

# **The Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy: A Re-Examination of The Paradigm**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most astonishing questions that was raised by a minister of foreign affairs in Great Britain in a public forum was if there is a foreign policy any more.<sup>(1)</sup> The question touches on an old debate on the relationship between domestic politics and the formulation of foreign policy. Indeed, in this era of accelerated globalization the line between what is domestic and what is foreign is diminishing. This trend raises a number of questions which this essay seeks to examine. First, to what extent is the line between domestic and global issues diminishing and to what extent should state leaders perceive themselves as actors in the global as well as domestic arena.

Second, as globalization's impact has been spread unevenly between developed and developing countries, how can we understand the dynamics between domestic forces and the formulation of foreign policy?

Third, how can we benefit from the understanding of the domestic structure's impact on foreign policy that was developed in the Cold War era?

Fourth, how can we move away from the Cold War era perceptions to a better understanding this era of democratic transformation and globalization?.

This essay surveys the evolution of the paradigm of domestic structure on foreign policy through the Cold War and Post Cold War eras to the Clash of Civilization thesis and finally to the era of global politics.

A survey of the evolution of the analytical framework of the domestic structure's impact on foreign policy reveals a significant gap in the analysis and a realist perspective still dominates the analysis and the conduct of foreign policy.

The paradigm shifted from the focus on ideology in the early Cold War era to the concept of institutional analysis in the late Cold War era when the United States was interested in using the institutional and cultural differences between the Soviets and the Chinese to effect a split in the Communist Bloc.

Yet this analysis did not encompass the changing cultural and social framework in developing countries that resulted from modernization and globalization.

This article argues that the West's policies toward the Arab-Islamic countries in the Arab Spring uprisings of 2010-2013 indicates that the analytical framework has not taken the cultural-social interaction into consideration.

## **IMAGES OF THE WORLD**

A decisive factor in the evolution of the paradigm on the interplay of domestic structure and foreign policy was the image of the world as both theorists and practitioners in international relations perceive it. As the post-modern approach to social science and political research emphasized the importance of understanding the process of exclusion and inclusion that shaped our articulation of knowledge<sup>(2)</sup>. It is inevitable that we look into the images of the world behind the articulation of theories applied in the era of the Cold War, the post Cold War and the era of Global Politics.

It was clear in the early part of the Cold War that the image of the world was focused on an East-West conflict with a view that the third world is only a back yard for competition between the two superpowers. Yet this simplistic image did not correspond to reality.

The war in Vietnam alerted both theorists and practitioners to the perils of ignoring the differences among political systems and only dividing the world into the East, the West, and the Third World. As a result of these major challenges confronting policy makers, a new interest in the cultural and social structure of political systems developed in the analysis and practice of US foreign policy. Thus, the new US Secretary of State in 1973, Henry Kissinger, started to look into the world not only as West and East but also as different groupings of political systems.

Later, in his book on American foreign policy in the age of globalization, Kissinger articulated an image of the world that perceives interaction within four international systems:

- The first encompasses the US and the Western hemisphere where American historical ideas have considerable applicability. Regional peace is based on the belief in the principles of democracy and economic welfare. Conflicts are not settled by war. Wars are inconceivable. In short, the domestic structure and foreign policy are reconciled on the basic principles of modernity, democracy, welfare and economic cooperation.
- The second encompasses the major states in Asia. They re-live Europe's history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and perceive each others as rivals; Wars are still in the cards. Alliances and counter
- Alliances are a major part of regional politics. In short, it is a world of geopolitics that prevails in that part of the world.
- The third is the Middle East, which in Kissinger's view, re-lives Europe's history during the 17th century. Conflicts are ideological and religious, not strategic as in Asia or economic as in Europe, "The maxims of the Westphalian peace and diplomacy do not apply."<sup>(3)</sup> In short that is an approximation of the Hobbesian Leviathan.
- The fourth is Africa, where more than 50 states live in a situation where no rules or general principles could be the basis for foreign policy. Tribal, religious, and border conflicts are combined with major health problems, poverty, and famine.<sup>(4)</sup>

The third stage of the evolution of the international system is the post Cold War era. Witness the early analysis of the impact of globalization. Joseph Nye and Robert Koehane developed the concept of interdependence and perceived an image of the world that is politically and economically interdependent and competitive at the same time.

The fourth stage with globalization progressing in the early 1990s. A new image was painted by Samuel Huntington with the clash of civilizations which was perceived as a self fulfilling prophecy after the tragic events of 9/11.

How these images of the world impacted the understanding of the interplay of the domestic structure on foreign policy and the formulation of Western foreign policy toward the Third World.

### **THE COLD WAR ERA**

Immediately after the end of WWII it became apparent that the US and Western countries would not accept the Soviet Union as a normal actor in the international arena. Indeed the capitalist system of the US and its allies and the communist system of Soviet Russia were so different that there was little, if any, room for reconciliation.

As Edmund Burk stated in his description of the conflict during the Napoleonic era,

"I never thought we could make peace with the system; because it was not for the sake of an object we pursued in rivalry with each other, but with the system itself that we were at war. As I understood the matter, we were at war not with its conduct but with its existence; convinced that its existence and its hostility were the same."<sup>(5)</sup>

Thus, two main concepts were raised to describe the mechanism of the relationship between the West and the East. The first was coined by Winston Churchill when he said "...an iron curtain has descended across the continent." so the relationship is only limited to dealing with the face of the state of the Soviet Union, not with the society. The second concept was coined by George Kennan in his famous article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," that the only strategy to adopt toward the soviets is to contain their actions.<sup>(6)</sup>

The major conflicts that erupted between the West and the East during the Cold War era, i.e., Korea and Vietnam were conducted on the perceptions that the state actions of the Soviets and Chinese could only be understood in terms of their communist ideology. It was only in 1969 with the Nixon -Kissinger team in the White House that a new look on the interplay between the domestic structure and foreign policy was introduced. In "The Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy," Kissinger advised that the US should examine the interplay of domestic forces in the socialist bloc at large in order to better understand Soviet actions.<sup>(7)</sup> That was the

beginning of the Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy toward china in 1969 which led to a US Chinese reproachment and a split in the Socialist bloc.

Kissinger, the main author of the new paradigm on the formulation of foreign policy, advanced two concepts which were instrumental in shifting American foreign policy. The first was that understanding the impact of domestic structure on foreign policy requires the examination of three major issues: the historical experience, traditional values and economic system.

He particularly focused on the impact of the administrative structure which focuses on the bureaucracy and its standard operating procedures as well as the leadership's values, ways of thinking, and conducting policy. He applied his approach to negotiations with the Vietnamese and the Chinese and later with the Egyptian leader Answer Sadat after the 1973 Middle East war.

Kissinger also underscored the importance of linkages which he emphasized in his negotiations with Egypt and the Arab countries after the War of 1973.<sup>(8)</sup> He emphasized that linking the domestic political and economic structure of these countries to the US would guarantee a continuing US-Arab partnership.<sup>(9)</sup> He advocated the same approach with the oil producing countries of Saudi Arabia Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain after the oil boycott of 1973. These two concepts were fitting to the Cold War era and it worked well in the US competition with the USSR.

In contrast, neo-realism, which was usherd in during the second half of the Cold War and represented by Kenneth Waltz, emphasized breaking the connection between the internal and external dimensions of politics.<sup>(10)</sup> Thus denying that the internal structure of states had any serious effect on interstate relations.<sup>(11)</sup> Thus there was a return to the assumption that states or units, according to Waltz, must be treated as "empty boxes" because their domestic arrangement and characteristics do not make a difference at the level of the international system. In his view it was only the distribution of capabilities that mattered.

The real politic approach downplayed the domestic factors on foreign policy and perceived the state as a unitary actor and the leader's beliefs and psychological set up as the main factors in formulating foreign policy. There was a clear difference between the liberal and realists about the impact of domestic structure on foreign policy. How both schools perceived the impact of domestic policy on foreign policy on developing countries.

The general assumption was that since these countries with autocratic political systems, the formulation of foreign policy mainly depends on the leadership's values, goals, and ambition. But within the general geopolitical framework of the country.

Indeed the general framework was based on the assumption that the US was dealing with autocratic regimes and that US interests could be safeguarded by

courting the leader and his entourage along with elements of the societal and military elite.

How these ideas played in the formulation of Western, particularly American foreign policy. It was clear that these ideas were fitting for the direct competition between the US and the soviet union at the time. But it led to two major draw backs.

First, small states started to play a game of bargaining with the two superpowers, using the domestic policy as a chess board. A case in point about the ability of developing countries to utilize domestic politics to advance foreign policy goals was the case of Egypt during 1961-1970 during the Nasser era. Nasser kept two parts of his ruling elite. One is known to be leaning toward the Soviet bloc and adhered to the socialist model leby by Ali Sabri and another that leaned toward the west and adhered to a more liberal model led by Zakaria Mohi Eldin. Whenever Nasser wanted to lean toward the Soviets he appointed the leader of the socialist leaning bloc to be prime minister. When he wanted to lean toward the West he appointed the Western oriented leader. So the domestic game was geared toward foreign policy gains.<sup>(12)</sup>

The second was the fact that ignoring the social cultural element in the developing countries led the US policy to engage in wars in Vietnam, Laos, and later in Somalia and Lebanon. In fact the US policy toward Afghanistan is a revealing case. Initially the US supported the Mujahideen against the Soviets as a part of the Cold war competition only to discover later that the same Mujahideen would become an enemy of the US.

A major concept that was introduced in the late Cold war era was the liberal thesis of democratic peace argued by Michael Doyle (1983:86)<sup>(13)</sup>. He advocated the idea that "stable liberal democratic sovereign states comprising market economies, the rule of law and democratic representation have never waged war against each other." By exercising restraint, liberal democracies have created a separate zone of peace.<sup>(14)</sup> But he emphasized that these liberal countries exercised restraint and prudence only among themselves. It was ironic that the George W. Bush administration and the neoconservatives invoked that theory to justify wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Again it was invoked in the continuing game of power between the US and Iran in the last decade.

### **POST COLD WAR PARADIGM REVISITED**

In the era starting from 1990, five major trends were at work. The resurfacing of several crisis, regional conflicts and ethnic strife. As a result of suppressing these issues during the Cold war. With the end of the Cold war era these conflicts resurfaced.

Second, the consensus on foreign policy in the Western countries which prevailed during the Cold War era was over. The old-new polarization between the liberals and conservatives returned to the front of the US and European societies.

Third, the process of modernization and globalization in the 3<sup>rd</sup> world started to have a major impact on the domestic political systems which led to polarization between modernists and traditionalists.

Fourth, there was a recognition, the new faith of interdependence which would be developed later to encompass globalization.

Fifth, the theory of democratic peace had an impact on political analysis with the argument that among democratic societies there is no war. Ironically, this argument was used by the neoconservatives in the US to justify the war in Iraq.

It was in this era that the paradigm on the relation between the domestic structure and foreign policy started to take a more detailed shape. By examining old concepts and utilizing concepts from comparative politics and political development there was a more in depth analysis of the paradigm.

The image of the world as a battlefield between the two giants with the Lilliputian actors on the field was replaced by a more realistic image of the World, one of interdependence. A fresh interest in examining the relationship between domestic policy and foreign politics resurfaced with major realist theorists including Raymond Aaron (1966), Kissinger (1964) and Kennan started to assign roles not just to the motives and intentions of statesmen but also to the nature of states and their internal characteristics. But only to generalize that states that belong to the same culture and ideological factors shape common policy goals."<sup>(15)</sup> This was a conclusion that the Arab oil boycott of 73 drove home.

The new paradigm started to emerge with a contribution from James Rosenau which emphasized that foreign policy is fundamentally influenced by: clusters of orientation held by the elite, a set of commitments, and forms of history we can detect from historical analysis.<sup>(16)</sup> Holsti emphasized the same level, mentioning orientation, national role images, objectives and actions."<sup>(17)</sup>

Beyond the general framework there was an effort to borrow from the discipline of comparative politics an analysis of the impact of the institutional set up of the state and its impact on foreign policy. This examines the level of political institutionalization which looks into separation of power and the bureaucratic politics in the government. It also looks at non government actors in the state and the impact of media and pressure groups. furthermore, it examines public awareness in foreign affairs and the salience of foreign affairs as opposed to domestic affairs.

Another attempt was made by Hagel to explore the dynamics of the interplay of domestic politics and foreign policy. He raised an important question: Is foreign policy used by decision makers to influence domestic policy or is domestic policy used to influence foreign policy? Hagel offered three approaches to dealing with these dynamics: accommodation, to accommodate one at the expense of the other,

mobilization, to use an issue to mobilize support for government policy, insulation, to try to insulate foreign policy from domestic policy.<sup>(18)</sup>

A third attempt to understand the dynamics was made by scholars who study public opinion and what could be described as public mind.<sup>(19)</sup> Here two approaches were advanced. Here, two approaches were advanced, the first is a bottom up approach where the impact of public opinion is felt on the formulation of foreign policy. The second approach is described as top down where leaders can influence public opinion.

It was clear that a new image of the world of diversified culture, values, religions, and interests prevailed among the analysts of international relations. With the new image came the concept of interdependence<sup>(20)</sup>.

Following his concept of interdependence and underlining the progress of globalization, Joseph Nye introduced "Soft Power."<sup>(21)</sup> As he outlined the reasons of the transformation of the concept of power he brought social change inside great powers as one of the main reasons." The warrior ethics in modern democracies means that it requires an elaborate moral justification to ensure popular support.<sup>(22)</sup> "As he describes the world system as divided between poor weak reindustrialized states, modernized states such as India and China and post industrial societies in Europe North America and Japan. Nye argues that the use of force is common in the first type, still accepted in the second, but less tolerated in the third.

As a result of that, the post industrialized countries would use more soft power which includes economic, cultural and social networking. Using soft power would require these countries to adhere to the global norms and values, acquire multiple channels of communication and enhance their capability by consistent performance on both the domestic and international arena. He hastened to emphasize that much of the soft power arises from social forces outside government control. Thus, the domestic forces and the civil society using culture and artistic talents and entrepreneurial capabilities are main actors in the international scene.

With the end of the Cold War and the US as the only super power, the framework for analyzing the impact of domestic structure on foreign policy combined ideas advanced in the Cold War era with new concepts brought about by the process of globalization. We can summarize this framework on several levels.

## **THE MARCH OF GLOBALIZATION**

Indeed the world system has witnessed several shifts on the domestic and international landscape that touched on the essentials of policy formulation, shifts in citizen loyalty towards more international and transnational commitment<sup>(23)</sup>. Another is shifts in the value system to become more global that led to what we can describe now as a global civil society and shifts in the perceptions of space and time, all of which have been effected by accelerated interestedness. As a result foreign policy is based on a continually changing rather than static image of the world.

The fate of the nation state itself is now being debated. On one hand the impact of globalization might lead to fragmentation of old states. Witness Slovakia and Czechia, or Sudan and South Sudan. On the other hand it might lead to adopting a super state integrating several states. witness the European Union and efforts on economic integration in Latin America.

A major change in the world environment is progressing. Two examples of this trend are the endorsement by the UN General Assembly of the Resolution on Humanitarian Intervention, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and activation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to deal with leaders who violate international laws and norms, have injected a new condition in both domestic and foreign policy making.

The character of citizenship changed gradually from one dimensional loyalty to the country in which they live to a multidimensional loyalty. A "digital citizen" appeared as one who is connected to several levels of contacts through a web of associations<sup>(24)</sup>. An associational revolution was ushered in where various issues: political economic, social, and gender-oriented became flagships for new affiliations and loyalties of the citizen<sup>(25)</sup>.

The accelerating globalization had a deep impact on the transformation of the international value system. Human rights became a major issue in all societies to varying degrees. The concept of state sovereignty has been challenged and conditioned on respect of international codes of conduct. As a result of these developments the balance of the state to society shifted to the society. The government no longer has a free hand in either domestic or foreign policy. The societal pressures became a major factor of domestic and foreign policy. Non-state entities started to be more influential in both domestic and foreign politics.

The impact of these developments on domestic and foreign policy was felt through increasing populism of the society. With the internet and the associational revolution empowering a large segment of the population, populism started to effect formerly insulated politics, e.g., foreign policy. Political instruments at the hand of the government became less effective. Issues facing the government became more difficult to control and resolving international issues became dependent on cooperation with other states.

Yet two elements condition the formulation of foreign policy. The first is the pull and push of globalization which leads to a more comprehensive and global view of world politics and the resisting process of localization which emphasizes the interests of people at home and the domestic issues that connect to foreign policy.

The second element is national tradition which usually perceives that what is just in domestic politics could be applied to what is just internationally, which might conflict with others' perceptions of what is just and what is not. Indeed, the perception of universal applicability of national values and traditions might generate



a gulf with other countries. How did these factors play in the formulation of foreign policy in the US and Western states in the last decade?

## **OPTIMISM SHATTERED: THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATION SYNDROME**

After the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, an euphoria led to coining a philosophical thesis of "the end of history."<sup>(26)</sup> Two developments led to the shattering of optimism and a return to the realist prism in international relations.

The first was the publishing of Clash of Civilizations by Huntington in 1993 and the second was the increasing activity of violent non governmental actors on the world scene.

### **Clash of Civilizations**

Yet on the horizon there were other concerns that started with a widening rift between the Islamic World and the West. The tension was growing and terrorist actions were expanding. Thus, in 1993 Samuel Huntington launched his thesis on the Clash of Civilizations<sup>(27)</sup>.

The cultural dimension was always considered in the dynamics of domestic/foreign policy formulation. As we have seen there was continuous examination of traditions, values and norms of society and their impact on foreign policy. Yet Huntington dug deeper into the causes of conflict based on culture, religion, and values.

His framework is based on five principles. First that classifications of countries in international relations should not be based on their level of political and economic development but on culture and civilization affiliation--a major turn around from the author of "Political Order in Changing Societies." Second, that identity is now based on cultural-religious basis more than on a national basis. Third, modernization will lead to an assertion of traditional values in cultures to fend against Westernization. Fourth, populist and religious leaders will raise the emotions of the public, fundamentalism will be on the move, and there will be a call on culture and religion as a source of identity. Fifth, that the differences in values is the main factor in the clash of civilization.

He concluded that differences in cultural values and religion will be the source for conflicts and that if there is another world war it will be between civilizations. Thus, a velvet curtain has fallen in Europe dividing Western Europe (Protestant/Catholic) from Eastern Europe (Orthodox and Islamic). There would be a calling on what could be termed the Kin-Country which shares the cultural framework to cooperate vis a vis Western countries.

He also concluded with two important remarks. One is normative. He mentioned that a person cannot live in two cultures, he is either in one or the other.

Thus excluding any cross-culture commitment. The second is geopolitical, that the Islamic world is going to establish an axis of cooperation with Confucianist China.

The significance of the article and the hypothesis was that it underlined cultural, religious and value systems and brought them to the front in the analysis of international relations. It took note of the growing dismay and some times hatred in the Islamic world toward the West as a result of both political and cultural differences. It was like a self fulfilling prophecy since less than nine years later the tragedy of September 11, 2001 happened, bringing the conflict between the US and some Islamic extremist-terrorist into the forefront and triggering two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The war on terror launched by the Bush administration in 2001 mirrored these perceptions and hypotheses.

What was missing in Huntington's theory was to dig deeper into the process of modernization in each of these civilizations and cultures, which Huntington defined as civil, and to find out that in each culture there is a process of polarization between traditional--sometimes extremist--and the modernist. The dynamics will become evident in the decade following that great debate ushered in by the tragic events of September 11.

Also was missing the concept of cultural proximity where the theory assumed an axis of cooperation between Confucian China and the Islamic world. It ignored the geographic and normative proximity of the Judeo-Christian traditions to the Islamic tradition and values. Thus, no axis was to be seen between the Islamic World and China.

As a result of all these factors, the theory of the clash of civilization became a syndrome which remains in the back mind of some politicians. (witness George W. Bush's expression about a crusading war after 9/11). But this was disproved by historical development. It nevertheless became a good framework for analyzing the phenomenon of the violent non-state actor.

## **THE WAR ON TERROR AND THE VIOLENT NON-STATE ACTORS**

After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the US launched two wars, Afghanistan and Iraq. The War on Terror was an unprecedented war on a new phenomenon in the international system, the violent non-state actors who have become important factors in the calculation of foreign policy.

Since these new forces are challenging states' legitimacy and states' monopolies on the, they have altered the landscape of world politics and created a new dimension for analysis of the domestic structure's impact on foreign policy

The analysis of violent non-state actors focused on its types, purposes, behavior and conduct, but foremost it focused on the environment which allows these violent groups to emerge and function.

## **THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT**

It was clear that the emergence of such groups is linked to state failure to assume their proper role. However, even if the government is in control and it fails to meet the economic and social needs of the citizenry, the people can shift loyalty and become affiliated with violent groups.

The internal conflict in modernizing societies between traditionalists and the modernizing elite may also trigger the emergence of violent non-state groups. Witness the Islamic societies of the Middle East, where the scarcity of resources, corruption, and decline of state legitimacy has led to open revolt which triggered the emergence of these violent groups. But these groups vary in character from War lords in Somalia and Afghanistan, to violent religious groups, to international criminal gangs.

In the face of these groups and their expanded roles the Western countries employed three approaches which reflect the different understanding of the interplay between domestic and foreign policy.

The first approach was confrontation. The War on Terror in Afghanistan was a case in point yet the fighting against irregular forces proved costly.

The second approach was to try to consolidate the states power and help it to control its territory and suppress violent non-state actors. This approach is reflected in the extensive network of security cooperation between western countries and the regimes in the Middle East and North Africa to suppress these groups.

The third approach was to allow these non-state actors to be part of the legitimate political system and encourage the emergence of a political system that can contain and control them. This strategy was employed by the US during the Muslim Brotherhood's year in the Egyptian government. This was turned around by a large segment of Egypt's population who rebelled against the Muslim Brotherhood government leading to a rift in US-Egyptian relations.

## **THE ERA OF GLOBAL POLITICS**

As the world entered the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it was clear that the impact of polarization between liberals and conservatives is at the core of the internal debate in the western countries, particularly in the US on foreign policy issues. Ironically at the breaking of the consensus of the cold war led to such polarization in the industrialized countries, another type of polarization was looming in the developing countries, particularly in the Islamic world. It was a social polarization between the modernist and traditionalists under the stress and strains of modernization. Local traditionalists merged with religious fundamentalists to create a negative feedback. Thus under the facade of autocratic regimes laid conflicting forces if allowed to reach the seat of power would not tolerate the other side.

## **Polarization in the US**

The first, polarization in the US was under the Reagan administration 1980-1988 that the realist and the conservative politics gained ground. The world remembered the Reagan administration attack on Grenada as a the largest county in the world attacking the smallest.

The golden time for the American-globalist approach was the Clinton era. In spite of the congress rejecting major issues on the course of globalization, e.g., the Kyoto Protocol and the membership of the US in the International Criminal Court, the Clinton administration followed a strategy of building coalitions, consolidating international organizations and supporting peaceful settlements of major conflicts, witness the Oslo Accords of 1993/95 and Bill Clintons efforts to mediate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet the major shock to the US and European policy maker was September 11, 2001.

The second stage was the aftermath of September 11th. For the US the Bush administration took an assertive, combative attitude, Europe took a less combative but equally assertive attitude. Russell suggests that the Bush administration had two options after September 11. The US could either pursue an international approach to build a world system to safeguard against these threats, thus following a Roosevelt-Truman approach. Or it could follow a unilateralist approach and to use the US power to impose its will. The Bush administration chose the latter. They executed a Global War on Terrorism. By the end of the Bush administration the US was involved in two wars, Afghanistan and Iraq, US military forces were overextended and the US economy was in recession. The Obama administration inherited a polarized, traumatized society.

The third stage was the election of Obama, which was itself a return to the globalists approach. Indeed, during Obama's speech at Cairo University in 2009 he extended a hand to all the countries of the world and recognized the importance of the domestic environment, traditions, values, and religions of all other nations.

Indeed the Obama administration came to the White House in what some writers describe as a divided America. The US witnessed an increasing polarization among the political elite and the society at large.

The polarization of the American society was downplayed during the first two years of the Obama administration and re-emerged during the second part of the first term and became more clear during the 2012 president election. The politics of the Right represented by the emergence of the Tea Party movement 2009, how this new trend perviced the main principles of US foreign policy was significant in the calculations of decision makers in the White House and the US Department of State. The anti-big government sentiment, which was a major force behind the conservative movement in the society, continues to have a major impact on the formulation of foreign policy. Whether it is a return to the core American values as supporters say or is it a "racist reactionary and ultimately futile protest against the emerging reality

of multicultural, multiracial US and a new era of government activism... the populist energy that powers it will not go away soon<sup>(28)</sup>." Obama Foreign Policy demonstrated a balancing act to accommodate both sides of the aisle.

### **Polarization in the South**

Modernization and globalization led to a different type of polarization in the south, particularly in the Islamic countries of the Middle East. The Iranian case in 1979 was an early indicator a modernizing autocrat was pushed out of power by traditional religious leadership. The victims were the Iranian middle class who aspired for democracy and a larger share in political life only to discover that it would be suppressed by the mullahs and the religious establishment. A question was raised in the United States on the debate about who lost Iran.

But the dialectical conflict took a longer time to crystallize in the Arab Islamic countries. It was clear to analysts and observers that the societies in Egypt, Tunis, Syria, and Iraq were divided between the traditionalist and the modernist. But there was not enough awareness of how deep the division was or how stark the polarization. In the middle of this struggle for survival the autocratic regimes failed to read the signs on the wall. They neither allowed for gradual transformation toward democracy nor did they succeed in improving the economic situation in their countries. The call of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2009 in Cairo to allow for more freedom and representation went unheard. It was in this time when the US debate on forcing policy on the Middle East started to underline the long neglect of the US policy toward political and social change in the Middle East, even president George W. Bush made a statement to that effect.

Four years later when the rebellions in Tunis and Egypt erupted, the regimes were astonished by the US changing course and not supporting them. Indeed, one analyst of the Mubarak regime labeled the US position toward change in the Egyptian government as a betrayal of friends and allies<sup>(29)</sup>. The US policy gradually moved to support a democratization and a change in leadership. Both sides in this process underestimated the domestic constraints. Neither of the US policies took into consideration the domestic polarization in Egypt and the countries of the Middle East between the Islamist and modernists. Nor did the new rulers in the Middle East countries understand the dynamics of America's domestic politics.

Whatever benefits the US can gain from alliance with these rulers, the US leadership cannot betray the liberal principles of their societies. The US government will be vulnerable to liberal groups' criticism. The leaders also misunderstood the legalistic approach prevailing among the US political elite which makes them perceive the conflict as a case of claims and disclaims which can be resolved by finding a compromise. In short, they misunderstood the lack of depth of understanding the problems associated with modernization in Middle Eastern society.

As a result an emphases was reached in 2012 when the Muslim Brotherhood was narrowly elected to lead the government in Egypt. The US supported the Muslim Brotherhood to the last edge. Egyptians and people in other Middle East countries saw the US support for the Muslim Brotherhood as a betrayal of American liberal values and a quest to achieve geopolitical aims at the expense of the real needs of the Egyptian people. A conspiracy was penetrating the political analysis in the Arab World of America's support for the Brotherhood. The theory was that the US supporting the Brotherhood because they could be useful in three major areas:

1. Ability to coopt Muslim extremist forces, including violent groups. Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood brokered an agreement between Hamas and Israel and showed interest in negotiating with Al Queda and the Taliban.
2. Ability to legitimize the peace agreement with Israel.
3. Ability to resolve the Palestinian refugee problem by allowing the alternative territory in Jordan and the Sinai.

There was a strong defense of the Muslim Brotherhood by major segments of American society. US Senators John McCain and Lindsay Graham traveled to Egypt in 2013 and pressed for the release of Muslim Brotherhood leaders from jail. This was seen as strong US support for the Muslim Brotherhood.

On the other hand, the US underestimated the power of civil society and modernists in Egypt and Arab societies. The eruption of rebellion and massive demonstrations in June of 2013 which led to the collapse of the Muslim Brotherhood regime proved that the US policy did not take Egyptian domestic dynamics into consideration in formulating its foreign policy. This demonstrated how the failure to understand the interplay of domestic forces on foreign policy might result in major international problems.

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