

AMERİKAN STRATEJİK KÜLTÜRÜ VE DIŞ POLİTİKASINI ROBERT KAGAN ÜZERİNDEN ANLAMAK: BİR İNCELEME*

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Amerikan stratejik kültürü ve güvenlik algısının zamanla nasıl şekillendiğini ve temel özelliklerinin neler olduğunu anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Amerikan stratejik kültürü, ülkenin tarihsel, coğrafi ve siyasal gerçekliklerinden beslenmektedir. Göçmenler tarafından kurulmuş bir ülke olarak Amerika'nın güçlü bir ülke yapılması aynı zamanda ulus inşası sürecinin de bir parçasıydı. Dahası, kıtanın coğrafi koşulları Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ni dünya çapında siyasal ve askeri olaylara müdahale etmek için daha da güçlü bir devlet yapmaya itmiştir. Robert Kagan'a göre, müdahalecilik, güvenlik sağlayıcılık ve uluslararası hukuku ve organizasyonları ikinci plana atmak Amerikan dış politikasının temel özellikleridir. Bu bağlamda çalışma, bu üç boyuta odaklanmakta ve bunları değerlendirerek kısıtlanmıştır. Amerikan dış politikası üzerine yazılmış birçok çalışma olsa da bu çalışma Robert Kagan'ın yaklaşımlarını merkeze alarak kendini mevcut literatürden farklılaştırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Robert Kagan, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Dış politika, Stratejik kültür.

JEL Kodları: N40, N42, F50, F59.

UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN STRATEGIC CULTURE AND FOREIGN POLICY THROUGH ROBERT KAGAN: A REVIEW

ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to understand how the American strategic culture and perception of security have been shaped over time and what its main features are. American strategic culture has been nourished from the historical, geographical, and political realities of the country. Being a country founded by immigrants, making a great America was also part of the nation-building process. Moreover, the continent's geographical conditions have led the United States of America to be a more powerful state to intervene in political and military issues worldwide. According to Robert Kagan, the interventionist character, the role of security provider, and disfavoring the international law and organizations are the American foreign policy's main features. In this respect, this paper focuses on these three aspects and evaluate them in its limitation. Although there are many studies upon American foreign policy, this study diverges itself from the existing literature by putting Robert Kagan's interpretations to its center.

Keywords: Robert Kagan, United States of America, Foreign policy, Strategic culture.

JEL Codes: N40, N42, F50, F59.

1. INTRODUCTION

As Gaddis noted, the US foreign policy has always aimed to create and preserve an environment that would support the welfare of its national institutions (Gaddis, 1974: 386). In this respect, it is a crucial question to inquire about the background of the existence of one of the most powerful country's foreign policy. Indeed there might be historical roots of those policies. Robert Kagan, the renowned American historian, explains the pillars of those policies from a realist perspective in his well-known books (Kagan, 2004, 2008, 2018). According to him, American history and the nation-building process have emerged as the backbones of the United States (US) foreign policy and strategic culture. Geography, demography, ideological roots, and nation-building affected the approaches for the country's foreign policy strategies. The USA has not a relatively long history as it is an immigrant country founded by people who fled from political and religious persecution in Europe. Building up a country with such a diverse society was hard enough; however, there was more to concern. The conflicts that happened in Europe such as the two world wars, the emergence and expansion of communism, and the conflicting issues in the Middle East have also affected the American continent. In this respect, interior and international affairs have had an impact on the US strategic culture, thus, the foreign policy outputs. Therefore, the US foreign and domestic policies have been shaped through such developments over time. One might consider three periods for the US foreign and domestic policies as the following: i-) Before/Between the World Wars, ii-) After the World Wars/Cold War, iii-) Post-Cold War/21st century.

Before the World Wars, the US followed a nonintervention policy. The nonintervention policy changed with entering WW1 by the USA. However, between the World Wars, the US implemented a different policy, which is called the isolation policy, to establish its institutions, complete nation-

building, and improve its military capacity. Isolationism is, as Braumoeller (2010: 4) puts it, “a belief system or ‘mood’ characterized by a desire for unconditional noninvolvement in world affairs.” Thus, it was the refreshment and build-up period of the USA. During that period, the US did not intervene in the European countries’ affairs and international relations. Most clearly, in 1920, the American people refused to join the League of Nations in a solemn referendum. Yet, American isolationism was not complete isolation as it might be understood in its pure form (Fensterwald, 1958: 111). Instead, as Kagan (2018: 20) emphasized, the US did not isolate itself from the rest of the world after WW1, “but they rejected responsibility for the world’s problems. After World War 2 (WW2), the US emerged as the protector of liberal values as the most powerful and unrivaled power, notes Kagan (2018:13). According to him (Kagan, 2018: 8), the nature and environment of the post-Cold War era and before 1945 were completely different. The world had witnessed the bloodiest wars for at least five centuries before the Cold War peacefully ended. As he puts it, the liberal world order is like a garden, which can be threatened by the jungle and its wild plants (Kagan, 2018: 9).

The Cold War emerged the US as the sole power against the Soviet Union and communism threat in the bipolar world order. Playing the liberalism card, the US has left its footprints all around the world through military interventions, humanitarian aid, and its diplomats who traveled all around the world to spread American values and doctrines. American security perception, primarily through NATO, has impressed most countries to join the alliance with them. It is negotiable whether the US has supported unilateralism or multilateralism, looking to its presence at NATO and UN. Yet, it can be said that the US contributed to international organizations and alliances. Its efforts to establish the UN and NATO should be reminded in that respect. However, there is a fact behind the US interpretation of such international organizations: the US has never been a part of any organization in which they are not in control. The USA is a complete and obvious unilateralist state, although it promotes alliances with NATO. At this point, one might ask why the US does act like this. The answer is simple: the US keeps all possible rivals together to be positioned all above them.

After all, it could be said that the 21st century started with an unbalance of powers, unlike the 20th century. In the 20th century, because of the Cold War period, there was mostly a balance between powers at it established the bipolar world system for nearly fifty years. However, as Kagan (2008) puts it, the reign after the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union allowed the USA to be the most powerful actor; thus, the beginning of the unipolar world order. On the other hand, as Yalçın (2018: 32) noted the USA had already been a prominent entity in world politics since WW2. Furthermore, Kagan (2018) claims that the liberal world order is like a garden, it is open to threats of nature and jungle, and the USA is the gardener of it. However, he also asserts that the jungle is growing back today, which is surrounding the garden as liberal democratic capitalist development has been threatened by authoritarianism. In this respect, the US has been positioned to fight against threats to the liberal order.

Hence, it is important to question what the pillars of the US foreign policies are. To do so, this study has used Robert Kagan's three famous books at their core to understanding American strategic culture and foreign policy. These pillars are excerpted as interventionism, being a security provider, and unilateralism. In this regard, these three aspects of the US foreign policy have been explained and discussed to provide an additional position of view to American politics.

2. INTERVENTIONISM AND THE UNITED STATES: THE GLOBAL PLAYMAKER

Kagan (2004) indicates that the US was not powerful after the Civil War regarding its military capacity. Moreover, because of its heterogeneity, society was also fragile. Hence, the country tried to stay away from foreign issues and problems abroad to focus on its development and nation-building. Afterward, the US's military capacity was increased through investments and technological improvements, and the social links tightened via, to say, the "Great America" motto.¹ This foreign policy of nonintervention lasted with the USA's entry into World War 1 (WW1) (Friedmann, 1968: 172, 173). Moreover, the foreign policy of the US differentiated also after WW2. The isolation policy which the US had been implementing before was changed to the containment policy after WW2 with the beginning of the Cold War (DiPrizio, 2002: 2). According to this new policy, the US aimed to protect the world order and preserve world peace as the security provider (Bağcı, 2019: 18). To preserve this order and stability, the US started to be the global playmaker. As Martinot puts it, that is the mission of bringing democracy to other countries and nations (Martinot, 2003: 128). How this process has occurred is essential to understand US foreign policy. Being a global playmaker, the US started to be present all around the world. In that way, the US presence has mostly been sustained under military interventions and humanitarian or nonmilitary aid. Military interventionism was the most critical policy tool for Woodrow Wilson since he has been attributed as the father of this policy. It is known that he has intervened in other countries more than any other US president. The main assumption for those interventions was removing the so-called undemocratic governments of the Third World countries for the future of democracy (Anthony, 2008: 239). In this respect, it is fair to say that the USA has been the leading country considering the number of military interventions since WW2 (Tang & Long, 2012: 511). Furthermore, according to Bağcı (1992: 272), the military interventions that have been held under the United Nations (UN) are mostly led by the US, such as the interventions in Korea, Iraq, and Somalia.

During the Cold War period, the US was the global security provider against Soviet and communist threats. That was the perception and reality of the European countries, too, according to Kagan (2004, 2008). The Soviet threat also provided the legitimate basis for the US foreign policies during the Cold War period. However, after the Cold War, the US started to use humanitarian

¹ "Make America Great Again" was a political motto used by former President of the US Donald J. Trump. However, in this study it does not indicate political or ideological basis. Rather, as Kagan (2004, 2008) indicates that American people love to be proud of their country, the discourse of Great America has been used to refer to this sense.

intervention to sustain its hegemony over other states, which can threaten the USA (Gibbs, 2001: 15). Although interventionism has deeper roots in US history, the interventionist mentality of the US was crystallized after the Cold War. If one looks for the origins of American interventionism, Anthony (2008: 241) notes that the US's militarily interventionist character began with the Spanish-American War in 1898 to spread and protect American values abroad. In American intercontinental relations, the US also pursued the same interventionist policy, which was rooted in its imperial role (Friedmann, 1968: 173).

It should be noted that the US did not only use direct military interventions. In this respect, The Truman Doctrine, announced on March 12, 1947, by president Truman (Bağcı, 2019: 24) can be an example. The doctrine was perceived by some groups to the shift from the isolation policy of the US after world wars and deeply criticized to be the inheritor of the United Kingdom in the Middle East region (Ertem, 2009: 388; Gaddis, 1974: 386). This doctrine includes military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey; thus, blocking the Soviet intervention and imperialism (Gaddis, 1974: 390). That was an important breaking point for the US foreign policy to provide aid to such countries; hence, keep the Soviet intervention away (Kalyon, 2010: 11). Therefore, as said before, we can infer that US interventionism is not only a means of military intervention but also blocking and limiting the playgrounds of its rivalries. By providing aid to Turkey and Greece, the US made its containment policy to set a gap between the Soviets and these countries (Merrill, 2006: 31). Truman's main goal was the containment of communism through a policy of sets of interventions. Those interventions include military operations, regime changes, and nation-building, too (Merrill, 2006: 29). However, the great containment strategy of the US, created by George F. Kennan (Karaosmanoğlu, 2020: 24), was not only containment of communism but also the European rivals (Gibbs, 2001: 16). Therefore, it can be concluded that US interventionism was not only about the Soviet Union and limited to the Cold War period. Rather, it was a general policy of the country.

The most important American interventions can be counted as Vietnam, Korea, Kosovo, Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Although DiPrizio claims that most of the American interventions since Cold War have held under the mentality of humanitarian intervention (DiPrizio, 2002: 2), especially during the Cold War the USA has fought against communism through its interventions. That was crystal clear in the Vietnam case as communism and nationalism were seen as threats for the USA and France (Statler, 2007: 1). Thus, the number of US interventions accelerated with the Cold War with the examples of Guatemala in 1954 and Chile in 1973.² However, these interventions held for the sake of democracy have been criticized. As Martinot (2003: 128) asserts, "if democracy is to be established by the US in other nations for the purposes of order and security, it implies that indigenous forms of democracy would produce insecurity and disorder." The US intervention can be categorized as unilateral interventions that

² For a detailed resource to see all of the US interventions since WW2, see (Blum, 2003).

mostly do not need or seek legitimacy neither from international organizations nor law. To put it clearly, the USA “is both judge and prosecutor” (Friedmann, 1968: 174).

Kagan (2004, 2008) focuses on the US's geographic conditions to understand the background of interventionism. It is essential to remind us that the USA is a continental country surrounded by oceans. Thus, it made the country strengthen its military capacity because of its geographic conditions. Its improving military power might have led the US to be able to conduct military operations overseas. Therefore, the strategic culture of the country has also been shaped by geography. Concomitantly, Tand & Long (2012: 511) assert a similar idea to link the geography with the US military interventions.

The interventionist shifts of the US foreign policy mostly became visible after 9/11 (Tang & Long, 2012: 510). It was a critical breaking point in the US strategic culture history and foreign policy (Duzcu, 2018: 573) as it was the first time being attacked by an overseas enemy on the country's main soil since Pearl Harbor. Thus, the Bush administration reacted very quickly and roughly. After 9/11, the Bush administration tried to intervene militarily in the governments that the US believes they support international terrorism. Doing so in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US also used soft power for interventions (Bağcı & Sinkaya, 2006: 21). Most importantly, instead of using international legal processes and international organizations such as the UN, the Bush administration announced the “Global War on Terror” (Aaronson, 2014: 124). Later on, in January 2002, he described North Korea, Iran, and Iraq as the axis of evil because they intended to acquire and possibly use mass destruction weapons such as nuclear power (Segell, 2005: 5). Those moments were the elements of the new interventionist era of the US in the 21st century. Starting with Afghanistan and following by Iraq, the US changed its direction to the Middle East. Mostly conducting under the perception of protecting democracy and defending all humanity’s wellbeing, the US became actively involved in the issues that occurred in the region.

Shortly it is evident that the USA is an interventionist country; furthermore, the country has involved and led the majority of military and humanitarian interventions in other countries. That is a feature coming directly from the historical background and geographical factors of the country. As a country surrounded by ocean, the US had to improve its military capacity with different technologies. Moreover, being able to be mobile overseas in means of military actions was important to such a country because that was the only way to be involved in world politics and power games. Therefore, in the US foreign policy interventions have been used under the shadow of promoting democracy and protecting the global order. However, the reality could not be that much seen from pinky glasses. Explaining the interventionist character of the US just through its role of security provider for the universe should not be enough. To elaborate this discussion, how the US positioned itself as the security provider has to be analyzed.

3. PROTECTION AND SECURITY: THE SECURITY PROVIDER FOR THE UNIVERSE

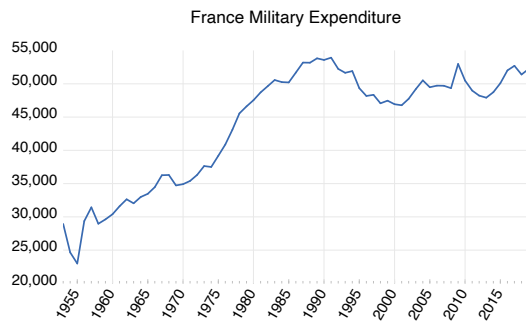
Kagan (2008) criticizes Fukuyama (1992) from the point of whether or not history ends after the Cold War. Contrary to Fukuyama (1992), Kagan (2008) asserts the idea that history would revive after the Cold War in means of polarization, international conflicts, and an arms race. It is known that the US was the primary country for global protection of liberal world order during the Cold War. Accordingly, the US Secretary of State Acheson noted in a press conference in 1949 that the US would help sovereign and free nations to preserve and protect their borders and freedom (Bağcı, 2019: 31). However, in means of being the security provider, the US and Europe have a different points of view. The relationship between the US and Europe concerning security is a catchy situation. Kagan has an interesting inference at this point. He conceptualizes Europe and the USA through Venus and Mars metaphors. According to him, the Americans and Europeans belong to different planets: Americans come from Mars, and Europeans come from Venus (Kagan, 2004: 3). Through this interpretation, he implicitly indicates that European countries need the protection of the USA as they are the masculine side of this relationship.³

Kagan (2004) emphasizes that obvious from the title of his book *Of Paradise and Power*, the USA represents power, whereas Europe stands for paradise, and it is essential to understand what these concepts mean. Primarily because of the Cold War, the USA was the sole protector of the universe against the Soviet and communism threat. While Europeans were spending their money on social welfare, social security, and prosperity of their citizens, the US was dealing with the economic burden of military spending to protect the liberal world order. However, we have to ask one question: could the USA take this burden on itself just to protect the liberal world order? Furthermore, could a country sustain this much military spending while the others paying little attention to improving their military capacity and mobility? These are essential questions to understand the main features of US foreign and domestic policy. In this regard, we can infer that the US's domestic and foreign policies merge at one point: as told before, making America the Great! As it has been emphasized, the US is an immigrant country, and their nationalism cannot depend on any race but being a proud American. Therefore, the US had to shape its nation-building process considering this reality. Making the Americans proud of their country can be achieved by being the sole protector of the liberal world order, thus, making America the Great. It does only make sense if one interprets this issue as a reflection of the domestic policy to get and keep its citizens together. Otherwise, it is not possible to explain why the US was spending \$280 Billion while Europe was at approximately \$150 Billion during the 1990s (Kagan, 2004: 69). It is also obvious from the Bush administration's promise during the 2000 elections to increase military spending. Using such an argument during elections can be interpreted as being a security provider for the universe is a pillar of their domestic policy, too (Kagan, 2004: 92). The military expenditures of France and Germany as leading countries in Europe and the USA have been shown in

³ It is must to note that making such sexist comparison does not comply with my understanding. It is not acceptable to imply that women need men's protection.

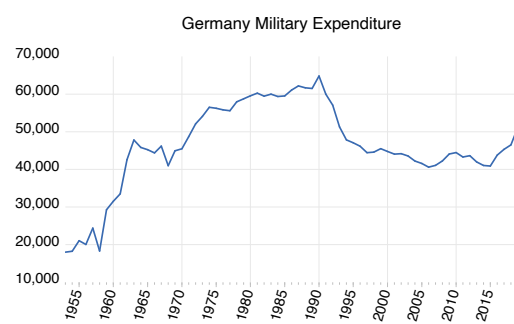
the graphics below for a comparison.⁴ It is clear as day that the US is far away from the sum of France and Germany's military expenditures for a period covering 1953-2019. Especially after the 2000s, the US has increased its military expenditures enormously. This is, without doubt, the reflection of 9/11 as it promoted the concept of counter-terrorism (Bağcı & Kürkçü, 2020: 7) and the Republican period. In another aspect, even the share of military expenditures in GDP is completely different for Europe and the USA. According to 2019 values, the USA spends 3.4% of its GDP on military spending, whereas France spends 1.9%, and Germany 1.3% (SIPRI, 2021).

Graph 1. France Military Expenditure.



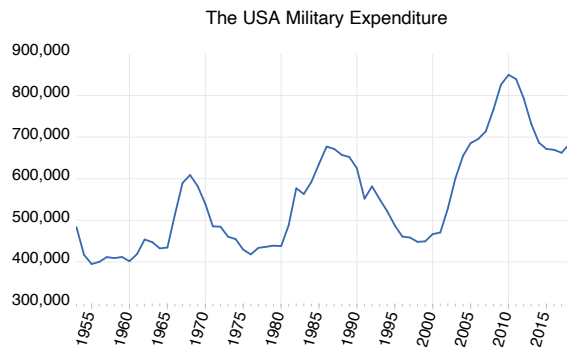
Source: Author.

Graph 2. Germany Military Expenditure



Source: Author.

Graph 3. The USA Military Expenditure



Source: Author.

The term being a security provider for the *universe* has been used consciously to refer that the USA is not only active for conventional security measures but also making tremendous investments in space security through NASA. The space security and space power race also started with investments

⁴ The data has been obtained from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>, and turned into graphics by the author using EViews 11 software. The values are in US \$m., at constant 2018 prices and exchange rates.

done by the USA and the Soviet Union during the Cold War (Egeli & Mevlütoğlu, 2020: 219). Yet, these investments have deeply been criticized by some citizen groups in the US. Even the huge amount of military spending in NATO by the US was criticized by the former president Donald J. Trump as claiming that “Europe's NATO members are not spending enough to support the alliance and are relying on the US to shoulder the burden” (Reality Check Team, 2020).

As mentioned before, military operations and being a powerful military actor as the security provider could allow presidents to tighten the social links among citizens and build up their confidence in the nation, the president, and the country. That can be explained by the famous phenomenon “rally ‘round the flag effect.” That is the effect of boosting the president’s popularity during certain international incidents (Mueller, 1970: 21). As Mueller indicated, the presidents’ approval rates increase as a result of some international incidents in which they have been involved (Oneal & Bryan, 1995: 380). Thus, major international incidents wither away the people’s disagreements with the government, specifically with the president; therefore, society can be linked together (Baker & Oneal, 2001: 664). For instance, right after 9/11, the acceptance rate of the president was increased from 51% to 86%, and it was the “largest rally round effect ever recorded” (Baum, 2002: 263) because it was the most obvious threat for increasing transnational terrorism (Erdurmaz, 2020: 31), and the US since the Pearl Harbor.

Therefore, it could be said that the US has wanted to be a security provider for the universe, not just for peace and order but also for its domestic policy and nation-building process. Making “America the Great” does not only stand for economic means. Furthermore, it implies that the US will be all around the world and the *universe* because it is strong enough to protect humanity. That is how the US policy has been shaped for being the security provider for the universe. It is no doubt that the Cold War period provided the most accurate atmosphere for the US to play that role. The US deployed its military forces almost worldwide against the Soviet threat and promised to the militarily weak countries to aid. In this regard, besides military or humanitarian interventions, the US presence has been one of the primary pillars of both its domestic and foreign policies.

From another point, the bipolar world system would have ended after Cold War. In this respect, some views were advocating that end of the Cold War would lead to global peace and a multipolar world system. However, according to Kagan (2008), the end of the Cold War was not even close to achieving that view. Instead, according to him, after the Cold War, the US emerged as the sole world power among the other powers. Thus, as he interprets, after the Cold War the world became a unipolar world with some other weaker powers. Kagan (2008) defines China, Russia, Iran, and Japan as possible power groups relatively weaker than the US. His basis for claiming these countries are possible power groups depends on their history. He advocates that (Kagan, 2008) China and Russia want to lead back to their previous stronger times in world history. Especially for Russia, Putin’s essential projection has been strengthening the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union and banishing the country's post-Cold War weakness from history. Accordingly, China has had the ambition to go back to its imperial power.

Thus, they both have been trying to be powerful actors against the US. Furthermore, Kagan (2008) has made a geographical classification for the new actors after the Cold War. He has analyzed Japan as a Pacific power, China as an Asian power, Iran as a Middle Eastern power, Russia as the former Soviet bloc power. Interestingly, he clearly less emphasized Iran's ability as an actor because he believes that radical Islamism cannot fight against modernism; thus, it is not a real threat, and cannot be, for western countries. In this context, the USA has been referred to as the sole power among the other relatively weak power groups.

Therefore, the US has been an obvious world power since WW2. It was not just because to protect the world order and liberal democratic capitalist system as Kagan (2018) advocated. Contrarily, it was mostly because of keeping its society together through allowing them to be proud Americans who are proud of their country's power and leadership. As Kagan (2004, 2008) explained, Americans love to brag about their country's leadership position on the earth. Thus, it has been a good opportunity for American policymakers to promote the US's security provider role as both a foreign and domestic policy. On the other hand, the US has always wanted to keep the world under its control by being the security provider. Because security measures and alliances allow states to deploy their militaries, it is a useful way to sustain one state's presence in other countries. In that way, the US has used the security provider role for keeping the possible rival countries under its control and surveillance.

4. A UNILATERAL POSITION IN A MULTILATERAL WORLD: DISCREDITING INTERNATIONAL LAW AND COOPERATION

Power affects governments' decisions and standings. Undoubtedly, powerful countries can negotiate with other countries in a more hegemonic way because of their self-esteem. On the other hand, weak states, it does not matter to be weak either in economic or military power, would be more diffident in negotiations, and have less to say, or their voice would be less to be *heard*. In these circumstances, powerful states even might not be disposed to use negotiation channels and cooperation. Because power provides the authority, the weak does not have any chance to stand against the strong states in international relations unless international law protects them. In some conditions, the powerful states make decisions by own, implement them without referring to international law, or do not seek approval from international organizations or communities for some of their actions. That is what is called unilateralism. Therefore, unilateralism "refers to a tendency to opt-out of a multilateral framework (whether existing or proposed) or to act alone in addressing a particular global or regional challenge rather than choosing to participate in collective action" (Malone & Khong, 2003: 3).

In this respect, military power directly affects a country's position before international law. If a country has a strong military, it would probably tend to disfavor international law and cooperate with other states to solve international problems. Since recent years, the US has been known for rejecting several international treaties such as "Kyoto Protocol, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal

Court (ICC), the International Landmine Ban Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Programme of Action on Illicit Trade in Small and Light Arms, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and a new protocol designed to verify compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention” (Skidmore, 2005: 207), and these actions have been perceived as strong unilateralism tendency in the US foreign policy.

Thus, it can be said that military capacity, interventions, and disfavor of international law are interconnected. In the case of the US, it is crystal clear that its military power has shaped its foreign policy and interpretation of the global world as a unipolar and unilateral order. As Rhodes (2003: 134) puts it, the US’s military power allows it to dictate the international rules and control the order. On the other hand, to support that idea, Europe should be reconsidered. Europe has a considerable and relatively weaker army than the US and surprise: the Europeans are the founders of international law, cooperation, and multilateralism! As Kagan (2004: 22) puts it, “the end of the Cold War did not reduce the salience of military power, and Europeans discovered that economic power did not necessarily translate into strategic and geopolitical power. The United States, which remained both an economic and a military giant, far outstripped Europe in the total power it could bring to bear on the international scene.” Kagan (2004: 10, 11) also explains different perspectives of the US and Europe for the international law and cooperation through these sentences: “When the United States was weak, it practiced the strategies of indirection, the strategies of weakness; now that the United States is powerful, it behaves as powerful nations do. When the European great powers were strong, they believed in strength and martial glory. Now they see the world through the eyes of weaker powers.” Thus, we can infer that the US and Europe share different opinions regarding the world order. Moreover, that divergence has deeply been rooted in their military and economic powers. Powerful states act powerful depending on their capacities, whereas the others rely on the stronger.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union left the US as the sole great power of the universe, not just on the earth (Fabbrini, 2006: 8). This power, called hyperpower, has led the US to be unilateral in international relations. As Nico Krisch noted, the US has always been timid about international law (Malone & Khong, 2003: 5). However, at some point, the US also looked like they have favored international cooperation and organizations. Yet, there is a significant and critical difference. They are only in favor of international cooperation if they are at the driver’s seat. This is why the US domination in NATO was criticized by De Gaulle (Gibbs, 2001: 19). The US promotes international cooperation to keep other states together and control the world order while it uses its power even without seeking authorization. Moreover, that is as mentioned before, coming from the military power of the US. Kosovo case was the most prominent example of the military gap between the US and Europe and their interpretation to use force and unilateral power. According to Kagan (2004: 47), the US predominance at the Kosovo war on the European forces led the US to control international diplomacy during the operations. The military gap was so huge, so the diplomatic power gap, too. In this

respect, the military weakness of Europe has also been uttered by the US. Notably, the US NATO Commander, General Wesley K. Clark, refused to end bombing several times when the European countries wanted to seek a peaceful ending at war (Kagan, 2004: 47). Rather than terminate the operations, Clark said, “in U.S. military thinking, we seek to be as decisive as possible once we begin to use force” (Clark, 2001: 449). There is a clear divergence between the US military and strategic culture and the European of them in that respect. In another interview, when it was asked if the US is culturally antagonistic for allied military operations, Clark (“Waging Modern War-An Interview with General Wesley K. Clark USA (Ret.),” 2001: 5) answered that “there is a recognised deficit in allied capabilities compared to those of the United States. It's been a longstanding feature of NATO that U.S. commanders and political leaders have continually criticised European allies for not doing enough for their own defence.”

On the other hand, Fabbrini (2006: 3) indicates that US unilateralism was crystallized with George W. Bush, especially in his second term, and he advocates a link between American unilateralism and neoconservatism. That is why the Bush administration is believed to see international treaties as obstacles rather than cooperation tools for order (Sauer, 2002: 116). As in the previous sections, it is also obvious that 9/11 has a significant role in the US's unilateral actions. Being targeted in their own country by a noncontemporary enemy, the US had to take immediate actions and did so. In this respect, Bush's unilateral actions in the Iraq case, thus by the US, have deeply been criticized by the European countries (Fabbrini, 2006: 6, 12). There were two main concerns regarding the American unilateralism by European countries: the fear of having an Americanized politics and economic-cultural Americanization of Europe (Fabbrini, 2004: 79). However, the Iraq invasion was the clearest sign of the unilateral position of the US. There were not enough proofs for starting such military intervention; thus, the US could not obtain approval of the UN Security Council but Great Britain and some other small countries' (Fabbrini, 2006: 13). That has been criticized because the US did not seek the explicit mandate of the UN Security Council; thus, it could be seen as a manifestation of unilateralism in the US foreign policy (Skidmore, 2005: 207). The US' unilateral position in the multilateral era is understandable through its power politics. Washington always prioritizes its security concerns over international cooperation. Therefore, when the security threat is more serious, Washington's possibility to comply with other states or organizations as a multilateral actor is less likely (Harvey, 2004: 42). In this security dilemma, it is essential to understand which is more critical: the public backlash after a future terrorist attack or public discontent on not sustaining multilateral cooperation to prevent terrorist attacks. Harvey (2004: 43) notes that the first one is more strategic to address. Thus, the USA usually takes the risk to act unilaterally to avoid any criticism for security deficit.

In sum, it is needless to say that the US has acted unilaterally for a long time for a reason: its relatively and considerably higher military capacity over Europe. The geographical conditions that led the US to invest in military power, the nation-building process to make America the Great, and its role

as a global security provider has shaped its foreign policy to get position itself as unilateral sole power. Even in international organizations, the US has maintained its dominance in the executive boards such as in the NATO and UN Security Council. Thus, it can be said that international law and cooperation are not completely unremarkable for the US unless they stand against their security and interests. Therefore, “acting unilaterally” is their choice based on military power to maximize their benefits worldwide.

5. CONCLUSION

The US has been a military power for almost a century. Having a background in an immigrant country and being overseas have impacted the US military capacity and foreign policy. As we have inferred from Robert Kagan’s writings, the US foreign policies are based on three pillars: i-) interventionism, ii-) the role of security provider, iii-) unilateralism. Therefore, I tried to focus on these three dimensions. All in all, it has to be emphasized that all of these policies depend on a single basic reality: military power. The US has long been a military power because of its nation-building and geographic location. For nation-building, the US, as an immigrant country, had to find a general base to keep the society together. Before the civil war, it was hatred against Europe and endeavors for freedom. However, after the civil war, there was no enemy; thus, no reason to stay as a society. In this regard, I suggest that the US favored increasing its military capacity because of its geographic obstacles to intervene in global issues. Additionally, increasing the military capacity would give the US enough time to establish its society, which is in accordance with the isolation policy.

Making “America the Great” has been the country’s approach to keep and sustain American society’s solidarity. Americans, as Kagan (2004) indicated, love, to believe that they are strong, powerful, and leaders of the world. Thus, the US policies have been shaped around this interpretation. After increasing its military capacity and WW2, the US and the USSR started the Cold War, and that was the main turning point for US policies, I suppose. In that period, the US began to intervene in other countries for the sake of democracy and the future of it. These interventions include military interventions, nonmilitary humanitarian interventions, or soft power interventions. In any case, the US-led operations and shaped the world for its desires against the Soviet and communism threat.

Moreover, the US has been the security provider for the universe. Its tremendous investments and expenditures for military capacity, operations, and NASA as well have affected its position and role. In that role, the US has been the country that preserves the liberal capitalist world order as did in the Cold War, that protects humanity as in the NASA case, and that shields weaker countries as in the case of Europe in their point of view. Although one might argue these assumptions, that is the picture that can be seen from the US side. Especially due to the Cold War, the US has assigned itself the role in protecting Europe and other countries against the Soviet and communism threat. As Robert Kagan indicated that Europe established its *paradise* over the American *power*.

Furthermore, this military power of the USA has led to another consequence: unilateralism. Unilateralism is, maybe, the most powerful choice in international relations, which a state could make. Any state claims and acts unilaterally; however, there would be consequences. To be prepared for those consequences or, most importantly, prevent them, a state must be strong enough, that is, military capacity. Having that much military power, the US has been able to act unilaterally in regard to international organizations, international law, and cooperation. The Kosovo War scared Europeans as they had seen how the US could be strong and determined when it comes to the use of force. Concomitantly, the US has withdrawn from several international treaties or been reluctant to sign or ratify them for a considerable time. These actions are seen as unilateral movements in US history. However, the most important cases were Iraq and Afghanistan invasions after 9/11. The US's reactionist feature and its military capacity led the Bush administration to act quickly and determined. They did not seek any support from international organizations such as the UN and conducted their operations.

In a nutshell, the US foreign policy's bases are military power and capacity. Hence, the military capacity has allowed the US to act unilateral, intervene in other countries, and be the security provider. Furthermore, there is a huge gap between the US and European strategic culture. The strategic cultures depend on the divergence of their economic and military power. The US has mostly focused on its military power, whereas European countries have prioritized economic power such as welfare state and social security. Since the US has been the security provider for Europe, the Europeans have been able to build their paradise.

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