world political system. In the view of Ronald Reagan and succeeding American presidents, these states are armed with weapons of mass destruction, are ruled by aggressive and unpredictable leaders, and set up links with terrorist organizations that want to overturn the structure of government of the world system. For all these attributes, *rogue states* are much more dangerous than Cold War *revolutionary* states which opposed the existing international order largely by mobilizing social movements, and acting through conventional violence.

Active opposition to states that refuse to obey to the world political rules and institutions that give to the United States the principal role of government has been normal policy of the American governments of the current world system. Bush reacted to

Saddam's policy by waging a war but had also other means at his disposal to choose from as effective as, or more effective than, war. Bush's preference for war can be explained by the expected efficacy of this action against Saddam, but his preference is better explained by the expected utility of this action to the world strategy of government of the United States. After two American-led operations that, in the past few years, caused the change of the local regime i.e. the American-led NATO intervention in Kosovo that caused the fall of the Milosevic's regime, and the American-led UN intervention in Afghanistan that caused the fall of the Taliban regime - Bush wanted the United Nations to legitimate also the US-led multilateral action of war to eliminate the regime of Saddam Hussein to promote the principle that all regimes recklessly defiant to the world political structure must be evicted. Bush was unable to get multilateral legitimating, as in the Kosovo and Afghanistan cases, but decided to go ahead with the support of an *ad hoc* coalition that he presented as the needed political legitimating of his action. Undoubtedly, the Iraqi case is a lesson also to the American ruling establishment. However, the American resolve to innovate intervention policy taking into consideration the preventive character that some forms of international intervention have been taken in the recent past, as it has been reminded here above, has brought this issue on the agenda of the world political system. Forwarding this innovation successfully and making this form of prevention a principle and practice of the world political system depends on conditions that include the consent of the most *important* states and the approval of the countries that follow the United States as allies.

#### EUROPE AND PREVENTION

It can be said that Europe is divided on the matter of the political legitimacy of the doctrine of prevention but, generally speaking, European governments remain faithful to the legal concept of preventive war. According to this concept, recourse to armed intervention is illegitimate action when urgency to protect a country from an explicit threat of aggression is missing. In the last years, although a common rapid intervention force to use also against aggressive regimes has been created by the European governments with the ESDP, they have not been enthusiastic about the *rogue states* doctrine mainly because they have developed different preferences towards reaction to threats coming from irresponsible dictatorial governments. Indeed, dissent between the United States and Europe is on the best strategy to cope with governments ruling countries in serious conditions of economic backwardness, political repression and social unrest. Americans prefer the strategy of bilateral relations and the use of specific-problem measures. For instance, eradication of drug traffic through strengthening the local police and army, as in the case of Colombia, or improving economic conditions by changing bilateral trade agreements, as in the case of Mexico. The Europeans, instead, prefer multilateral agreements and regional programs of economic cooperation accompanied by the clause of political conditionality. The debate on prevention after the invasion of Iraq demonstrates that the Europeans are not ready to abandon their preferred strategy. Even to cope with irresponsible dictators and *rogues states*, they prefer maintaining the existing economic, political and social regimes until cooperation programs (as, for instance, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership project of

free trade in the Mediterranean area) bring economic development and, subsequently, relaxation of political and social tensions to a group of countries. To the Americans, instead, when the situation doesn't allow waiting cooperation programs defuse regional instability and make *rogue* governments harmless, turning to military intervention is immediately necessary.

With regard to security, in particular, the European states have built a security co-management system or regional security partnership, which is largely founded on multilateral institutions and mechanisms inspired by the concepts of cooperative and comprehensive security (Adler and Barnett, 1998; Attinà, 2005). Accordingly, regional security agreements are the preferential road to security problem solving, and the Europeans believe that the European security model is to export to other regions. The United States, instead, considers regional security arrangements as subsidiary to their world role interests.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, the difference of role in the government structure of the world political system is to take into great consideration to account for all the differences between Europe and the United States. Further research is needed to assess the impact of terrorism and the Iraqi war on transatlantic relations and the change of the agenda and government structure of the world system. Contention between the United States and Europe as voiced by governments, such as the French and Spanish government, and also the European Commission that from time to time expresses concern on differences regarding issues such as the International Criminal Court, the ban on anti-personnel land mines, actions against biological weapons, the

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (see more in Monteleone, 2003) has been conspicuous over the last years. However, transatlantic cooperation keeps on being meaningful. For example, cooperation on the issue of the fight against terrorism is particularly important. Cooperation is strong in Afghanistan, where EU commitment to reconstruction represents more than 50% of total pledges for the 2002-2006 period. Further cooperation is developed on issues not directly related to terrorism and confrontation with reckless countries such as in South-Western Asia, where the European Union joined the United States in working towards the reduction of tension between India and Pakistan. Cooperation has been strengthe-

ned also in the Balkans, where the European Union has taken a more active role with the full backing and support of the United States. Although recurring clashes occur in this phase along with these forms of cooperation, the argument developed in this article has been that the present state and the future of transatlantic relations are clearly understood only taking into account their different values and interests in the context of the structure of government of the world political system. Americans and Europeans are different actors in world politics but they are under the pressure of taking side on the major issues of the global agenda, and the reasons for sharing the same alignment still look prevalent on the reasons for making coalition opposing one another.

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