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The Discrepancies of U.S. Foreign Policy: Realism versus Liberalism and Policy versus Rhetoric during the Presidencies of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter

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Chapter I

Introduction: Global Studies, International Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy

One of the key players in this contemporary era of globalization has been the United States of America, which means that U.S. foreign policy can have a tremendous impact across the globe in a way that the foreign policies of many other states simply cannot. This is not to say that other countries do not matter, they most certainly do—in fact, this essay will highlight how important they are in an era of global interconnectedness—but clearly, an understanding of U.S. foreign policy can go a long way in explaining some of the most important developments within the contemporary international community. Given the structure of the U.S. government, a discussion about foreign policy will almost always involve the U.S. President, who has much more control over foreign policy than domestic policy, which is shared to a greater extent with the U.S. Congress and the state governments, including local governors and legislators. Thus, when trying to understand U.S. foreign policy, the presidency is a good place to start. This essay will specifically explore the foreign policy initiatives of U.S. Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter, including the sometimes contradictory nature of their rhetoric, in order to develop a clearer understanding of the theoretical basis of U.S. foreign policy.

In this essay, U.S. foreign policy will be placed within the greater context of global studies. As such, it will not look at U.S. foreign policy simply for the sake of doing so, but rather to see how it is connected to global affairs; this will immediately remove from the table many domestically oriented topics of international relations and U.S. foreign policy studies, such as the checks and balances between the congress and the presidency regarding foreign affairs and the bureaucratic distribution of power among internationally-focused government departments and agencies. However, this essay will specifically address philosophies and theories that dominate the understanding of global affairs in Washington, D. C. More specifically, this essay will address

the two primary schools of thought regarding foreign policy in the United States: realism, often paired with its philosophical twin *realpolitik*, and liberal internationalism, the global application of liberal philosophy. Although there are certainly other theories used to explain international events and to create foreign policies, these typically fail to escape from university classrooms and libraries in the United States. Despite the sharp philosophical distinctions between the two paradigms, their application in the real world tends to be quite fuzzy. The majority of the public political discourse is rooted in either realism or liberalism, or some sort of combination of the two. From this dynamic, a typical question emerges: Which theoretical framework provides the best understanding of the United States' foreign policy? Or to put it differently, which provides the clearest explanation of how the United States views its place within the international community? This question seems fairly straightforward. One might think it would be relatively easy to identify which paradigm of theories is dominant, but no quick analysis of Richard Nixon or Jimmy Carter can indicate accurately which paradigm formed the foundation of their understanding of the United States' position and role in the world. Contradictions abound in the foreign policies and rhetoric of both Nixon and Carter.

Primarily two phenomena have inspired the creation of this essay. The first is that of the relationship between the United States of America and the rest of the world. The relatively quick ascent of the United States from a small, isolated, agricultural society—comprised primarily of pious outcasts from Europe and some African slaves—to the world's leading superpower through a rapid industrialization process and victories in global wars, both hot and cold, was a significant turning point in global history. Because of its power, the United States, along with its allies, has played a crucial role in the development of the current global community. Thus, understanding how U.S. leaders and policy makers view the world helps one understand not only how the United States designs its foreign policies, but also how the U.S. interacts with the global community through the process known as globalization. The effect of U.S. foreign policy is felt

throughout the world and any alteration to U.S. grand strategy could have a profound impact upon the process of globalization.

The second primary phenomenon that has inspired this essay was the recent election of a presidential candidate who, in addition to being the first candidate to campaign for the presidency outside the United States, also based his candidacy on the promise of *hope* and *change* and the corresponding lofty rhetoric of triumphal liberal idealism. Although these themes were largely directed towards domestic policy issues, they were also specifically linked to U.S. foreign policy, especially policies dealing with the military base at Guantanamo Bay, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the relationships with the Muslim world, Israel and Russia. However, Barack Obama was certainly not the first presidential candidate to inspire hope and promise change in U.S. foreign policy; both Nixon and Carter did the same, as the following case studies will indicate. In sharp contrast to the grandiloquent promises of change, this essay will ultimately demonstrate that there is remarkable consistency in U.S. foreign policy because of its consistent philosophical understanding of global affairs, despite what candidates promise on the campaign trail and what presidents say from the Oval Office.

It is often easier to understand contemporary events with the perspective of time, thus, this essay will deal with neither the current president, nor his immediate predecessors. Undoubtedly they will be the subjects of future scrutiny.¹ Instead, this essay will focus upon U.S. Presidents Richard Nixon (1969-74) and Jimmy Carter (1977-81) largely because of their supposedly vastly different approaches to foreign policy. The purpose of this essay is not to specifically address the foreign policies of these presidents per se, but rather to take a step back: to look at the bigger picture; to evaluate the philosophical context and its influence on policy matters; and to place U.S. foreign policy within the broader scope of global studies. Specifically, the two aforementioned presidents will serve as case studies in an analysis of how to best explain U.S. foreign policy and the consistency of its inconsistent rhetoric.

¹ For an example of this development see: Stephen Walt, "Was Obama's Nobel Prize Speech Really 'Realist?'" *Foreign Policy*, 18 December 2009. Accessed from www.foreignpolicy.com.

However, before digging into the speeches and writings of the presidents, this essay will recount the broader context in which their policies and rhetoric were developed. The theories of international relations will be summarized in order to provide an adequate understanding of the philosophical foundation upon which the presidents' foreign policies were developed. For example, Nixon did not travel to China simply because he thought it would be a cool thing to do; there were actually extensive philosophic reasons for doing so, which accomplished complex, strategic objectives. This trend holds true for rhetoric as well. For a brief example, Nixon did not talk about building a bridge of peace to China simply because it sounded nice; there were specific reasons for his word choices. But first, the connections between the two fields of global studies and international relations will be explored. Although quite similar at times, there are also some major differences between these two fields of academia.

GLOBAL STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The discipline of global studies is a very broad one, perhaps one could say it's as broad, expansive and diverse as the globe itself, providing a roof over many different disciplines, mixing them and bringing them together, including, but certainly not limited to: history, political science, economics, cultural studies, anthropology, geography, biology, theology, archaeology, philosophy etc. Given the uniqueness of each of these traditional fields, they all connect differently with the global studies discourse. This essay will specifically deal with a topic of contemporary history and international relations (including its philosophical foundation) within the context of global studies.

The relationship between the two fields of international relations and global studies may seem obvious, and it is at first glance. However, there are also some poignant nuances worth mentioning which shed light on their differences and similarities. Not all topics of study within the field of global studies would qualify as subjects of international relations, while not all topics

of international relations would qualify as subjects of global studies. As mentioned above, global studies places great emphasis on being interdisciplinary, whereas international relations is most frequently considered one of the major disciplines within the broader field of political science. Ironically, the very core concept of international relations—the study of the relationship between “nations”—is antithetical to global studies’ mission to look beyond the nation-state’s bias and view the world through a paradigm of transnational interconnectedness. The global studies discourse often seeks to ignore the nation-state or to look beyond it and to replace it with less nationally themed phenomena. This mission is essentially subverted by the focus of international relations, which by definition looks at the nation-states individually and how they interact with one another. The discourse surrounding the role and legitimacy of the nation-state is a robust one, from which many theses could originate, but this essay will instead focus upon the clear instances where the two fields overlap one another by recognizing that individual states develop their foreign policies within the context of the global community.

There are many international relations topics which lay outside the realm of global studies, in particular, border disputes between neighboring states. Naturally states have some of their most intense relationships with the states they directly border or to which they are closest, and since the field of international relations studies the relationships between states, such neighborly relations, whether violent or peaceful, form a large portion of the discipline; however, these highly localized affairs often are not *global* in nature. But, the discipline is also much broader, especially in eras of heightened globalization, which allows the most powerful states to project their power onto states that may be located very far away. When states, or at least people from states, form relationships of any sort—peaceful, belligerent, economic, militaristic, religious, imperial, colonial, cultural, etc—with states in distance regions of the world, they become interesting topics of global studies as well.

In the field of global studies, one seeks to understand how the world works by analyzing topics that bring various regions of the world together in some capacity, often economic and

cultural, but also militaristic, etc. Global studies is an attempt to view the big picture and sometimes, but not always, the big picture is dominated by big, powerful states, or at least the actions of the big, powerful states. However global studies also extends beyond the study of big states and states in general, and thus it also extends beyond international relations and takes on many different angles, especially a historical one, from the time period before the rise of the nation-state, which was, after all, a rather recent development in human history.

The relationship between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China is a good topic for both international relations and global studies. Within the field of international relations, one would study the direct connections between the two states, but when placed within the broader context of global studies, other states and regions throughout the world begin to play a role as well, especially Russia, Taiwan, Pakistan and India, all of which must be considered in any analysis of the foreign policies of contemporary U.S. presidents.

Global History

One of the greatest contributions of global studies comes from the field of global history, which in some cases substantially challenges the dominant discourse of the various national histories. Some of the problems of non-global histories—the histories written before the development of global history—were their limited range and focus. The limitations of the previous histories were primarily a result of their nationalist character. History was written, or at least funded, by nationalists and intended for nationalist consumption.² It goes without saying that nationalism ultimately, in its extreme forms, drove much of humanity, but especially Europe, into an era of extreme chaos and violence with horrific results. From this devastating experience with nationalism, historians began looking beyond nationalism and nation-states towards the bigger picture—the global picture.

² Univ. Prof. Dr. Peer Vries, "KU: Theories, Sources and Methods of Global History," Universität Wien Wintersemester 2008.

However, the traditional forms of nationality have not been the only such biases to distort perceptions of history. Even before the rise of nationalism, various sets of beliefs had similar effects of limiting the views and interpretations of historical events and phenomena, such as beliefs founded upon various scientific or spiritual followings. These can be seen in later—but still non-global—versions of the history of the Americas, in which a Darwinian European society explained the demographic transformation of the Americas using genetic ideas of superiority and inferiority.³ This was a history written by a white-European society, which provided an explanation and justification for the demographic transformation of the Americas. The demographic transformations of the New World and the various racially-charged, genetic theories only re-enforced one another. Perhaps “nationalism” is not exactly the correct term because here the issue is race not nationality, but in any event, the general principles still apply: this interpretation of events was a history written by a specific group of people, for consumption by their own group, and often functioned as a quasi-propagandist form of self-promotion. Notably, religion also played a similar role in distorting some of the interpretations of historical phenomena, including the demographic transformation of the Americas.

Global history seeks to break the narrowness and limitations of history by providing a historiography that is less nationally, racially, spiritually or regionally biased. Global history, like globalization, is about the exchanges, communications and transformations of the societies of the globe, while trying to avoid the prejudices inherent in the previous histories, which were often written from regional, spiritual and more specifically national points of view.

Global historians use various methods to elevate their work from a nationally or regionally focused level to a truly global one. Thus, for example, *the global history of the United States of America* is a seemingly paradoxical concept. However, many of the most crucial events of U.S. history, such as independence, expansion, slavery, assimilation, etc. have truly global explanations behind them, either in their genesis or direct effects, and to give the big, global

³ Alfred W. Crosby, *Germes, Seeds, and Animals: Studies in Ecological History* (Armonk, New York 1994), 63.

explanation of these events would no longer be just a nationalist history of the United States, but rather a historical narrative comprising much of the globe—in other words, a “global history.” Likewise, the same is true of almost all modern states. Few and far between are the countries that have not been heavily touched by global processes, and thus the history of most states can be told in a limited, localized, nationally-biased and incomplete manner, *or* it can be told in global manner, which takes into consideration the global phenomenon that had direct local implications and places the local entity in a broader, more comprehensive context.⁴

Perhaps somewhere there is an exception to this, but surely the overwhelming majority of North and South America cannot be fully separated from the broad story of global history, nor can their colonizers, nor their former fellow colonies in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. However, global history is not just a European colonial affair, as the Russians, the Ottomans and the Chinese became entangled in the system of colonization in differing ways, while also building their own empires, thus bringing their border lands into the web of global history—which certainly pre-dated the rise of the European empires.⁵ Additionally, almost all regions of the world have histories dating from before the European imperialists set sail, with the Silk Road and the great migrations being just two of the many quintessential portions of global history.

This essay will specifically address a topic—the foreign policies of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter—which cannot be properly explained when limited to the field of U.S. history. Because their foreign policies were formed during the Cold War, a global understanding of that affair is necessary; the political and economic events unfolding in western and eastern Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and throughout Asia had a profound impact upon all Cold War policies. Only global history can truly explain many of the

⁴ Prof. Dr. Andrea Komlosy, “VO: Austrian History from a Global Perspective,” *Universität Wien* Wintersemester 2008.

⁵ J. R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A bird's-eye view of world history* (New York 2003) 44, 175.

Cold War decisions made in the United States, especially those of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter.

Global History and the United States of America

Although there seems to be a dispute regarding the exact meanings of the terms “global history” and “world history,” it seems, in general, that a differentiation is not necessary here, and if one in fact does exist, it is of little importance for this essay.⁶ The objective of both fields—if they are in fact separate fields at all—is to look beyond the dominating aspects of history, especially those determined in large part by a nationally oriented focus. Although there is clear emphasis on the United States in this essay, U.S. foreign policy is placed within the context of global affairs. It is not simply about the United States, but rather how the United States deals with the international community—how it deals with the process of globalization.

Histories are most often the narration and explanation of a particular nation, and as such are clearly identified as national histories. Although they are not completely biased and skewed toward the glorification of the target nation, they do typically fail to explain many, if not all, relevant global phenomenon, even if, or perhaps especially if the historian is of the nation in focus. This approach to history has been found to be insufficient in a world that is experiencing such a heightened process of globalization as the current one. As mentioned above, the Cold War is a perfect example of a phenomenon that needs to be placed within a global context to be understood.

The fall-out from the First World War, including the Great (Global) Depression, and the rise of autarkic and fascists regimes in various regions of the world was an era in the history of humanity when barriers between peoples were put up, instead of being taken down. However, these events and experiences, along with several other factors triggered the Second World War,

⁶ For an example of one historian’s interpretation of the distinction between the fields see: Bruce Mazlish, “Comparing Global History to World History,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 28 no. 3 (Winter 1998).

which ended the short lived era of *de*-globalization and began once again an era of globalization, or *re*-globalization.⁷

Each era of globalization has sought an explanation of the world and its problems, and typically these explanations are based upon the experiences and knowledge of the explainer. Knowledge of—and experience with—other societies are obtained largely through the process of globalization, which is by definition an increase in the contact and communication among the globe’s numerous and widely diverse societies. This has occurred many times in the past and will likely continue in the future, although not in one continually linear progression, but rather via cycles of globalization interspersed with eras of de-globalization.

Although the processes of de-globalization and re-globalization can together be seen as a more or less constant phenomenon, the actors, the modes, the forms and the levels of globalization are certainly not consistent. It is, in fact, these inconsistencies and variations of the flavor of globalization which have led to different interpretations of the events and experiences of human history. The current era of globalization is no exception. It is like the other eras of globalization in that it is unique and distinct from them aside from the fact that people across the globe are experiencing greater levels of contact with one another—the defining aspect of globalization. The actors, the philosophies, the modes, the forms and the levels of globalization are all different.

The contemporary era of globalization is defined in part by the United States of America functioning as the chief promoter of this round, along with its principles of democracy and capitalism which originated from and continue to dominate the societies of Western Europe. Undoubtedly, the modern, western, liberal democracies of Europe and a few other locations also play a strong role in promoting contemporary globalization. This is in sharp contrast to the former imperial and colonial elitists of Western Europe, who were the chief engineers of the previous round of globalization. Although many modern critics of globalization equate modern

⁷ Jeffrey G. Williamson, “Globalization, Convergence, and History,” *The Journal of Economic History* 56 no. 2 (June 1996) 277.

global capitalism with the former mercantilist imperialism through terms such as “neo-colonialism” and “neo-imperialism,” surely great differences can be observed between the social interactions and the political institutions involved.

The United States, Global Power and the Cold War

As mentioned above, any state and its history can be incorporated into a discourse of global history. However, for some states, there is a lot of stretching that needs to be done, and some only reach a truly global level and become part of the global story through incorporation with a larger, more prominent global player—typically a former colonial master or through patterns of mass migration. But some states just naturally have their own prominent global connections and thus are natural features in the global story. This is true for basically any state that has developed a navy with a broad, even global, reach—such as the western European colonial powers—as well as states or societies that developed the ability to similarly travel vast expanses of space by land such as the Ottomans, the Arabs, the Mongols and the Russians, each of whom conquered significantly large and diverse territories through which their culture spread.

Currently, in the 21st century, there is a state that clearly falls into the category of being a global power: the United States of America. This is not to say that the U.S. is a true global hegemon, since it does not firmly control the world and its authority can be seriously challenged in most regions of the globe.⁸ Also, the U.S. is not the only global power, but simply the most prominent; there are several other states that would also fall into this category, such as China, Russia and a united Europe, as well as some of Europe’s independent states. Although this essay will take a predominantly historical route of a contemporary nature, it is worth keeping in mind the current global political situation since it gives a poignant relevancy to the past.

The exact point at which the United States became a true global power can be debated, but certainly after the Second World War the U.S. was actively playing the role of a global power

⁸ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York 2001) 41.

and although it had previously established relationships with many regions of the world, they became much stronger after the war, during which time the Cold War was *not fought*, when such relations were of crucial strategic importance.

The Cold War is one of the hottest topics of international relations since it was a classic system of bipolar powers competing for global supremacy. It was the era during which many theories of international relations could be observed in action in a real world setting. Clearly, given that it was an interaction between two states, the Cold War perfectly falls into the field of international relations. However, given the global reach of the antagonists, it also falls quite neatly into the field of global studies, and while the Cold War itself has been concluded, the endurance and longevity of the United States of America and its global power have made it a bit difficult to see in terms of global history—which tends to need a rather great deal of distance for the big picture to emerge—despite its now obviously historical nature. Certainly, the Cold War is not unique in its ability to unite international relations and global studies, but it is a noteworthy example, and even one that has strong connections to the current international system, lending it even greater relevancy for today.

Because the Second World War and the Cold War together fundamentally transformed the United States' relationship with the global community, it is natural that new questions would be asked while the general understanding of global affairs would come under great scrutiny. The process of finding a new understanding of the U.S. role in the world was not new; it had been going on since independence. The earliest U.S. approaches to global affairs had been the Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine which called for the western expansion across the continent to the Pacific coast and a lack of tolerance for European imperialism in the western hemisphere, respectively. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the Manifest Destiny had not only been fulfilled but also extended beyond the coast through the annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii; the annexations of the Spanish colonies of the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico; and the establishment of suzerainty over Cuba, which effectively destroyed Spain's global empire

and established the United States as a European-style overseas colonial empire. However, that era was short lived because the First World War had begun the decline of global imperialism and sparked the genesis of President Wilson's idealism, which called for self-determination and democratization, a direct contradiction to colonialism which in turn ultimately undermined imperial authorities across the globe, including those of the U.S. itself.

Idealism and its hallmark institution, the League of Nations, failed to prevent the rise of fascism and the Second World War, which counted idealism among its many victims and essentially terminated the era of European imperialism for good, leading the United States to find a new understanding for its role in global affairs. The newly interpreted philosophies of realism and liberalism emerged to dominate the discourse. Although neither realism—inspired by Machiavelli's *realpolitik*—nor liberalism—inspired by Kant's *Perpetual Peace*—were profoundly new, their new interpretations allowed the United States to reassess its role in global affairs. Not surprisingly, their proponents often find references and examples from throughout both U.S. and global history to support their theories and to turn their policy prescriptions into realities. Both realists and liberals can credibly claim great historical legacies. The World Wars changed how the U.S. viewed itself within the greater global context, which, in any event, had undergone its own metamorphosis. Consequently, the U.S. transformed itself from a predominantly passive follower of the British-led, free-market imperial system to a leader of the new international community and the global movement of democratic capitalism in its global conflict with internationalist communism.

The next chapter of this essay will provide a general background of the theories of international relations that have significantly shaped the United States' perception of its place within the global community. A basic understanding of the theory-based paradigms of realism and liberalism goes a long way in understanding the specific policies pursued by various presidents. The following chapters will properly dig into the issue by examining some foreign policies of recent U.S.

Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter. Nixon, along with his top foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger, is often thought to be the best example of American realism while Jimmy Carter's reputation for supporting human rights makes him one of the most prominent liberal presidents. This will allow for an analysis of realism and liberalism within the administrations most influenced by them. And since the Cold War transcends their reigns, its effects on the study are essentially nullified because both presidents were engaged in the ideological struggle of the USA and USSR. Additionally, both presidents used realism in their foreign policies, but ironically conjured up liberal rhetoric. Grasping this dynamic leads to a clearer understanding of the distinct roles each theory plays within U.S. society and how the U.S. sees its place within the global community.

Chapter II

The Theories of International Relations and the United States of America

The main purpose of this essay is to look at the connections between global affairs and the conflict of policies and ideology as manifested in the foreign policies of U.S. Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter. Naturally, the field of international relations forms the foundation of this endeavor, thus it is necessary to include here a chapter about international relations theories to show how they relate to U.S. foreign policies and presidential rhetoric. Hopefully this background information will clarify the discrepancy between the realist policies and the liberal rhetoric of both Nixon and Carter. This chapter has been divided into five sections, the first of which deals with the so-called *levels of analysis*, which are the different divisions into which international relations topics fall. These levels of analysis will provide the framework and broader context for the general overview of the systemic level of analysis and its theoretical paradigms of both realism and liberalism while also bridging the gap between global studies and international relations. Finally, the last section will conclude with a look at how U.S. foreign policy is influenced and created by the two aforementioned paradigms of international relations theories, and thus how they are applied to the globalizing world and specifically to the policies and rhetoric of Nixon and Carter.

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

In order to facilitate the analysis of international relations, the leading scholars and texts often divide the field into three levels of analysis: individual, domestic and systemic.⁹ Each of the levels of analysis is useful, and knowledge of them all is essential in developing an understanding of historical processes. It is also worth knowing where the boundaries are that separate them

⁹ Steven L. Spiegel and Fred L. Wehling, *World Politics in a New Era*, 2nd ed., (Philadelphia, PA 1999) 542.

because a dialogue that drifts across the boundaries can easily become jumbled and weak. Thus the focus of a discourse of international relations is often confined to one of the levels of analysis but it is certainly possible to combine them.

The main concern of this essay is the systemic level of analysis, and this will be obvious after quickly considering all three of them, but the individual level of analysis will certainly be incorporated into each of the cases studies about Nixon and Carter. The following pages will briefly look at each of the levels of analysis. Even though the case studies of the subsequent chapters will primarily involve the systemic level of analysis, with a bit of influence from the individual level, looking at the them all first will develop the context in which they exist.

The Individual Level of Analysis

Not surprisingly, the individual level of analysis is the study of individual people and their impact upon international affairs. One of the most obvious and recent examples is Adolf Hitler, whose personal opinions regarding race not only formed the backbone of the Nazi Party, but also played a significant role in foreign policy, especially the policies concerning the conquest and transformation of the *Lebensraum*. For a fundamentally different example, one could look to Benjamin Franklin and his trip to Paris to visit the King of France, Louis XVI—whose own personality had much to do with the French Revolution—to ask for French assistance in defeating the British during the U.S. War of Independence, or one could also look at the ideological affinity of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and their coordinated efforts to confront the Soviet Union's control over eastern Europe, including Poland, an effort that was spiritually and morally supported by Pope John Paul II, an ethnic Pole by birth.

In general, despite the above examples, the affinity between global studies and the individual level of analysis of international relations is not all that strong. Given the sheer number of people involved in the process of globalization and its recent democratization, it is

relatively rare that individuals can have profound impacts on the process of globalization itself. Of course, further back in history, when rulers ruled with absolute authority and the masses were uneducated and less affected by globalization, it was easier for individual elites to have a global impact; the modern rise of democracy limits the tenure of most leaders while also diverting significant elements of power to large legislative bodies with continually rotating, short-term membership. Furthermore, these legislative bodies are controlled by the masses, who feel the impact of globalization much more immediately than the people of eras gone by.

However, there are of course individuals who did manage to shape the history of the world, but these exceptions are relatively few. Some of the obvious members of this club of utmost global elites would include Julius Caesar, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Christopher Columbus and of course several more—they need not all be listed here. For more recent examples of individuals who drove global affairs one could look to Mahatma Gandhi, whose movement of freedom and peace without violence continues to inspire peaceful rebellions today. One could also look to Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong, who, after leading the revolutionary movement of the Chinese Civil War, basically single-handedly shifted China away from its rigid alliance with the Soviet Union towards a more globalist approach of foreign policy along with U.S. President Richard Nixon, who actively sought to sharpen the Sino-Soviet split and began a tectonic realignment of global power, a topic that will be further explored in the next chapter.

But to focus solely upon individuals in global studies would clearly leave out significant portions of global affairs which feature collaborative developments and movements among the masses, frequently involving thousands and even millions of people. For example, to base the great impact of the Roman Empire on global history solely upon Julius Caesar would be unwise given that Rome was great not only because of its leader, but also because of its military, its institutions and its citizenry. Caesar's impact was profound, but there were clearly many more factors at play as well. Furthermore, what could Christopher Columbus have accomplished had his mission not coincided with that of Spain's unification and imperial rise? Of course, the

individual achievements of Columbus played a major role in the Columbian Exchange, but the most significant aspects of that historic development were the ones that fundamentally changed the lives of millions upon millions of people.

Although the individual level of analysis does clearly manifest itself in this essay via the fact that the two following case studies are centered around and defined by individuals—Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter—the other levels of analysis also play major roles. In fact, the general conclusion will be that the individuals were not nearly as important as the circumstances surrounding them. This is especially true of Carter, who initially favored a morally liberal approach to foreign policy, which ultimately was consumed by the demands of the global system, the central aspect of the systemic level of analysis.

The Domestic Level of Analysis

In the second level of analysis of international relations, domestic concerns play the centralizing role. Of the three levels, this one is the most antithetical to the objectives of the global studies discourse, given its national-centric approach; however, the next few paragraphs will highlight a few bridges that bring the fields together. With this level of analysis one seeks to explain a state's approach to international affairs by examining its domestic characteristics. Naturally, the form of government of any given state plays a central role within this level of analysis.

Democratic governments are often divided into executive, legislative and judicial functions. In the United States of America, each of the aforementioned functions solely comprises each of the three independent branches of the government. On the other hand, a Westminster parliamentary system features a more blended distribution of power with the executive and legislative being largely combined. The ways in which power and responsibility are distributed within a state can be incredibly important in a state's international affairs. For example, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson essentially developed the League of Nations, but was unable to see his country become a member due to the blockade of the U.S. Congress, which

was protesting a presidential power grab and a perceived loss of its own sovereignty to the executive. Most Prime Ministers would most likely not face such a situation given their leadership role within the combined executive and legislative body.

Chasms within a legislature often develop along party lines, and their corresponding conflicts naturally flow into foreign relations as well. This was particularly evident in the United States during the recent Iraq War, but similar struggles between the parties often arise during the passage of international treaties and trade deals, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Similar power struggles can also be found within the executive branch itself; the clash of the U.S. Departments of State and Defense are a classic example. Also, elections play such an extensive role in democratic states that even international relations can be affected. The Hollywood movie *Wag the Dog*¹⁰ famously depicted a fictional president who took his country into a fake war so that the press—an essential component of any properly functioning democracy¹¹—would have something other than his politically disastrous sexual affairs to talk about. Although the movie was completely fiction, it does demonstrate how domestic political affairs can have a profound impact upon foreign policy. It will never be known how U.S. foreign policy would have unfolded had Nixon's Watergate scandal not reverberated through the U.S. political system.

Even legitimate wars can be profoundly impacted by domestic circumstances, such the United States' contemplation of entering the Second World War, an act that conveniently brought an end to the seemingly unending Great Depression. George Orwell also discussed a similar phenomenon in his acclaimed novels *1984*¹² and *Animal Farm*.¹³ There is no doubt that numerous leaders throughout history have used wars to bring their people together for a common cause, this was particularly true of the fascist empires, and undoubtedly, the global

¹⁰ *Wag the Dog*, prod. and dir. Barry Levinson, 97 min., New Line Cinema, 1997.

¹¹ W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz, ed., *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (Chicago 1994) 7.

¹² George Orwell, *1984* (New York 1961).

¹³ George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (New York 1996).

conquests of the British Empire were used as nationalist propaganda at home for political purposes.

As just noted, non-democratic regimes also confront similarly domestic-centric concerns in their international relations. One obvious example is the marriage of a monarch, which of course corresponds to the individual level of analysis as well. England's Queen Elizabeth I notoriously refused to marry, a decision that was at least as important to global affairs as it was to her personal life. In her era, a royal marriage was also a political alliance or even union, thus royal marriages were acts of international affairs. Likewise, on the Iberian Peninsula, the marriage of King Ferdinand III of Aragon to Queen Isabella I of Castile and León paved the way for the completion of the unification of Spain, the Reconquista and the Golden Age of the global Spanish Empire, including Columbus's discovery of the New World. The Spanish Inquisition was part of the broader regional phenomenon also incorporating elements of the Reconquista, and ultimately the movement was brought to the newly discovered Americas by the conquistadors. The domestic affairs of Spain—especially the union and dogmatically Catholic objectives of Ferdinand and Isabella—translated themselves into global affairs and led directly to one of the greatest transformations in global history, the Columbian Exchange. Furthermore, an understanding of Spain's domestic policies is necessary in understanding some of the root causes of the so-called *American Bifurcation*.¹⁴

However, despite the obvious cases in which domestic affairs have transcended their borders to become global affairs, the more a study focuses on domestic affairs, the less it focuses on global affairs and at some point, one would logically question the validity of including it within the discourse of global studies. For this reason, the domestic level of analysis, although sometimes concerned with global affairs, is the one least relevant to the field of global studies. According to the common wisdom of Carter's shift to a liberally focused foreign policy, the domestic level of analysis would be very relevant; however, the second case study of this essay

¹⁴ Peter Gärtner, "The Americas in Globalization – Causes and consequences of the American bifurcation," MWG07, MWG08, Institute für Geschichte: Universität Wien. (Sommersemester 2009).

will refute the common wisdom, while demonstrating that the systemic level is more important for U.S. foreign policy.

The domestic level of analysis does manifest itself in the following case studies, but its role is more supportive than centralizing. When comparing President Carter to Nixon, the domestic level of analysis explains why they supposedly had such different approaches to foreign policy. As mentioned above, only the Watergate scandal can explain why and how the U.S. seemingly shifted so dramatically from Nixon's traditional realism to Carter's moral liberalism. The domestic scandal itself did certainly and directly impact the development of Carter's foreign policy, but as the fourth chapter will conclude, ultimately, at the end of the day, Carter's decisions were more firmly rooted in the systemic level analysis, despite his rhetoric.

The Systemic Level of Analysis

Finally, the systemic level of analysis is the level of international relations most concordant with the global studies discourse. Most significantly, both fields share the same orientation: they both use a global context as their foundation. In analyzing the entire system of states, this level of analysis transcends national, state-centric concerns by focusing upon broader global conditions and features, as does global studies. Essentially, the systemic level of analysis of international relations is the political branch of global studies. It is within the systemic level of analysis that the classic debate between realism and liberalism exists, alongside a few others.

The main point of consensus between realism and liberalism is that the global system is anarchic—there is no one in charge.¹⁵ There is no global king, dictator, prime minister or president. There are no true global policemen or soldiers to keep the peace, despite the United Nations' efforts. There is no global court which can truly enforce global justice. Most scholars agree that the only global law is the law of the jungle, where anything goes. Because there is no global order, all states must defend themselves; those which fail to do so, also fail to survive.

¹⁵ Jack Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories," *Foreign Policy* No. 145 (Nov.-Dec. 2004) 56.

This global condition of disorder is identified by the term *anarchy*.¹⁶ It is the principle from which the grand theories begin. The realists accept anarchy as eternal and seek to survive within it. The liberals believe that it can be tamed and brought under control. The various “radical” theorists believe that it can be overthrown altogether and replaced by some sort of New World Order, which fundamentally alters the condition of global anarchy.¹⁷

THE SYSTEMIC THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Stephen Walt is one of the most influential theorists in the field of international relations today. In addition to his significant contributions to the academic discourse, including his deep and complex analyses, he has written a brief, but brilliant, article to explain the relevancy of international relations theory to today’s world and the impact that theories have on public policy in the contemporary United States. His article in *Foreign Policy* provides a great background for this essay, and includes one paragraph in particular that explains why realism and liberalism are the best theories to use in seeking an understanding of the U.S. approach to global affairs:

The study of international affairs is best understood as a protracted competition between the realist, liberal, and radical traditions. Realism emphasizes the enduring propensity for conflict between states; liberalism identifies several ways to mitigate these conflictive tendencies, and the radical tradition describes how the entire system of state relations might be transformed. The boundaries between these traditions are somewhat fuzzy and a number of important works do not fit neatly into any of them, but debates within and among them have largely defined the discipline.¹⁸

The case studies of this essay do not include all three of Walt’s categories because the “radical tradition” is not a singular cohesive group, but rather a combination of various theoretical ideas, and as such it is impossible to consider them in general terms. An attempt to do so would

¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (England 1651).

¹⁷ Stephen Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many Theories,” *Foreign Policy* No. 110(Spring 1998) 30.

¹⁸ Walt, “International Relations,” 30.

necessarily require them to be looked at individually, but there are simply too many of them to fit into this essay. Nor are they particularly helpful for this approach, but before summarily dismissing them, a few quick paragraphs can explain why they, or at least a couple of them, are being dismissed here.

The various other theories of international relations

Clearly the field of international relations contains a breadth and diversity that this essay will only begin to explore. It would be impossible to adequately take into consideration all the theories of international relations in one essay, thus this essay will look only at the two most influential: realism and liberalism.

However, before taking a brief overview of the aforementioned theories of international relations, the reasons for not including the others should be addressed. Much of the work conducted within the field of international relations is theoretical, including the paradigms of realism and liberalism; however, they have both been applied in the real world, making them more than just mere theories. They are also associated with actual policies and as such can be observed in a real world setting. Not all theories share such a connection to the real world. Some remain in the minds of scholars. There is certainly nothing wrong with the unobservable theories, some are quite fascinating indeed, but the purpose of this essay is to observe and analyze policies conducted in the real world, during the administration of Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter; therefore, theories of pontificating professors and scholars imagining an alternative world order simply will not do, at least not here in this essay. (Maybe there will be seats at the table for them the next time around.)

An example of one such theory is the result of the application of feminist theory or gender studies to the field of international relations. This global theory is based upon the same foundation of many facets of gender theory: the division of labor between the genders in the so-called hunter-gatherer societies, where men used physical strength and force to obtain

resources—primarily food—and to protect their families. Although their actions were sometimes coordinated into teamwork, there was greater emphasis placed upon individual leadership and individual skill. Great warriors and great hunters became great leaders and great procreators. According to many gender theorists, the above mentioned traits are to be considered “masculine,” and since the world has frequently experienced wars of a similar nature—the reliance upon unilateral strength, violence and brute force, as well as the violent pursuit of resources—they have attributed masculinity to the violent conflicts around the world. The contemporary and historic global systems have been masculine systems.¹⁹

On the other hand, gender theorists have conceptualized an alternative feminist world order which would reflect the roles of women gatherers who utilized collaborative, nonviolent efforts to gather food, including the remembrance of where and how to harvest or gather certain edible substances and also how to raise and educate the children. Supposedly, a feminist world order would be based upon nonviolent collaboration in international affairs—in other words, a feminist world order would be peaceful and based upon diplomacy rather than violent and based upon warfare. Ironically, in this crudely brief and simplistic overview of gender theory in international affairs, masculine and feminine global systems become the classic yin and yang of war and peace; confrontation and diplomacy; hard and soft power; hawks and doves; arrows and olive branches; and realism and liberalism. However, neither realists nor liberal internationalists base their ideas upon gender roles. The main distinctions between global feminism and liberalism arise in the nuances provided by the specific focus on gender.

For example, gender can be considered in international developmental aid as feminists would advocate for allocating money to women who are more likely to invest it in the health and education of their children instead of allocating it to men who seem to be more likely to invest it in symbols of wealth such as showy jewels for their wives or indulgences for themselves such as such as fancy gizmos, drugs, alcohol or additional women, or also for acts of warfare to maintain

¹⁹ J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York 1992) 27.

their territory or to conquer more. The feminists would argue that because women typically take care of the children, they will invest in them—their health and education—thus investing in their society’s future stability and providing a higher return of invest in comparison with the typically male concerns.²⁰

Nonetheless, the international system, in the big, global picture, has essentially always been masculine, and the feminists’ projections are merely that, speculation. They can be observed in small, isolated instances, but not on the global scale, or the systemic level. Regardless of how well founded those speculations may be, their lack of mass manifestation does little to explain how the United States of America deals with the process of globalization within the confines of the current world order. Perhaps one day women and feminist concerns will rule the world, but until then, it is best to accept the masculine order and seek to understand how it functions the way it does. There is little to no evidence to suggest that a gender theory can explain the policies and rhetoric of Presidents Nixon and Carter.

Likewise the Marxist and post-Marxist understandings of global affairs do little to explain the foreign policies of the United States and, more specifically its understanding of its place within the international system. This judgment is based largely upon the U.S. perception of Marxism in general. Although he remains a popular figure at universities from coast to coast, Karl Marx and his vision of the great anti-capitalist revolution have been largely discredited via the failures of the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Marxists across the globe naturally disagree with such a dismissal, and thus subsequently Marx’s ideas concerning class and labor are still very influential, especially via their corresponding dependency theory. However, Marxist theories still fall outside the parameters of this study, which addresses the United States’ perception and reaction to global phenomena. If the public at large dismisses the Marxist approach, then its representatives in the democratic government will too.²¹ There is little to no

²⁰ Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, “The Women’s Crusade,” *New York Times*, 23 August 2009.

²¹ The connection between public opinion on policy matters and the democratic government will be touched upon later in the final chapter.

evidence to suggest that Marxist-based theories can explain the policies and certainly not the rhetoric of Presidents Nixon and Carter. If Marxism is not accepted within the government, then there must be an alternative concept of global affairs on the table. In fact, there are two alternatives which together comprise the discourse: realism and liberalism. For this reason, the rest of this essay will focus exclusively upon them, as they hold the key to understanding the foreign policies of the United States and its general approach to global affairs.

REALISM

Although realism is concerned with theory, it is incorrect to say that it is “a theory.”²² Stephen Walt refers to it as a “theoretical tradition,”²³ while John Mearsheimer calls the ideas of realism “bodies of theory.”²⁴ These awkward and clumsy terms must be used because realism—nor liberalism—is a true, singular theory, but rather it is a collection of theories that complement and build upon one another. However, a sharp line of division can be drawn between the groups of realist theories and liberal theories, thus they each comprise their own *paradigms* of international relations theory.²⁵

In this essay, the term “realism” is used in a broad context with no substantial preference for the various schools of realism which include classical realism, neo-realism, defensive realism, offensive realism, etc. Realism is based upon the principles of *realpolitik*, and in fact, many writers use the terms interchangeably, although, “realism” is most often used in the discourse of international relations theory, while “*realpolitik*” is more highly associated with the political philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli,²⁶ but the ideas are quite similar. Quickly, it is worth noting the major difference between Machiavellian *realpolitik* and the realism of international relations theory: Machiavelli wrote about both domestic and foreign affairs within the context of medieval

²² Walt, “International Relations,” 31.

²³ Walt, “International Relations,” 31.

²⁴ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 14.

²⁵ The term “paradigm” has been picked-up from: Spiegel and Wehling, *World Politics in a New Era*, 542.

²⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince and Other Writings*, Translated by Wayne A. Rebhorn (New York 2003).

politics in southern Europe, while the realism of international relations theory obviously looks exclusively at foreign affairs, especially within a more contemporary context—regardless, the basic principles are nearly the same, which is why Machiavelli is often considered to be the grandfather of modern realism.

Although none of the early realists had contact with each other, their observations had some major similarities concerning the interaction of various political units within their regional systems. The realist paradigm could not be more global in its roots: it began emerging about 2500 years ago in the writings of Sun Tzu (*The Art of War*) in ancient China, Thucydides (*Peloponnesian War*) in ancient Greece and Kautilya in India. Many centuries later, during Europe's Renaissance, realism experienced a philosophical revival in the writings of Machiavelli (*The Prince*) and Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*). One could certainly debate the point or points at which realism leapt from history and philosophy to grand public policy, but clearly the transition had occurred by the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Under the leadership of the Austrian Minister Prince Klemens von Metternich the ideas of realism were implemented on a pan-European scale and ultimately traveled to the halls of power in Berlin, where they were notoriously put to use by Prussian Prime Minister and German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in the late nineteenth century. (As an interesting side-note, the connection between German statesmen and the principles of realism apparently migrated to the United States, as is evidenced by U.S. National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger,²⁷ who was President Nixon's most influential foreign policy advisor. However, Kissinger was certainly not the only U.S. statesman to utilize the principles of realism, since they have—as was stated in the previous chapter—been used throughout U.S. history.)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the failure of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's idealism led to a dramatic revolution in U.S. academia and its understanding of the world.

Democracy and self-determination had formed the foundation of idealism and the League of

²⁷ Kissinger was born to a Jewish family in Bavaria during the interwar era. His family fled Nazi persecution by emigrating to the United States.

Nations had failed in its objective to defend them and prevent another World War. The United States' and Wilson's entire concept of global affairs was washed away, paving the path towards the realist revival.

The contemporary realist writer John Mearsheimer has identified the most significant realist scholars: E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz.²⁸ All three authors published their seminal works around either the Second World War or the Cold War and provided theories to explain the dynamics of global politics. Naturally they were each highly influenced by the great conflicts of their time. Their works may all be part of the broad realist discourse, but they certainly did not agree on everything and some distinctions do exist among their ideas; however, the main ideas are in harmony with one another.

As stated above, the basis of realism is the acceptance of global anarchy and the belief that because of this anarchy, states must defend themselves; they cannot rely on the good will of others. State survival and self-preservation is the ultimate objective of any realist statesman. A state's ability to protect and defend itself and its interests is known as *power*. Scholars often define power differently, but economic strength and stability are generally the most significant elements. Of course population size and military might are important but even more important than the number of citizens is their skill level and available equipment which is generally determined by the state's economic condition. One million unskilled and unarmed peasants or foot soldiers cannot outperform one thousand soldiers with highly developed technology and weaponry. Likewise, military might alone does not determine power because a solid, stable economy is necessary to support and maintain it. Furthermore, militarily weak states with strong economies can readily arm themselves when the time comes. No matter how it is defined or measured, state power is the key consideration of any realist because a state's own power is its only means of protection in an anarchical system.²⁹

²⁸ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 14.

²⁹ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 12.

With a global perspective, the realist paradigm usually focuses on the great powers and this point will be demonstrated in the following chapters which analyze the United States' relationships with countries such as the Soviet Union, China, India and Pakistan. They may not be exclusively the world's most powerful countries, but it is no coincidence that powerful states are relevant while small, powerless states are not.

The relationships amongst the greatest powers form an important part of the realist paradigm's discourse. The most simplistic division of power is the unipolar system in which the globe is dominated by one state, whether that domination is in the form of a true, absolute hegemon, or simply a state that is significantly more powerful than the others (but not omnipotent). A bipolar system is characterized by two major powers. The realist paradigm's ability to explain the various aspects of the Cold War undoubtedly led to its popularity during that era. Finally, a multipolar system has several significantly powerful states, among which there are no dominating leaders. The various versions of realism disagree over which type of system is the most stable or peaceful. A similar debate exists concerning transitions from one type of system to the next.

Although the trend can be observed to a lesser extent in unipolar and bipolar global orders, the multipolar system is typically characterized by alliances, which are essential elements of the balance of power theory. This phenomenon came to life quite vividly as the European multipolar system began its transition into what would ultimately be the Cold War's bipolar system. One hundred years ago, the United Kingdom, France and Russia had organized themselves in the Triple Entente, in an effort to defend the global distribution of power from the rise of the German Empire and its fellow members of the Triple Alliance: the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. After the unsustainable truce of the inter-war period collapsed, the alliances basically reemerged. Austria had been annexed by the Third Reich, during its rise to power and the Soviet Union had replaced Russia, but essentially the alliances had simply put themselves back together, despite the idealist endeavors to specifically prevent

that exact development. As the dust of the Second World War began settling upon the destruction of Europe, the United States and Soviet Union began organizing the new bipolar world order, so often referred to as the Cold War. Realists explain its coldness with their theories concerning the balance of power and the mutually assured destruction (MAD) of the nuclear age.

The bipolar balance of power and its accompanying alliances are much less dramatic than those of a multipolar system, as was experienced during the Cold War and its lack of direct warfare between the global powers. However, warfare still existed, but among lesser powers, not the great ones directly. The Korean and Vietnam Wars provide clear examples of that, along with numerous others. Both Presidents Nixon and Carter governed during the Cold War and its bipolar system of global power had a profound impact upon both of their foreign policies, thus they are a good pair to compare, since the global dynamics of their terms as president were quite similar, especially in comparison to the global challenges to the U.S. before and after the Cold War.

Finally the issue of national interest must be addressed more specifically than its brief mentions above. The term “national interest” is itself a bit of a misnomer: the semantics of “state interest” would be more intuitive given that the concept is specifically about a state’s self-interest, not the nation’s interest, but nonetheless, the widely used term is “national interest,” thus it is also the term used here in this essay. According to realism, a state’s main objective is survival. When the desire of a state to survive is combined with a state’s rationality, the result is a state acting to ensure its safety and security within the anarchical world system. This is the phenomenon which is somewhat confusingly called “national interest.”

Although the general concept is quite simple—a state will pursue the policies which are the best for it—it is actually very complicated because defining the state’s ultimate interest in a complicated world is not always easy. During the Cold War, it was rather easy for the United States to define its national interests: halting the expansion of the global communist movement

and seeking to undermine the authority of the Soviet Union and its allies. However, defining the national interest under other circumstances can be much more difficult. Initial U.S. support for the Shah of Iran, Saddam Hussein and the Mujahedeen of Afghanistan has certainly come back to haunt it. In these cases, U.S. support was granted for very different reasons, and in each of them a different turn of events caused harm to the U.S. national interest. Perhaps, with all things being considered, the initial support may have been correct at the time it was issued, but nonetheless, each case demonstrates how the national interest is not always clear, especially in the long term.

This phenomenon is true not only of the past, but also the present. In Afghanistan, the United States is currently maintaining a corrupt regime at great cost to its society and budget. Is the price being paid worthwhile to maintain the corrupt regime that governs where the Taliban once allowed Al Qaeda to plot its attacks on the U.S.? The answer is far from clear, and thus subject to great debate. A somewhat similar conundrum exists in Saudi Arabia where the United States has established lucrative trade deals with a human rights abusing regime, which financially supports radical Islam. Both oil and Islamic fundamentalism flow freely from Saudi Arabia, but is it possible to stop one without it stopping the other? In Egypt another such dilemma has been answered by the local population, not U.S. foreign policy makers; a dictator with a reputation for human rights abuses was overthrown by a revolution-inspired military coup. What happens concerning Egypt's peace treaty with Israel remains to be seen and it is not clear which policies would best maintain the peace. How the success of the Egyptian revolution will affect the other states of the world—including the U.S.—also remains to be seen.

This uncertainty is what can make the definition of a state's national interest so difficult. The definition of the national interest played an important role in the foreign policies of both Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter. Nixon essentially redefined the U.S. national interest regarding China by beginning the process of reconciliation, many years after the falling-out. This shift in the perception of the U.S. national interest was used by Carter during his presidential

campaign as a tool to attack his opponent. As the second case study of this essay will explain, Carter campaigned against Nixon's revision of the U.S. national interest, but actually chose to continue the policy as president by developing and even closer relationship with the world's more populous communist state. Despite its lack of clarity and shifting nature, once the national interest has been established, the state will relentlessly pursue it, according to the realists. This is a direct contradiction of liberal internationalism which pursues first and foremost liberal ideology; although, it should also be noted that liberals believe the promotion of liberalism to be analogous to the national interest, meaning that, one of the greatest distinctions between realism and liberalism is their concept of national interest.

LIBERALISM

Like realism, the concept of liberalism lies within the systemic level of analysis of international relations; however, given its nature, it does also reach into the domestic level of analysis at times. Also like realism, liberalism is not really a true theory, but rather it is a compilation of complementary theories based upon the general ideas of classical liberal philosophy. Liberalism, like realism, is most accurately described as a paradigm of international relations theory.³⁰ The various channels of liberalism are often pursued together at once, as is generally true in the United States, Europe and various other places across the world. However, liberalism is like a buffet in the sense that policy makers may choose some policy prescriptions, while avoiding others. A phenomenal example of this would be the People's Republic of China which staunchly rejects democracy, while seeking to join international institutions such as the World Trade Organization and to pursue international trade, especially with the industrialized world and states rich in natural resources.

Given its pluricentric nature, liberalism can easily pull one in many different directions at the same time. Because the central concept of this essay is not explicitly philosophical or

³⁰ Spiegel and Wehling, *World Politics in a New Era*, 544.

theoretical, liberal internationalism is best addressed in a more general sense. Instead of becoming bogged down by the narrow specificity of the contemporary theorists, this essay will focus mainly upon basic concepts of liberal internationalism such as peace, human rights, democracy and free trade, and their influence on the rhetoric and policies of Presidents Nixon and Carter. However, the next few pages will also include a brief overview of some of the neo-liberal theories, in addition to the classical liberal theories.

A Tale of Two Liberalisms

Both realism and liberalism have another basic similarity, which is that both have two basic definitions: one that is generic and one that is specific to the field of international relations theory. In the United States, foreign policy discussions can become quite confusing because the generic political definition of “liberalism” is not the same as the international relations theory definition of “liberalism.” Politicians at the left end of the political spectrum and most members of the Democratic Party identify themselves as being “liberal.” Additionally, the further to the left one’s ideas are, the “more liberal” they are generally thought to be. This concept of liberalism is not the same as the liberalism of international relations theory, which is analogous to the ideas of the Kantian system, as outlined below. Connections between the two can be made, especially at the philosophical level, but a significant difference between the two concepts often emerges in regards to public policy.

A great example of how the two liberalisms can disagree is embodied by the U.S. labor union movement. Generally speaking, the labor unions financially support politicians at the local, state and federal level who are members of the Democratic Party, which in turn supports legislation favorable to the unions. However, the unions generally do not favor international trade and the general process of globalization due to the ensuing outsourcing of U.S.-based jobs, especially in the manufacturing sector, which has a difficult time competing against other countries where the cost of production is significantly lower due to lower labor costs and looser

environmental standards.³¹ Because global trade is one of the cornerstones of the liberal paradigm of international relations theory, it can be said that the U.S. labor unions support the Democratic Party's *domestic American liberalism*, but oppose *international liberalism*, specifically its global free trade agenda.

Conversely, the Republican Party's members of the 103rd Congress (1993-94) were ultimately the ones who supported the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The bill was controversial with both bipartisan support and opposition; however, since the majority of the Republicans in both houses of Congress supported it while the majority of Democrats in both houses opposed it, the bill was essentially passed by the Republican party, which is generally regarded to be the conservative party—on the right of the political spectrum, opposite the “liberal left.” Because of its mission to enhance international trade, the NAFTA bill is an example of legislation inspired by the liberal paradigm of international relations theory. Ironically, this *liberal* piece of legislation was opposed by the *liberal* politicians (of the left), but supported by the liberal party's opposition. Furthermore, in the United States, the liberal's opposition party—the Republican Party—is the one that most strictly adheres to the theories of classical liberal economics (including free trade), which directly oppose many of the Keynesian and social welfare schools of economic thought, as advocated by the “liberal” Democratic Party. Thus it is correct to say that, generally, the Republican Party opposes domestic *social liberalism* while supporting *classical liberalism*, including Immanuel Kant's international liberalism.

To further the awkward confusion of liberalism, the fourth chapter of this essay will present a case study of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who was a member of the Democratic Party and is generally referred to as a “liberal.” As the head of state and government, Carter orchestrated his foreign policy upon the principles of human rights, peace and the power of international treaties, all of which are essential elements of the liberal paradigm of international relations theory. Thus, one could say that Jimmy Carter was actually both a *domestic liberal* and an

³¹ David J. Jackson and Steven T. Engel, “Friends Don't Let Friends Vote for Free Trade: The Dynamics of the Labor PAC Punishment Strategy Over PNTR,” *Political Research Quarterly* Vol. 56, No. 4 (December 2003) 441.

international liberal, but the two do not always go together and are not dependent upon one another, as demonstrated by the previous examples.

From Liberalism to Perpetual Peace

Because the driving force of this essay is the notorious conflict between realism and liberalism, it is important to understand their fundamental difference: the realists believe that global anarchy is eternal, while liberals believe that it can be replaced with a “perpetual peace.”³² This means that the realists pursue strength and power, which enable survival despite the anarchy, while the liberals pursue the utopian concept of a perpetual peace using the three cornerstones of liberal internationalism discussed below.

As indicated by the title of Immanuel Kant’s notorious essay of liberal internationalism: *Perpetual Peace* is the ultimate goal of liberal ideology when applied to the world. This idea can be seen as a response to the writings of Hobbes and Machiavelli, which claimed that warfare was a natural condition of humanity. Although the liberals may not fundamentally disagree with such a notion, they do reject the belief that it must always be so. In fact, the liberal theories of international relations claim to light the path out of the despair of perpetual anarchy, violence and warfare.³³

The great debate of the great philosophers from centuries ago continues to this day. The concepts expressed in Wilson’s Fourteen Points speech, the *Atlantic Charter* (1941) and nearly all the note-worthy United Nation’s resolutions are evidence of liberalism’s perseverance despite the insistence of realist theorists, such as Mearsheimer³⁴ and Kenneth Waltz³⁵ that a global peaceful utopia is unrealistic. For this reason, it is quite easy to tell when a statement or idea is based upon realism or liberalism: if the statement or idea indicates that global peace can be obtained, then liberalism was the source of inspiration, not realism. As the following case studies will

³² Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories,” 56.

³³ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 22.

³⁴ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* 15.

³⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (Long Grove, Illinois, USA 1979) 112.

demonstrate, the notion of a perpetual peace plays a significant role in U.S. foreign policy and its corresponding rhetoric.

Human Rights

Although the modern liberal concern for human rights can be traced back to the philosophers of the Enlightenment, John Locke in particular, the basic concepts of rights go back much further, as they originated in the various ancient civilizations. However, in the modern era of global history, the debate concerning human rights began anew when the Old World met the New World. The most notorious example was that of the classic historic debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, known as the Valladolid Debate, in which the political status of the indigenous Amerindians of the New World was discussed. Later the issues of human rights were picked-up by the liberal democratic revolutionaries on both sides of the Atlantic and expressed in two legendary documents: the (United States) *Declaration of Independence* and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. Of course, these two documents did not automatically grant universal human rights to everyone; they did however initiate the on-going global trend of human rights promotion.

The importance of human rights to liberalism cannot be understated as acknowledgement of fellow human beings as equal is the very foundation of liberalism. From a basic understanding of human rights, liberalism evolved to encompass civil rights, or the equality of treatment under the rule of law, which is itself another fundamentally liberal concept. Only with recognition of human rights can the rest of the liberal agenda follow: capitalism (liberal economics), democracy, free trade and participation in international organizations. For this reason, when liberalism is introduced in an illiberal land, the establishment of human rights is often the starting point.³⁶

³⁶ John P. McKay, Bennett D. Hill and John Buckler, *From the Revolutionary Era to the Present*, Vol. C of *A History of Western Society* (Boston 1998) 691.

In terms of international politics, human rights are very important for liberals because the basic liberal elements, such as a democratic, representative government and a capitalist economy rely heavily upon individualism and individual freedom. Because human rights form the backbone of personal liberty and freedom, they are of great concern within the liberal paradigm of international relations theory. Human rights have also played a very crucial role in U.S. political history. As a president of the so-called “Deep South,” Carter was connected to the issues of human rights and equality in a way few previous presidents were. The second case study of this essay will further explain how and why Carter influenced the liberal concerns about human rights and equality into U.S. foreign policy.

Kant and the Triangle of Peace

There have been hundreds, if not thousands, of scholars who have written about the liberal paradigm of international relations theory, but given the broad nature of the discourse, many scholars tend to focus on only one aspect of the paradigm. However, Bruce Russett and John Oneal provide a great overview of the paradigm in their book entitled: *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. Russett and Oneal use the triangular Kantian system to explain how the principles of liberalism are relevant to today’s world and the pursuit for global peace. Their presentation of liberalism in the modern era forms the framework for this essay’s analysis of the liberalism of international relations theory.

Russett and Oneal specifically discuss the “three elements that are key to ‘liberal’ theories of international relations: ... [1] the promotion of democracy ... [2] the bolstering of national economies;”³⁷ and [3] “the construction of a thick web of international institutions.”³⁸ In addition to being the framework of international liberalism, these basic notions are also the

³⁷ Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations* (New York 2001) 24.

³⁸ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 26.

cornerstones of the triangle of the so-called Kantian system.³⁹ Clearly, Russett and Oneal's triangle of Kantian peace is based upon the work of Immanuel Kant, a philosopher of the enlightenment who wrote about many diverse topics. He covered the topic of international relations in his manuscript entitled *Perpetual Peace* (1795), in which he essentially founded international liberalism, including the foundations for what would become the democratic peace theory.

Kant believed that there were three keys to establishing a perpetual peace: democracy, economic interdependence and international institutions. Furthermore, these three elements are not random and independent from one another, but rather they complement one another in a way that foster and reinforce one another. The presence of two will help assist the third's development.⁴⁰ Also, Kant postulated that these three elements would foster peace while also being encouraged by peace themselves. This means that one would expect them to develop during times of peace, but once these liberal elements are present, they will also encourage further peace, which in turn encourages yet more liberalism. This cycle is what Russett and Oneal call a "virtuous circle."⁴¹ This concept of the Kantian system is a brief, simplistic overview of the liberal paradigm of international relations theory. Russett and Oneal's concept of virtuous circles and the Kantian system explain how democracy, peace and human rights can enhance global political and economic connections.⁴²

The Democratic Peace Theory

Although Kant was one of the early writers on the topic of democracy, he was certainly not the first; the ancient Athenians had actually created a "democratic" political system centuries earlier. However, it is worth noting that if somehow an ancient Athenian democracy were to be reestablished today, it would immediately be condemned as something less than truly democratic

³⁹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 10.

⁴⁰ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 193.

⁴¹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 24.

⁴² Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 35.

according to contemporary standards and certainly unacceptable given its restriction of rights to a select minority.⁴³

In fact, democracy is one of the most global systems there can be, having been planted in Ancient Greece, discussed across early modern Europe—from the England of John Locke⁴⁴ to the Prussia of Kant—and implemented via revolution in the North American colonies of the British Empire. Democracy then went back to Europe in the form of the French Revolution which sparked revolutions across the continent and on the other side of the Atlantic. When the French Revolution and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789) reached the colony of Saint-Domingue, a highly tumultuous debate followed, regarding to whom exactly liberal rights applied. Eventually the slaves revolted, claiming liberty for themselves.^{45, 46} This liberal revolution proved to be a turning point in the illiberal policies of slavery across the colonized world as the morality and stability of the institution itself were further reconsidered.⁴⁷

In Europe, the desire for democracy continued spreading, and ultimately caused the revolutions of 1848 in nearly all corners of the continent. Eventually, the dawn of the twentieth century and the same revolutionary fervor brought democracy to the Russian Empire. Of course not all of the democratic revolutions were successful, and some paved the way for illiberal regimes such as those of Napoleon Bonaparte and Vladimir Lenin. Not even the liberal, democratic Weimar Republic could stop the rise of the illiberal Third Reich. But ultimately, as the global empires of Europe collapsed, predominantly democratic regimes ultimately took their place, not only in Europe, but also Latin America, South Asia and Africa, as well as parts of the Middle East and East Asia, leading Francis Fukuyama to proclaim that history had in fact come to an end now that liberalism was the clear global hegemonic philosophy.⁴⁸

⁴³ Eric W. Robinson, *Ancient Greek Democracy: Readings and Sources* (Malden, Massachusetts, USA 2004) 248.

⁴⁴ John Locke, *The Two Treatises of Government* (England 1689). Locke's manuscript played a crucial role in the formation of the revolutionary liberal ideology in the British colonies of North America.

⁴⁵ McNeill and McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History*, 226.

⁴⁶ Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA 1979).

⁴⁷ McNeill and McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History*, 253.

⁴⁸ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York 1992) xi.

Some scholars insisted that democracy was an inherently more peaceful form of government,⁴⁹ but once it became obvious that democracies can be as belligerent as non-democracies, the democratic peace theory was reformed to the belief that although democracies engage readily in warfare, they don't do so against fellow democracies.^{50, 51} Even this claim is challenged by critics who believe that there simply have not been enough democratic states for a sufficient duration of time to make such a pronouncement.⁵² However, the European experience with democracy and the concurrent peace and stability have been astonishing developments. The proponents of liberal internationalism believe that there is a direct connection between the peace and stability of post-war Europe and its embrace of liberal democracy.^{53, 54}

Economic Interdependence

Global economic connections fit into the triangular Kantian system as one of the corners called "Economic Interdependence." This concept has two elements: a classical one and a contemporary one. The most famous classical proponents of international economic interdependence were Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

In the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith not only created the discipline of economics, including the concept of the division of labor, but he also made the claim that trade must exist and be free to enable maximum economic output and wealth creation.⁵⁵ Smith's concepts formed the economic wing of the much broader liberal philosophy.

David Ricardo further developed the concept of international trade in *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817). Specifically, he is known for writing about the concept of

⁴⁹ Joseph Schumpeter, "The Sociology of Imperialism," in *Imperialism and Social Classes: Two Essays by Joseph Schumpeter* (Cleveland, Ohio, USA 1951) 69.

⁵⁰ Dean Babst, "A Force for Peace," *Industrial Research* Vol. 14 (April), 55-58.

⁵¹ Walt, "International Relations," 39.

⁵² David E. Spiro, "The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace," *International Security* Vol. 19, No. 2 (Autumn 1994): 76.

⁵³ Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, New Jersey, USA 1995).

⁵⁴ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 28.

⁵⁵ Michael Parkin, *Macroeconomics*, 7th ed. (New York, USA 2005) 53.

comparative advantage, which is the understanding that a nation can maximize its wealth by producing the goods it can most efficiently trade, and then trading them for goods it cannot efficiently produce. Of course, in order for this to occur, trade must exist and the lower the trade barriers, the more profitable everyone becomes.⁵⁶ Essentially, comparative advantage in international trade is the global application of Smith's concept of the division of labor.

Riccardo's concept of international trade is the global application of classical liberal economics. Thus, the contemporary global movements to support free trade are truly liberal movements.

The principles of liberal international trade have been demonstrated nowhere more notably than in the European Union, which was initially founded as three separate organizations: the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community. Although the first and third communities dealt specifically with energy concerns, throughout human history and across the globe, energy has been one of the most important factors of an economy, as was dramatically demonstrated by the industrial revolution and as the price of petroleum continuously reminds consumers today.

These institutions were created amongst the rubble of the Second World War to help foster a perpetual peace in Europe, a goal the European Union has certainly achieved. Likewise, Japan entered into a peaceful post-war relationship with the global community as it also developed lucrative economic connections. Long before the theory of international institutionalism went vogue, the newly formed United States of America ended its two-war era of hostility with the British Empire, which coincided with the development of a significant trade relationship—much fairer than the one that triggered the Boston Tea Party. To put it simply, the liberal paradigm of international relations theory claims that states that trade together are disinclined to fight one another.

The liberal drive for free and fair trade also generated the North American Free Trade Agreement and most treaties and agreements concerning international trade. Most significantly,

⁵⁶ Parkin, *Macroeconomics*, 458.

the liberal belief that good trade relations can prevent war led to the belief that the world would be safer if both Russia and China were included in the traditionally western-dominated World Trade Organization. The latter has joined and the former is currently in negotiations for accession.

International Institutionalism

In addition to being features of economic interdependence, the EU, NAFTA and the WTO are each also examples of liberal institutionalism and Kant's third element of *Perpetual Peace*: international organizations. Other prominent examples include the global intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Interpol, as well as regional organizations such as the European Union, Mercosur and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Although the Congress of Vienna (1815) and its Concert of Europe were examples of proto-liberal institutionalism, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson is generally given credit for globalizing the concept of liberal institutionalism, via his public policies expressed in his infamous Fourteen Points speech, especially his insistence on creating the League of Nations.

The basic concept of liberal institutionalism is that when states have the structured means to cooperate, they are more likely to avert war. The institutions can provide a framework for cooperation that establishes norms and values, sometimes with a means of enforcing them, such as the United Nations Security Council and its peacekeeping missions. Another significant contribution that institutions make towards the perpetual peace is a reduction in uncertainty, which encourages a peaceful handling of international crises.⁵⁷ Of course, as alluded to above, international organizations also provide an essential means of facilitating economic interdependence via international trade organizations.

⁵⁷ Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, New Jersey, USA 2005) 247.

The Global Relevancy of Liberalism

One cannot dispute the fact that the global community continues to deepen its embrace of the principles of liberal internationalism, a trend which has been going on for centuries. That's not to say that it has been a smooth transition. The World Wars and Cold War were essentially challenges to the rise and spread of global liberalism. Terrorism in junction with jihadi movements have emerged as another serious challenge. However, the liberal global community, in general, does not fondly remember the times it departed from liberalism, or even the times that pre-dated liberalism's triumph. In fact, the movements against liberalism—monarchism, imperialism, fascism, communism—only served to deepen and expand liberalism globally. The success of liberalism and the failure of the alternatives continue to encourage yet greater efforts to liberalization.⁵⁸

One can, however, dispute the relevancy of the liberal trend in international politics, which is exactly what the realists do. The realists reject the liberal notion that international trade, economic interdependence and democracy make the world safer and more peaceful. According to the realists, wars will break out whenever a state is threatened. They acknowledge that even long periods of peace can be maintained, but eventually, the apple cart will be upset as global anarchy takes its toll. This is the fundamental difference between realism and liberalism; the liberals accept anarchy, but believe it can be tamed by a perpetual peace, while the realists do not.⁵⁹

REALISM AND LIBERALISM IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Often in the realm of academia, the two components of a binary—such as realism and liberalism in international relations—cannot reasonably complement one another. Typically in a binary, one has either black or white, left or right, rich or poor, or war or peace. However, both realists and liberals may look at a situation and come to the same conclusion that a certain policy should

⁵⁸ G. John Ikenberry, "The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 75, Iss. 3 (May/June 1996) 85.

⁵⁹ Walt, "International Relations," 30.

be pursued in a specific manner. They would indeed look at the situation differently and follow different thought-processes, but it is quite reasonable that they would arrive at the same conclusion. In fact, that is exactly what happened with U.S. foreign policy during the great rivalry with the British Empire in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and the German-led alliances of the World Wars. In these cases the liberal United States—or New World colonies, as was the case for the Revolutionary War—was opposing the illiberal British⁶⁰ and German Monarchies and the fascist Nazi and imperial Japanese Empires. Each of these cases pitted the liberal ideals of American freedom and democracy against illiberal, undemocratic, suppressive powers. However, the U.S. position in each of these cases can also be easily advocated by the realist perceptions of the global power structure, national security and the strategic alliances which support it. One could easily fill an entire library with books debating, describing and explaining the historic precedence of both the liberal and realist paradigms of U.S. foreign policy, and there is no need to finely comb through all that information here in this essay, but the general trend must be acknowledged.

The discrepancy of rhetoric and foreign policy

In his book, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, John Mearsheimer, one of the most prominent realist scholars in the United States today, briefly describes in his introductory chapter the dynamic which is the focus of this essay: the discrepancy between the liberal rhetoric and the realist agenda in the United States.⁶¹ Because Mearsheimer wrote his book to explain his refined version of the realist paradigm—a version he calls “offensive realism”—he does not dwell upon the discrepancy of rhetoric, but rather he points it out in his overview of the established

⁶⁰ Just to clarify, this statement is about the British Monarchy of the times of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. Once the British Empire had evolved into a more liberal regime, it lobbied the liberal United States to fight alongside it in the First and Second World Wars, where both powers (British and American) espoused essentially liberal ideals.

⁶¹ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 25.

paradigms of realism and liberalism and their manifestations in U.S. foreign policy. This essay does dwell upon the discrepancy by looking at specific case studies that illustrate the point.

However, this relationship of the two theory-based paradigms is quite interesting and gives a great deal of insight into the world of foreign policy, and the purpose of this essay is to further explore it. Understanding this relationship could in fact provide a gateway into the actual foreign policy decision-making process and additionally showcase how the relationship between foreign policy and the democratic republic functions. Understanding the discrepancy of rhetoric and policy could help explain contradictory policies such as why the U.S. sometimes supports the overthrow of democratically elected regimes, such as that of Salvador Allende in Chile in the 1970's, while also conducting an overthrow to create or strengthen democracy, such as the recent forced regime change in Iraq and attempted regime change in Libya? Why did the United States support Augusto Pinochet in Chile but not Saddam Hussein in Iraq, keeping in mind that both were dictators who grossly violated human rights and subverted democracy? Why did the United States' criticism of human rights abuses in Kosovo, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq lead to military action, but not in Rwanda, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, China, Bahrain, Iran or the Ivory Coast?—places where similar, and in some cases worse, abuses of human rights have been recorded.

Did the United States enter the Second World War to defeat and replace dictatorial, human rights abusing regimes such as those which ruled Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan, or did the U.S. enter the Second World War to defeat an alliance of states aiming to drastically change the world—socially, politically, ethically, economically and demographically—by military force? Of course, both of these objectives were achieved, but were both scenarios necessary for the United States to reach its policy to enter the Second World War? Or could just one of those conditions also have precipitated such a response? In other words, would the U.S. have waged war against the Triple Powers if they had not violated human rights, but nonetheless intended to reform the global system as we know it? Would the U.S.

have waged war against the human rights violators if they had not threatened the global power structure? Of course, one can easily be sidetracked and sucked into a vortex of “what-if” questions about history, but here answers to these *what if* questions provide great insight into how one of the most powerful global players of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries makes its foreign policy. This in turn then explains how this great power understands the international system and views its place within it, which not only provides insight into the philosophies behind the United States’ foreign policies of the past, but also of the present, with a possible indication of what’s to come in the future. Thus, by focusing on the various explanations of the past, revelations about the present and possibly the future come into focus. But first the questions of the past must be addressed, and here are some more poignant questions to consider, regarding this topic:

Why did the United States form an alliance with a totalitarian, dictatorial, human rights violating regime such as that of Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin to end the regimes of Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini and the Japanese Imperialists, when Stalin was guilty of similar crimes against humanity and ruled over an equally undemocratic, totalitarian regime? Were the Soviet Union and the United States tangled in the Cold War because their respective political ideologies were incompatible (liberal, democratic capitalism vs. communist Marxism) or because their strength, size and power threatened the security of the other? Did the United States lead the defense of Kuwait after it was invaded and conquered by the regime of Saddam Hussein because he violated Kuwait’s internationally recognized sovereignty, or because, as an aggressor, his regime threatened the stability of the Arabian Peninsula as well as the broader Middle East and perhaps even the greater Islamic world? Did the United States invade Iraq for the second time in recent memory in 2003 because of national security concerns, or because it wanted to create a free, democratic state? Would a free and democratic Iraq really benefit the United States strategically?

There is not necessarily a right or a wrong answer to these questions, and the answer one comes up with would most likely be a reflection of one’s preferred theoretical paradigm. Realists

would most likely have a similar set of answers while liberals would most likely have a differing set of primarily similar answers. The purpose of this essay is in no manner to provide solid answers to these questions, but rather to look into their complexities. Because the theories and their paradigms provide a framework for explaining how the world functions and how states subsequently behave toward one another, they shape the analytic processes of people, including decision makers; those who view the world through the realist paradigm will most likely create realist-inspired policies, while those decision-makers who view the world through a liberal-inspired paradigm will most likely make liberal-inspired policies.

The questions posed above highlight what would appear to be a bit of hypocrisy on behalf of the U.S. regime and its foreign policy. This is equally true throughout U.S. history; although that particular group of questions above was restricted to the post-war era, one can easily come up with a similar group of questions for the pre-war era centering around policies concerning the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Manifest Destiny, the Monroe Doctrine, the Spanish-American War, the Mexican-American War and even the Civil War, just to name a few of the most obvious. Face-value contradictions abound in U.S. foreign policies and perhaps the foreign policies of many states, especially democratic ones. The following case studies about presidents Nixon and Carter will lay the foundation for explaining why the discrepancy between policy and rhetoric in U.S. foreign policy exists.

So, the next logical questions one stumbles upon are: Why does such hypocrisy exist? and What does this all mean? Why does it matter? As stated above, understanding the foreign policies of states, particularly the most powerful ones helps explain how the world functions, especially how and why conflicts and ultimately wars break out. If an understanding of global conflict and warfare can be created, then perhaps it can be avoided or at least minimized, allowing for greater prosperity and opportunities for humanity to flourish in peace. In regards to the hypocrisy, many scholars such as John Mearsheimer argue that there is no hypocrisy from the policies themselves (at least within the context discussed here), but rather the hypocrisy is a

result of the *liberal* rhetoric being used in regards to *realist* policies.⁶² The policies themselves are not hypocritical, but rather their rhetoric is. This debate between realism and liberalism is one of the cornerstones of discussions about international relations in the United States and around the world. The following chapters will look at how the discrepancy of rhetoric and policy and conflict between liberalism and realism unfolded during the presidencies of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter.

⁶² Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 25.

Chapter III

Case Study: Richard Nixon

Richard Nixon, the thirty-seventh President of the United States of America, makes a great case study for understanding the discrepancy of reasoning and rhetoric in U.S. foreign policy—the roles of realist and liberal international relations theories—because he is well known for his realist approach to foreign policy, thus there is little doubt about the reasoning he and his administration used in creating their foreign policies. In fact, Nixon’s top foreign policy advisor Henry Kissinger is often thought of as the foremost proponent of realism in modern U.S. academia.⁶³ At first glance, one might hastily conclude that Nixon and his policies contradict the notion of U.S. foreign policy having an intrinsic dispute between realism and liberalism—policy and rhetoric—but actually, this is why his case is so compelling. Someone with such a strong reputation for realism should easily make the case that U.S. presidents can fall nicely into one camp—in the case of Nixon, that would be the camp of realism. As an adherent to the realist doctrines, one could reasonably expect Nixon to defy Mearsheimer’s notion⁶⁴ that U.S. foreign policy is realist in application but liberal in rhetoric because one would expect such a clear realist to have also used realist rhetoric. However, this chapter will show that such a straight forward expectation is not in line with reality. Nixon did in fact use liberal rhetoric to explain his realist foreign policies to the public, despite the reasoning that went into making them.

President Nixon actually enforces the notion of the discrepancy of rhetoric and policy. Essentially everyone knew that Nixon was a realist, with regards to international relations. It would be difficult for someone to fundamentally dispute the fact then or now, which makes his use of liberal rhetoric all the more intriguing. Although Nixon certainly did put forth a dishonest image of himself in an attempt to hide the truth from the public during various public affairs,

⁶³ Spiegel and Wehling, *World Politics in a New Era*, 544.

⁶⁴ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 25.

such as the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal,⁶⁵ this was not really the case with his foreign policy rhetoric.⁶⁶ He was not trying to hide and cover up his realist beliefs. Remember, the point of this essay is that U.S. presidents use liberal rhetoric which appeals to the public to describe and support their realist policies, which, although they are in keeping with the realist national interest, may not be popular with the public. Nixon is no exception to this. He made policies based upon the teachings of the *realist* paradigm and theories of international relations while often cloaking them in a façade of rhetoric inspired by the *liberal* paradigm and theories of international relations.

Nixon: an Overview

Richard Nixon became a member of the national political establishment after being elected to the United States House of Representatives by the twelfth congressional district of California in 1946 upon returning from military service in the Pacific during the Second World War. After four years in the House of Representatives, Nixon moved to the Senate, where he served two years of his term before joining the executive branch of the federal government as the U.S. Vice President from 1953-61 in the administration of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th President of the United States. Upon the end of his vice presidency, Nixon ran for a promotion, but lost the presidential election of 1960 by a slim margin to Senator John F. Kennedy. In 1968, after spending several years in political exile, traveling and writing, Nixon ran for president again. Much of the campaign focused on social and cultural issues, such as the hippie and anti-war movements and the corresponding Vietnam War, which was ever increasing its unpopularity amongst the people. Given that the war had been greatly escalated by presidents of the Democratic Party—Kennedy and his successor Lyndon B. Johnson—it is not surprising that its

⁶⁵ C. L. Sulzberger, *The World and Richard Nixon* (New York 1987) 3.

⁶⁶ David Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image* (New York 2003) 271.

unpopularity contributed to Johnson's withdrawal from the Democratic Party's primary election of 1968⁶⁷ and ultimately returned the Republican Party to the White House in 1969.⁶⁸

Perhaps the most infamous of all the presidents, Richard Nixon became the first to resign from the presidency on August 8, 1974. For many Americans, Nixon is most highly associated with the Watergate scandal that cost him his job.⁶⁹ Of course, many books have been written about Watergate and other aspects about Nixon's life. This essay will not dwell upon most of these subjects, but because the Watergate scandal has so consumed the remembrance of the Nixon presidency, it must be briefly mentioned, especially because it was relevant to U.S. foreign policies and Nixon's role as a statesman which are central topics of this essay.

The Watergate scandal took its name from Washington, DC's Watergate Hotel, where a group of men were arrested for their forced entry into the Democratic Party's headquarters on June 17, 1972, during President Nixon's campaign for reelection. It took the authorities nearly a year to conduct the investigation, collect all the facts, and conclude that not only was Nixon connected to the burglars, but also that he was aware of the illicit cover-up plan, despite his denials. Because of the lies and deceit, the public, which had just recently reelected him in a landslide election, turned against him as did the House of Representatives—under the leadership of the opposition party—which initiated impeachment procedures on May 9, 1974.

The connection between Watergate and foreign policy became quite clear in hindsight: in his post-presidency, Nixon and his supporters put forth an image of him as a statesman to counterbalance the incredibly negative color with which the Watergate scandal had tarnished him. Although some historians, such as Joan Hoff, believe his domestic policies to be superior, most scholars view foreign policy as the most noteworthy aspect of the Nixon presidency.⁷⁰ The notion that Nixon's foreign policies should trump the tarnish of Watergate has two sources:

⁶⁷ David L. Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (New York 2002) 117.

⁶⁸ Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War*, 69.

⁶⁹ Stanley I. Kutler, *The Wars of Watergate: The Last Crisis of Richard Nixon* (New York 1992) 612.

⁷⁰ Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York 1994) 8.

Nixon himself and the foreign policy establishment, primarily of the United States, but also of the global community.⁷¹

Historian David Greenberg made the case in his 2003 book, *Nixon's Shadow*, that many members of the foreign policy establishment did not approve of Richard Nixon for a mixture of various reasons, ranging from his persona, style of governing, views on domestic policies and even some foreign policies; therefore, the Watergate scandal and the subsequent collapse of the Nixon administration left a great feeling of frustration—relief that their source of disdain was gone, but also regret that an astute statesman had been lost from public service. Many foreign policy officials in the United States believed that foreign policy was *über alles*, thus they did not want the foreign policy accomplishments to be overshadowed by some disgraceful and petty political scandal. There was a real concern that a backlash against all things Nixon could quickly spread like a wild fire and threaten to undo some of his major accomplishments, especially his breakthrough with the People's Republic of China.⁷²

As Greenberg points out as his main thesis, Nixon did not simply allow others—such as the foreign policy establishment—to recreate his image as an “elder statesman,” but rather he was directly and personally involved with the recasting of himself as the elder statesman.⁷³ In fact, it would have been unlikely that the elder statesman image of Nixon could have emerged without his participation. By giving speeches and granting interviews, he allowed himself to participate in the remaking of his legacy. When he appeared for the public, either in person or through writers or politicians, he was able to remind everyone about his skill and success as a statesman, which helped chip away the image of a deceitfully scandalous politician. Despite his efforts, and the efforts of various scholars, historians, diplomats, journalists, pundits and analysts,

⁷¹ Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 271.

⁷² Raymond Price, *With Nixon* (New York 1977) 312.

⁷³ Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 271.

the statesman image never fully replaced the scandalous one.⁷⁴ Whether or not it will be able to do so at some point in the future remains to be seen.

NIXON'S REALPOLITIK

That Richard Nixon and his chief foreign policy architect, Henry Kissinger, practiced realism is widely accepted. Kissinger, often regarded as the godfather of modern realism in the U.S.—at least one of its foremost policy makers—has written several tomes on the subject, which include the clear recognition of the fact that Nixon's understanding of the world was based upon the realist paradigm of international relations and his policies which reflect that.⁷⁵ Nixon's ideological perspective of the world is no surprise given the trajectory of his career, which had much to do with foreign policy.

Nixon's on-the-job training as a realist statesman stem from his entire career. As mentioned earlier, he had a front row view of U.S. foreign policy in action as a member of the Navy, through which he participated in the military defeat over imperial Japan. As a young congressman and member of the Herter Committee he actively participated in the creation of one of United States' greatest levels of international engagement—the Marshall Plan, which actively contributed to Europe's division into two spheres: one western, capitalist and democratic; the other eastern and communist.⁷⁶ The corresponding bipolar global order, while being completely consistent with the principles of liberalism, assisted in giving birth to the modern U.S. understanding of the realist paradigm of international relations theory.⁷⁷

In the House of Representatives and the Senate Nixon participated in the anti-communist movement, exposing domestic spies working in the U.S. government and attempting to thwart the global encroachment of communism.⁷⁸ Although as vice president he had very

⁷⁴ David Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow*, 271.

⁷⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, 1994) 706.

⁷⁶ Conrad Black, *Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full* (New York, 2007) 100.

⁷⁷ Steven L. Spiegel and Fred L. Wehling, *World Politics in a New Era*, 544.

⁷⁸ "The Nation: Nixon's Coup: To Peking for Peace," *Time*, 26 July 1971, Vol. 98, No. 4.

little power, he naturally gained much experience, especially given that his tenure occurred during the early post-war period, when the United States was heavily engaged in international affairs; furthermore, he also served under President Eisenhower—a general from the Second World War—who certainly provided a great deal of mentoring. On behalf of the president, he traveled to several countries to promote U.S. foreign policy, including Venezuela, Libya and even the all important Soviet Union, the state around which nearly all U.S. foreign policies revolved.

However, Nixon was forced into a long holiday of sorts when he lost the general election of 1960. It was one of the closest presidential races in U.S. history, complete with a litany of controversies, but, at the end of it all, John F. Kennedy won while Richard Nixon lost. He tried to redeem his political career by running for the governor of California in 1962, but again lost, leading many to conclude that he would never return to the political scene as he himself had indicated.⁷⁹

Although Nixon was removed from the realm of public awareness for much of the 1960's, he maintained a minimal level of relevance. His low-profile included meetings with foreign leaders while traveling and contributing to the academic foreign policy debate via an article in the *Foreign Affairs* journal,⁸⁰ which certainly factored into his political comeback, given that the article was published just one year before his first successful run for the presidency.

Nixon's published realist perspective

The journal *Foreign Affairs* served—and continues to serve—as a platform for the exchange of ideas among the foreign policy establishment, including scholars, policy makers, journalists, diplomats, directors of multinational corporations and other movers and shakers of U.S. society directly involved with the country's global affairs. Notably, the journal is not customarily found on the coffee tables in living rooms across the United States; the journal does not seek an audience of mass appeal, but rather a contribution to the scholarly and academic debate, and is

⁷⁹ "Career's End," *Time*, 16 November 1962. Accessed from www.time.com.

⁸⁰ Richard M. Nixon, "Asia after Viet Nam," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 46, (Oct 1967): 111-125.

most frequently found in the libraries of think tanks and universities and on the book shelves of professors and policy gurus.

Entitled “Asia after Viet Nam,” Nixon certainly wanted his article to capitalize on the disastrous war and corresponding policies regarding Vietnam, which were primarily the work of two previous presidents, both from the other side of the political aisle. Clearly, Nixon was aware that the public did not support the war effort, and that by appeasing the public demand for peace, he would enable himself to achieve electoral success in an election cycle which had been overtaken by the peace movement. The challenge was to exit the war while maintaining the global reputation of the United States and avoiding the perception that the U.S. had “lost” and been defeated by the global communist coalition—to avoid the perception that the revolutionary forces of communism had been able to militarily trump the United States of America and its armed forces.

Like virtually all informed U.S. citizens, Nixon had realized the dramatic and negative impact the Vietnam War was inflicting upon the United States, and his article in *Foreign Affairs* was an articulation of how the U.S. could address that particular problem, and perhaps more importantly, how such a problem could be prevented in the future, especially taking into consideration that the Vietnam War was in many ways a repeat of the disastrous Korean War.

Most of the article focused on the regional role of communism in Asia and the corresponding policies of containment. Much of the containment strategy regarding the global spread of communism is of little concern to this essay because it was both a realist and a liberal strategy at the same time, thus it provides little insight into how the United States and its leaders understood global affairs.

However, in his discussion about the region, Nixon clearly utilized the ideas of realism even without directly using the term itself. He began by establishing the major powers of the

region, as a realist would.⁸¹ India, China, Japan and the United States made Nixon's list of Asian powers of the near future, while the European-oriented Soviet Union did not. The fact that he then analyzed the power relations among the states is evidence that he viewed the international system through the paradigm of realism, but one does not need to go so far to see his realist inclinations, which were so clearly demonstrated by his analysis. The very fact that he set about defining the regional powers was itself a realist act. Furthermore, he went on to analyze the regional powers via economics and armaments. Because the Soviet economy and military was focused on the European theater, Nixon culled it from the list of Asian powers—a bit ironic in geographic comparison to the United States, which he considered to be an Asian power given its military relations and subsequent economic commitments concerning Korea, Vietnam, Japan and Taiwan. In his view, the United States had a much more prominent role to play in Asian affairs than the Soviet Union did.⁸²

The significance of Nixon's realist paradigm is more greatly appreciated when one places it into the greater framework of international relations theory. Although theories such as neoliberalism and liberal institutionalism did not fully emerge until after the Nixon era, most of the significant founding classical literature of the broader concepts of liberalism had already been written, in some cases centuries beforehand. Liberal internationalism is itself a descendant of Wilsonian idealism, which had been practiced by the United States decades earlier. Had Nixon conceived of Asia's future through a liberal-idealist paradigm, he would certainly have been more concerned with liberal issues such as rule of law, voting, freedom of the press, free market economies, self-determination, education, the depth and commitment to international organizations, etc. Instead of focusing on liberal issues, Nixon saw the elements of realism: military strength and sophistication, economic prowess and development and population scale and growth. Additionally, Nixon made emphatically clear that he was concerned about the

⁸¹ Nixon, "Asia after Viet Nam," 119.

⁸² Nixon, "Asia after Viet Nam," 119.

realist cause of national security, while liberal concerns of global interconnectedness were often ignored.⁸³

Nixon's realist foreign policies

In addition to writing about global affairs, Nixon also had the opportunity as president to orchestrate the United States' policies and relationship with the global community. Furthermore, he did so with the assistance of the legendary realist, National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The reason why they were able to work so closely together, constantly in sync with one another, was that they shared the realist paradigm of international relations theory, which placed premier emphasis on national security. It is noteworthy that they were not concerned with the global transition to a liberal world order.

In what most would consider to be the United States' most important relationship, Nixon displayed a true dedication to the theory of realism in dealing with the Soviet Union. Despite a few early set-backs in his attempt to establish an agreement concerning strategic armaments, Nixon was able to coerce the Soviet Union into cooperation by traveling to China. Of course, the trip itself was largely symbolic and a propaganda effort concerning domestic politics; however, what the trip symbolized has turned out to be one of the greatest turning points of the twentieth century. The transition from a hostile relationship to a respectful and even cooperative one between the People's Republic of China and the United States fundamentally began to restructure global power relations. This was only emphasized to a greater extent when viewed in light of the ongoing and continually deepening Sino-Soviet split, including the recent border skirmish between China and the Soviet Union along the Ussuri River and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 in which the Soviet Union supported India while China

⁸³ Nixon, "Asia after Viet Nam."

supported Pakistan. As a realist, Nixon realized that the development of the Sino-Soviet split was underway, and that he could help further encourage it by siding with the Chinese.⁸⁴

Although the Cold War is often seen as being a textbook example of a bipolar distribution of global power, in which each the United States and the Soviet Union led their respective alliances of free-market democracies and Marxist societies, Nixon was hoping to effectively transition the bipolar international system into a tripolar one, in which China could separate from the monolithic communist bloc to join the United States in pressuring the Soviet Union into acquiescence on certain issues pertaining to global security. It is worth noting that Nixon's aim was not to weaken the communist regime of Mao in some sort of attempt to bring about a free market, democratic revolution. He simply was concerned with the global power structure. Having China as an ally was significant, not the liberal transition of China's domestic political structure:⁸⁵ realism defined Nixon's agenda, not liberalism.

Nixon's relationship to China also showcases realist international theory in that he recognized that the United States could not indefinitely deny the legitimacy of Mao's rule in China, partially because it was the world's most populous state. It is much easier to isolate smaller states than larger ones. He knew that China had the people, the resources and the historical precedent to be a great global power and naturally establishing a cooperative relationship with such a potential power was in the national interest of the United States, despite the concerns of pro-liberal, anti-communist critics who preferred a policy of isolating all the communists. Furthermore, Nixon had falsely believed that a good relationship with China could help improve the United States' quagmire in Vietnam—as history later demonstrated, it could not; however, the failure of Nixon's strategy to lessen North Vietnam and the Viet Cong's ferocity does not diminish the fact that by launching such an attempt, Nixon was indeed playing

⁸⁴ James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York 2000) 35.

⁸⁵ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 719.

the game of the power politics, completely in line with the realist paradigm of international relations theory.

Realism does not just explain the United States' interactions with the big global powers, such as the Soviet Union and China, but it also explains the United States' relationship with lesser powers, although even these relationships were sucked into the bipolar global order of the Cold War dynamics. The Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 was briefly mentioned above as an important element of the Sino-Soviet split, with China maintaining its alliance with Pakistan while India forged a counterbalance with support from the Soviet Union. The United States also played a role in the affair by siding with and supporting the Pakistanis and the Chinese, with whom Nixon hoped to establish a framework for further cooperation, which would in turn pressure the Soviet Union into cooperation as well. However, in the conflict between India and Pakistan, the liberal paradigm would have prescribed the United States to assist the world's largest liberal democracy, India, instead of supporting its opponent, a state governed by an illiberal—and some would even say genocidal—military dictator, whose action lead to the displacement or death of millions of citizens through a gross violation of basic human rights. This awkward and seemingly backwards position of the United States during the war is actually easy to understand given Nixon's realist paradigm.⁸⁶

NIXON'S LIBERAL RHETORIC

For someone with a clear understanding of Nixon's firm adherence to the realist paradigm of international theory, a discrepancy is easily observed in many of his speeches—many, but not all. Sometimes when addressing the public, Nixon called upon realism, and his affinity for that school of thought was documented in the previous section; this section will showcase his rhetorical affinity for liberal internationalism. Again, it must be remembered here that “liberalism” is not a part of the liberalism of the liberal/conservative, left/right or

⁸⁶ Jagdish Bhagwati, “The United States in the Nixon Era: The End of Innocence” *Daedalus* (Vol. 101, No. 4, 1972) 33.

Democrat/Republican binary of the U.S. political system, but rather this liberalism is the philosophical concept of classical liberalism applied to international relations, as outlined in the previous chapter of this essay.

Nixon's academic writing, presidential appointments, personal thoughts and beliefs and some of his speeches have clearly enunciated the principles of *realpolitik*. The next few pages will use his political speeches to demonstrate that Nixon is a great example of the discrepancy between the rhetoric and policy of the global affairs of the United States of America by showcasing some of his liberal rhetoric.

During his failed campaign for the presidency in 1960, Nixon spoke to an audience in Greensboro, North Carolina. The majority of the speech he delivered there dealt with domestic issues, such as the debate concerning the size, duty and responsibility of the federal bureaucracy in relation to the various levels of local government—as a member of the Republican Party he was naturally in favor of a limited federal government—but there were some lines regarding global affairs. Most of the international references were of realist-inspired rhetoric about the strength of the military; however, the dichotomy of international relations theory did appear in a rather substantial manner. In addition to the more trite calls for generic peace and aid for those societies struggling to establish freedom, he briefly touched upon the deeper intellectual aspects of liberal internationalism by saying, “We must create new instruments, and make the old ones more effective, for peace in the world. I refer for, example, to the enlightened study which Duke University is sponsoring for developing better means of substituting the rule of law for the rule of force in international affairs.”⁸⁷

That the campaigner mentioned Duke University while speaking in North Carolina, the university's home state, is no coincidence; those seeking to be elected often try to connect themselves to the local community in hopes of obtaining local votes. Additionally, the reference to “rule of law” was also no coincidence. The modern concept of liberal democracy was built

⁸⁷ Richard M. Nixon, Speech, Republican National Convention (Miami Beach, FL, 8 August 1968) available at <http://www.4president.org/speeches/1968/nixon1968acceptance.htm>.

upon a rule of law which grants guaranteed rights to citizens in protection against the arbitrary whims of mayors, clergymen, the nobility, kings, emperors, dictators or other power holders. Without rule of law, democracy and liberalism cannot exist.⁸⁸ Had that been Nixon's only reference to liberalism, it could have easily been dismissed as an insignificant one-off. However, it was not Nixon's only use of liberal rhetoric.

Nixon at the Republican National Convention, Miami Beach, Florida, 1968

After losing the election and taking an eight-year hiatus from high political office, Nixon again ran for the presidency. During every presidential campaign, the political parties hold a national convention. Although they have ceased to be the rowdy and suspenseful nomination brawls of earlier U.S. history, they still hold a premier place in the political campaign, as they did during the Nixon era. A political party's national convention is the opportunity for its nominee—chosen beforehand by primary elections, state by state—to showcase party unity and demonstrate his⁸⁹ worthiness to be the party's nominee. It is also incredibly relevant because the party's platform is designed and presented to the public in an effort to draw-up support in the upcoming election. The highlight naturally is the presidential nominee's speech, which provides great insight into the candidate's appeal to the voters. In other words, it is U.S. presidential political rhetoric at its grandest.

On August 8, 1968, at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida, presidential nominee Richard Nixon outlined to the U.S. public the reasons why they should vote for him. Again, much of the speech naturally addressed domestic issues which do not directly concern this essay, but as the would-be head of state, commander-in-chief of the armed forces and premier foreign policy maker, Nixon clearly felt the need to address the nation's relationship with the rest of the world.

⁸⁸ Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom* (New York, 2003) 17.

⁸⁹ Undoubtedly at some point in the future, *she* will use it for the same reasons, but historically only *he* ever has.

The previous section addressed Nixon's article from *Foreign Affairs*, which had been published less than one year before the national convention speech. Interestingly, the overt realism of the article barely appeared in the convention speech, but even more surprising is that it was replaced by some substantial references to liberal internationalism. Admittedly, the liberal rhetoric of Nixon is fundamentally different from Jimmy Carter's, which will be presented in the next chapter, but nonetheless, the rhetoric Nixon used during the convention speech clearly enunciates some of the basic principles of the liberal paradigm of international relations, while largely avoiding those of the realist paradigm.

Towards the beginning of the speech Nixon said to the people of the United States of America: "The choice we make in 1968 will determine not only the future of America, but the future of peace and freedom in the world for the last third of the twentieth century."⁹⁰ There are two liberal points in that statement. First, he connects the United States to the rest of the world. Some forty years after that speech was delivered, it seems to be a banal point. Of course the future President of the United States would draw a connection between his country and the globalized world. However, at that time, it could not be taken for granted. Previous generations of U.S. citizens—especially politicians from Nixon's own Republican Party—had been staunchly isolationist, up to and even during the Second World War. Given the violently atrocious nature of that war and the overwhelming nature of the subsequent Korean and Vietnam Wars, there was a legitimate possibility that isolationism could be restored as a guiding principle of the foreign policy of the United States. Nixon affirmed that if he were elected he would continue Eisenhower's Republican support for engagement not isolation.⁹¹

Secondly, this statement links the peace and freedom of the United States to the peace and freedom of the world. He notably did not mention the balance of power nor the effort to maximize relative power, both of which are tenets of realism. Contrarily he mentioned "peace and freedom," which are the tenets of liberalism. However, this was not just a vague, yet vogue

⁹⁰ Nixon, National Convention.

⁹¹ Margaret Macmillan, *Nixon and Mao: The Week that Changed the World* (New York 2007) 10.

reference to the broad concepts of peace and freedom. He hit upon the core of international liberalism, which is that states can promote peace, which reinforces freedom and other liberal principles such as democracy and international cooperation. The theoretical basis for the statement is that as a liberal state, the United States can encourage liberalism abroad, and help create a liberal world order.⁹² This contradicts the realist notion that the international system is and will always be entwined in a sometimes violent anarchy.⁹³

Both of these interpretations of Nixon's statement were made much clearer later in the speech when he said: "What I call for is not a new isolationism. It is a new internationalism in which America enlists its allies and its friends around the world in those struggles in which their interest is as great as ours."⁹⁴ The "new internationalism" he spoke of is really *liberal internationalism* and he is calling for the United States and its liberal democratic allies—for these were the only real allies at the time—to participate in a global effort to reinforce liberalism. This is based upon the fact that liberal leadership in the world can foster further liberalization, but at the same time Nixon also acknowledged that the decline of U.S. global power had already begun and that it alone could not provide liberal leadership. A team effort would be needed to encourage the further development of global liberalism.⁹⁵

These were not the only liberal-inspired statements in Nixon's national convention speech; and his alignment with liberalism was not just a coincidence or a use of meaningless, soaring political rhetoric meant to bring out the votes, but rather it was a clear, deliberate and reoccurring theme present throughout the speech. Later on, Nixon said again, "I do promise action—a new policy for abroad; a new policy for peace and progress and justice at home."⁹⁶ This sentence was evidence of a common theme from the speech: connecting global peace to

⁹² Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 80 no. 4 (1986) 1162.

⁹³ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, IL, USA, 1979) 102.

⁹⁴ Nixon, National Convention.

⁹⁵ G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of International Leadership," *The Academy of Political Science* 111 no. 3 (1996) 396.

⁹⁶ Nixon, National Convention.

domestic peace—a reaction to the race riots and other forms of violence unfurling across the country at the time.

Another example from the speech of this theme is the statement: “We shall reestablish freedom from fear in America so that America can lead in reestablishing freedom from fear in the world.”⁹⁷ Here he used the term “fear” in reference to crime and violence in America, which was globally, paralleled by tyranny, violence and warfare, all of which are themselves non-liberal elements that further inhibit the development of liberalism. He essentially said that he believed that ending the chaos at home would enable the United States to further the causes of liberal internationalism. He did not utilize the rhetoric of realism to say that ending chaos at home would increase the United States’ power within the international community; he chose to use liberal rhetoric, not realist rhetoric.

Nixon developed a different kind of theme to further illustrate his concept of America’s role in the international community. He used references to light and illumination to connect the United States to the rest of the world in a manner consistent with liberal internationalism. There are two examples of this: “And the great light shining out from America will again become a beacon of hope for all those in the world who seek freedom and opportunity,”⁹⁸ and, “I see a day when our nation is at peace and the world is at peace and everyone on earth—those who hope, those who aspire, those who crave liberty will look to America as the shining example of hopes realized and dreams achieved.”⁹⁹

Both of these statements draw upon the liberal paradigm’s theory that a “virtuous circle” can be developed in which liberalism begets more liberalism—once liberal ideals such as peace, democracy, freedom and economic opportunity are established, they will encourage further efforts of liberalization.¹⁰⁰ In these statements, Nixon expressed a belief that the liberalism of the United States will encourage liberalism elsewhere in the world. The second statement also

⁹⁷ Nixon, National Convention.

⁹⁸ Nixon, National Convention.

⁹⁹ Nixon, National Convention.

¹⁰⁰ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*, 24.

expressed Nixon's belief that the world can be at peace when liberalism faces no legitimate ideological challenge. Such a lack of an ideological challenge to liberal democracy is Fukuyama's *End of History*,¹⁰¹ while the establishment of a *Perpetual Peace* is Kant's endgame vision.¹⁰² It is also an essentially unimaginable development according to the realist paradigm and its notion of enduring conflict in the international system.¹⁰³

Further into the speech Nixon reached out to his audience by connecting the generic idea of peace to the actual current events of the day affecting the lives of the people across the country: "And I pledge to you tonight that the first priority foreign policy objective of our next Administration will be to bring an honorable end to the war in Vietnam. We shall not stop there—we need a policy to prevent more Vietnams."¹⁰⁴

Finally, Nixon concluded his speech at the National Convention by saying to the audience, "The time has come for us to leave the valley of despair and climb the mountain so that we may see the glory of the dawn—a new day for America, and a new dawn for peace and freedom in the world."¹⁰⁵ It may at first glance seem trivial, but the fact that the last word—Nixon's final impression with the voters, under the campaign's brightest spotlight—was: "world," and in the context of "peace and freedom in the world." Although this idea could be consistent with the realist approach to foreign policy—the power politics of the freedom alliance versus global communism—the rhetoric is much more liberal than realist. Despite Nixon's own intellectual commitment to the realist dogma, one of his most important campaign speeches was inspired by liberal internationalism. He chose to end his speech, which he had uncustomarily written himself, with an appeal to the voters' desire for peace—an appeal to the public's natural affinity for the liberal interpretation of international affairs.

¹⁰¹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York 1992) 45.

¹⁰² Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, trans. M. Campbell Smith (Rockville, Maryland 2009) 107.

¹⁰³ Walt, "International Relations," 30.

¹⁰⁴ Nixon, National Convention.

¹⁰⁵ Nixon, National Convention.

The realist concern with national security surely does not directly contradict any portion of Nixon's speech; he did not advocate any policy, which would explicitly weaken the strategic interests of the United States, obviously, but nor did he advocate anything specific that was not relevant to national security—largely because there were few specifics mentioned. However, it is the predominance of liberal rhetoric that is so intriguing. Because his national convention speech was given to appeal to the widest array of people, also known as *voters*, Nixon understandably did not intellectually dig into the academic debate of global public policy—and because of his *Foreign Affairs* article he didn't need to—he'd already done so. Thus, despite having clearly realist views of foreign policy, for one of the most important speeches of his career till then, he quite clearly swung into the liberal paradigm. When he addressed the intellectuals and the foreign policy establishment in *Foreign Affairs*, he utilized the realist paradigm, but when addressing the mass public he used the liberal paradigm. This is the discrepancy of foreign policy in the United States; it is the discrepancy between realism and liberalism; policy and rhetoric.

Nixon's televised announcement of his trip to China, July 15, 1971

The campaign trail was not the exclusive home of Nixon's liberal rhetoric, it could also be found in numerous speeches he gave during his presidency. This essay cannot possibly thoroughly analyze them all, but it is worthwhile to look into one of the most historically significant presidential statements of the twentieth century.

Nixon's televised statement to the press on July 15, 1971, was just that: a statement; not a speech. A couple of minutes were all that was necessary to deliver the message about the new significant distribution of global power, which is exactly what it was: a realist-inspired, carefully calculated, strategic move to realign the world's most populous state—a state, which because of its population size and growth rate, could be the most powerful one on the globe—into a proto-alliance for the purpose of explicitly lessening the relative power of the Soviet Union's

communist bloc, the great rival of the United States. The realist intentions behind this diplomatic move were previously explained above and need not be re-iterated here.

The public statement in which Nixon announced one of the greatest efforts of the United States' realpolitik intriguingly contained no overt realist rhetoric. He did reference the size of China's population—a fact of great significance to realism,¹⁰⁶ but not an inherently realist statement. At best, the reference to China's large population provides an insight into Nixon's realist thought, but without the overt discussion of power politics. On the other hand, liberal rhetoric abounds in his short statement. He began by talking about, “our efforts to build a lasting peace,”¹⁰⁷ and an “enduring peace,”¹⁰⁸ which were certainly in line with Kant's notion of the *Perpetual Peace*, if not a direct reference to it. The statement's conclusion mirrored its introduction with the following reference to peace: “It is in this spirit that I will undertake what I deeply hope will become a journey for peace. Peace not just for our generation, but peace for future generations on this earth we share together.”¹⁰⁹

There are two immediate interpretations of Nixon's references to peace. The first involves his status as a *President of Peace*. He won the election of 1968 largely because he was able to obtain support from the anti-(Vietnam) War crowd, which had evolved into less of a policy criticism to a general movement for peace. It had been rather easy for him to brand himself as the candidate of peace because the other party controlled the White House and both houses of the U.S. Congress while the United States military involvement in Vietnam escalated to unacceptable levels. Unfortunately for Nixon and the peace movement, the withdrawal from Vietnam was a long, slow process.

Nixon had promised peace, but delivered a secret expanded war in Cambodia to disrupt the enemies' supply chains—a failed effort to establish peace through success. Nixon's

¹⁰⁶ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 43.

¹⁰⁷ NixonFoundation, “President Nixon announces trip to China,” content date: 15 July 1971, uploaded on 13 May 2010, to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ps34mVys8o>.

¹⁰⁸ NixonFoundation, “President Nixon announces trip to China.”

¹⁰⁹ NixonFoundation, “President Nixon announces trip to China.”

deliverance of more, broader warfare instead of peace in Vietnam did not bode well for his desire to be reelected for a second term as president. He had already lost one presidential election, and as the Watergate scandal would later prove, he so desperately did not want lose to another one. If a narrative of his broken promise for peace had set in, reelection would be a steeper uphill climb, thus he sought to prevent the establishment of such a narrative. One method to do so was to seek peace someplace else, someplace bigger, someplace unexpected: China—the People’s Republic of China, to be more specific. Nixon hoped the perception of failure concerning Vietnam and its ensuing disappointment and certain electoral rejection could be counterbalanced by peace with Peking. Thus, Nixon had a vested interest in a narrative of peace—a liberal narrative.

However, there is another interpretation of Nixon’s fixation on peace, and it has little to do with domestic politics. Global peace is the guiding light of the Kantian peace triangle, along with its corresponding paradigm of international relations theory: liberal internationalism—as was discussed in the previous chapter. Diplomatic relations are among the most prominent tools used for expanding the reach of liberalism. Remember, democracy, economic exchange and international organizations are the three points of the Kantian peace triangle and the main tenets of liberal internationalism.¹¹⁰ The democratization of such a strongly communist state is generally a long, difficult process, and there is no indication that Nixon legitimately hoped to bring democracy with him to China. The other two ideas were enshrined in the new attitude regarding China: the beginning of trade relations and the China seat at United Nations Security Council being transferred to the People’s Republic. These specific policies were not directly mentioned in Nixon’s announcement, but they would certainly be the result of “normal relations,”¹¹¹ as history has demonstrated to be the case. However, Nixon did specifically say, “All nations will gain from a reduction of tensions and a better relationship between the United

¹¹⁰ Russett and ONeal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 24.

¹¹¹ NixonFoundation, “President Nixon announces trip to China.”

States and the People's Republic of China."¹¹² By that statement, Nixon implied that the global community would benefit from peace between the United States and the People's Republic, as does the liberal paradigm of international relations.

Nixon also said, "It [the new relationship] is not directed against any other nation."¹¹³ Here Nixon was anticipating the criticism of his realpolitik and denying it. The denial—a common theme of Nixon's presidency for other, more scandalous reasons—is of course contradicted by the fact that he used this relationship with China to unsettle the Soviet Union enough that it would ultimately agree to an arms reduction treaty.¹¹⁴

Certainly both of the aforementioned dynamics—appeasing the public's demand for peace and international liberalism's policy prescriptions—were at play in Nixon's announcement address regarding his trip to China. The domestic reasons for seeking peace complement the liberal foreign policy rhetoric. *Time Magazine's* cover illustration—a political cartoon featuring Nixon and Kissinger in a patriotic boat with the phrase: "To Peking for Peace,"¹¹⁵—indicates not only that the usually hostile media had adopted Nixon's desired interpretation of the event, but also the power of presidential rhetoric. If the president's words and rhetorical style were irrelevant, then the rest of society would disregard them. However, Nixon's liberal rhetoric regarding his trip to China became the narrative. By framing his trip to China in liberal rhetoric from the get-go, he was also able to establish the narrative. In essence, his propaganda effort had worked flawlessly.

Based upon the facts surrounding the event, *Time Magazine* could have easily justified a headline of "To Peking to Pressure Moscow," or "To Peking to Restructure the Global Distribution of Power," but it did not. The editors followed the lead of the president's liberal rhetoric. The fact that Nixon was perceived as a president bringing peace to the world

¹¹² NixonFoundation, "President Nixon announces trip to China."

¹¹³ NixonFoundation, "President Nixon announces trip to China."

¹¹⁴ Edward Kolodziej, "Foreign Policy and the Politics of Interdependence: The Nixon Presidency," *Polity* 9, no. 2 (1976) 145.

¹¹⁵ Cover illustration, *Time*, 26 July 1971, as viewed at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19710726,00.html>.

potentially reconciled his failures in the Vietnam War which could have derailed his attempt for reelection. In the trip to China, it was beneficial for the president to be perceived as a man of peace, prosperity and cooperation; it was beneficial for him to adopt the mantra of the liberal paradigm of international relations theory. Only broader research and a deeper analysis could properly determine if his trip to China would have captivated the U.S. public and allowed the president to seem so peaceful in the Vietnam era if it had been framed as an attempt to rearrange the global balance of power, to transform the bipolar system into a potentially tripolar one, or an attempt to establish leverage to use against the Soviet Union during arms limitations negotiations. Would the rhetoric of realpolitik have been as effective and achieved the same results domestically as the liberal rhetoric did? Probably not.

RECONCILING NIXON'S REALISM AND LIBERALISM

This essay is seeking to reconcile or at least develop some sort of understanding of the apparent discrepancy of foreign policy and its rhetoric, and the conflicts of interest between the international relations theories of realism and liberalism. The previous two sections of this chapter have demonstrated that U.S. President Richard Nixon not only found intellectual inspiration in the *realist* paradigm of international relations theory, but he also contributed to the scholarly field—via his article in *Foreign Affairs*—and implemented a set of corresponding policies regarding the United States' relationship with China, the Soviet Union, Pakistan and India, as well as others. On the other hand, Nixon drew upon the *liberal* paradigm of international relations theory as a candidate on the campaign trail and as president, discussing his desire for peace, friendship and cooperation around the world. The apparent contradiction between conducting a realist foreign policy while discussing it in liberal terms can actually be easily explained. Although John Mearsheimer did not explicitly discuss the Nixon case in his book about realism, he did address the basic notion of the United States being attracted to *liberalism*

while utilizing *realism* in its foreign policy.¹¹⁶ Nixon was clearly no exception to Mearsheimer's concept.

Despite the fact that the general public discourse does not recognize the discrepancy, the foreign policy establishment duly does. Mearsheimer's observation of the general discrepancy has already been addressed, but he is not the only one who has recognized this phenomenon. A member of Nixon's own administration has also written explicitly about Nixon's discrepancy in foreign policy and its rhetoric. In addition to providing several additional examples of Nixon's liberal rhetoric—or its closely related cousin “Wilsonian idealism”—Henry Kissinger provided an explanation of Nixon's dichotomy¹¹⁷ that directly parallels Mearsheimer's general description of U.S. society.¹¹⁸ According to Kissinger, both the public of the United States and Richard Nixon preferred the liberal paradigm and its vision of a world where peace and freedom reign supreme. Both were drawn to the positive vision of humanity and global affairs, while acknowledging and accepting the role of the United States as a leader of liberalism and its global enlightenment.

However, realism showcases the difference between the U.S. public and Nixon. While the public dislikes realism and most everything it represents,¹¹⁹ Nixon had an essentially realist understanding of the world: he believed that ideology should not trump national security, as it had under the containment strategy, particularly in Vietnam. He also believed in the balance of power theory—a key component of the realist paradigm.¹²⁰ As president, Nixon ultimately combined the two approaches. In an effort to connect with the public and express his own idealism he used liberal rhetoric to discuss his realist policies based upon national interest and the implementation of a global balance of power, as evidenced by his policy of establishing a relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China to balance the threat

¹¹⁶ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 22.

¹¹⁷ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 706.

¹¹⁸ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* 23-24.

¹¹⁹ With the poignant exception of national security, which is generally well received by the public of the United States.

¹²⁰ Stephen S. Rosenfeld, “Nixon: Limits of Détente ...” *The Washington Post*, 29 April 1994, A27.

of the Soviet Union and the global spread of communism.¹²¹ Nixon clearly expressed such a belief to foreign affairs columnist and author C. L. Sulzberger during an interview in 1986:

It is very important to have in mind that we live in a world of power politics [“realism”]. On the other hand, Americans do not like power politics. We never have. We are dragged into it against our will. For Americans to support any foreign policy initiative, it must be cast in idealistic terms. Wilson, for example, talked about making the world safe for democracy. That was in his mind. And a lot of Americans believe that was also the case when they walked in and supported World War II. ... I think at the present time it is very important for the United States in its position of leadership to cast its role not just in terms of balance of power, arms control, etcetera, but in idealistic terms. That is why I think it is very important that despite the traditional unpopularity of foreign involvement, Americans respond to a positive initiative. They should see that we’re not just spending all this money to defend ourselves and all the rest, but that we want peace for ourselves and everybody else too. ... Of course, a good dose of idealism exists in American foreign policy. We should practice power politics because that’s the way the world is. But it must be cast in idealistic terms in order to get people to support it.¹²²

Clearly, Nixon himself was aware and readily admits that he was conducting realist foreign policy, while using liberalism to sell it to the public. His more cynical critics would find this to be natural given his lies surrounding the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War; however, this dichotomy of foreign policy was not just another sinister, deceitful element of the conniving “Tricky Dick,” but rather a condition of the U.S. presidency and a response to public sentiment. The next chapter will outline how even the sweetheart of the liberals, Jimmy Carter, at the other end of the political spectrum, was fundamentally no different in his approach to foreign policy.

¹²¹ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 706.

¹²² Sulzberger, *The World and Richard Nixon*, 50.

Chapter IV

Case Study: Jimmy Carter

One cannot reach an understanding of the discrepancy between liberal rhetoric and the realist agenda of U.S. foreign policy without considering James Carter, who governed the United States of America as the 40th President from 1977-1981. President Carter is crucial to understanding how the rhetoric of liberal foreign policy works in the United States because he is widely acknowledged as a champion of peace, human rights and other liberal notions of foreign policy.¹²³

When looking into the discrepancy between foreign policy rhetoric and reasoning, the presidency of Jimmy Carter provides an excellent case study. Because he is seen as being a clear “liberal”—in terms of foreign policy, not necessarily “liberal” in regards to the American political spectrum—he is the one who would least likely have used realist reasoning in his foreign policies. If the actions and actual foreign policies of presidents matched their rhetoric, then Jimmy Carter’s actions should show only at most a minor influence from the realist paradigm, and should instead indicate the liberal paradigm’s influence on his foreign policies. Thus, if one can demonstrate that the (rhetorically) least realist president was heavily influenced by realism, one can reasonably assume that the institution of U.S. foreign policy is heavily influenced by the realist paradigm, and that it does not simply influence a few presidents once in a while, but rather the system as a whole. To state this concept more succinctly, if Jimmy Carter, the most “liberal” foreign policy maker was in fact greatly informed by realism, then the United States, regardless of its leader and his or her rhetoric, is primarily a realist actor within the international system.

However, before making the case that Carter made realist foreign policy despite his liberal rhetoric, the exercise of demonstrating his liberal rhetoric should be completed. But it

¹²³ Peter G. Bourne, *Jimmy Carter: A Comprehensive Biography from Plains to Postpresidency* (New York 1997) 383.

will be useful to begin with a brief explanation of how and why Carter stands out as being so liberal—specifically one should be aware of the political circumstances which brought a liberal to the White House, where he was responsible for orchestrating U.S. foreign policy.

Carter and the Watergate Effect

Given the nature of democracy and the choices it presents, it is very difficult to ever draw concrete conclusions from parties, proposals or even candidates in isolation. Unlike the regimes of dictators, authoritarians and absolute monarchs, successful democratic regimes are characterized by electoral choices, and thus a plethora of influences ranging from ideologies to parties to leaders. Therefore, one can only analyze Jimmy Carter, his administration and his foreign policies by having at least some understanding of their context. In the case of Carter's liberal ideas of foreign policy this is particularly relevant given the zeitgeist and political dynamics of the time.

As a result of one of the greatest scandals in U.S. political history—Watergate—Richard Nixon felt the need to resign from the presidency, given the public outrage and anger. Nixon's vice president, Gerald Ford, then became the president of the United States of America. Despite his lack of direct involvement in the Watergate scandal, as the highest ranking member of Nixon's administration, his credibility, and more importantly, the credibility of the political party he represented, was tarnished. So disgusted was the public with the way Washington politicians conducted themselves, anyone associated with *the establishment* was seen in a negative light. The first presidential election to follow the Watergate Scandal was the election of 1976, in which Jimmy Carter ultimately defeated the incumbent Gerald Ford, who had served as president for two and a half years.

A very basic understanding of Watergate and its fallout, particularly the public's disgust with Washington's political culture, not only explains how and why Carter won the election¹²⁴, but why his foreign policy rhetoric departed so significantly from that of the Nixon/Ford administration. One of Carter's main traits that appealed to the people of the United States was his status as an outsider.¹²⁵ As a politician he had served the State of Georgia from 1961 to 1966 as a State Senator and from 1971 to 1975 as Governor. His involvement with Georgia's politics instead of the federal politics of the nation's capital meant that he was untainted by the political culture of corruption in Washington, DC, while his laid-back and charming manner—much more typical of the deep South than the elitist Northeast—gave him the aura of an “outsider” and thus the appeal that helped him win the nomination of the Democratic Party.¹²⁶ This is significant because as a successful outsider, he was freed from the conventional wisdom, including the conventional wisdom in regards to management style and policy-making. The appeal of his “outsider-ness” allowed him to forge a new course in many policy areas, including foreign policy. Thus, the scandalous nature of Watergate and the desire to turn a new page in U.S. politics allowed an outsider, such as Jimmy Carter to campaign for the presidency upon a rather new platform. By abandoning the Washington consensus he was also able to abandon Washington's often overt realpolitik and focus instead on liberal issues such as human rights and world peace.

CARTER'S LIBERAL RHETORIC

As a sub-federal political leader from Georgia, Jimmy Carter had never needed to consider foreign policy issues because the federal institutions of Washington, D.C. have the exclusive prerogative in international affairs. Thus, while being an outsider was beneficial to Carter

¹²⁴ Kenneth E. Morris, *Jimmy Carter: American Moralist* (Athens, Georgia, USA 1996) 209.

¹²⁵ Gary W. Reichard, “Early Returns: Assessing Jimmy Carter,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* vol. 20, no. 3 (Summer 1990) 603.

¹²⁶ Leo. R. Ribuffo, “Jimmy Carter: Beyond the Current Myths,” *OAH Magazine of History*, vol. 3, no. 3/4 (Summer-Fall 1988) 19.

regarding domestic concerns about the national political culture, being a Washington outsider was disadvantageous for Carter in the sense that he had no experience with foreign policy and no connections to the foreign policy establishment, although this certainly did not hinder him politically in 1976. Additionally challenging his policy credentials was the foundation of his political philosophy, which had brought him great success in Georgia, where his Christian faith had led him to conclude that the previous racial policies typical of the south were amoral. His biblically-inspired commitments to the pro-life and civil rights movements didn't have an automatic correlation in the realm of foreign policy.¹²⁷ Of course, given that the U.S. president plays such a crucial role in the nation's foreign policy, any presidential candidate must address international issues and explain to the public what his or her basic approach to foreign policy would be if elected to the presidency.

Carter's campaign speech to the Foreign Policy Association

As the presidential campaign progressed, the need for Carter to explain his foreign policy philosophy grew. In June of 1976, as his campaign for the nomination of the Democratic Party began to shift to the general election strategy, he delivered a speech entitled "A Community of the Free" to the Foreign Policy Association in New York City. Of course, this was not just a random speech by a presidential hopeful, but rather his attempt to persuade the foreign policy establishment that he, a retired peanut farmer, was capable of representing the United States of America to the rest of the world as its head of state, and also literate enough in foreign affairs to create policies that would deeply impact the U.S., as well as its international friends and foes. The general precariousness of the Cold War only heightened the concerns of the time.

In his speech to the Foreign Policy Association one can easily observe both his willingness and desire to shift the U.S. from a realist-inspired state to a liberal-inspired one, especially in the following excerpt:

¹²⁷ Betty Glad, *An Outsider in the White House: Jimmy Carter, His Advisors, and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, New York, USA 2009) 19.

In the area of foreign policy, our people are troubled, confused, and sometimes angry. There has been too much emphasis on transient spectacles and too little on substance. We are deeply concerned, not only by such obvious tragedies as the war in Vietnam, but by the more subtle erosion in the focus and the morality of our foreign policy. Under the Nixon-Ford Administration, there has evolved a kind of secretive “Lone Ranger” foreign policy—a one-man policy of international adventure. This is not an appropriate policy for America.

We have sometimes tried to play other nations one against another instead of organizing free nations to share world responsibility to collective action. We have made highly publicized efforts to woo the major communist powers while neglecting our natural friends and allies. A foreign policy based on secrecy inherently has had to be closely guarded and amoral, and we have had to forgo openness, consultation, and a constant adherence to fundamental principles and high moral standards.¹²⁸

In the second paragraph of this excerpt, he made a direct reference to the Nixon-Ford administration while characterizing it as a realist policy maker. The “secretive Lone Ranger” is a reference to the realist concern with a state’s self-interest and willingness to conduct unilateral foreign policy. Within the principles of realism, states deal with the uncertainty of anarchy by looking out for their own security and understanding that only they can protect themselves from the conflict and devastation in the world. This concept often manifests itself when states, particularly the most powerful ones, take actions to achieve their own goals without depending upon the greater global community to protect their interests.¹²⁹ This speech, like virtually all campaign speeches in the United States, is full of vague ideas and thus it is difficult to know to what exactly this was a reference, but, as explained earlier in this essay, President Nixon and his foreign policy advisor Henry Kissinger were infamous for running U.S. foreign policy on their

¹²⁸ Jimmy Carter “A Community of the Free,” (The Foreign Policy Association, New York June 23, 1976) in: Jimmy Carter, *A Government as Good as Its People* (New York 1977) 115.

¹²⁹ Walt, “International Relations,” 31. Based upon Waltz, *Theories of International Politics*.

own, with little help from outsiders. So in this case, Carter's *Lone Ranger* was the realist philosophy of the administration's foreign policy dynamic duo: Nixon and Kissinger, whom many critics accused of implementing overly aggressive, unilateral, realist foreign policies, which Carter criticizes, thus implying his disdain for a philosophy of foreign policy that could be called *Nixonian realism*.

The above excerpt's third paragraph attacks realism's use of shifting alliances to create a balance of power instead of utilizing more global organizational structures to foster peace and stability. Carter went on to criticize Nixon's reconciliation with illiberal China and claimed that the liberal allies of the U.S. were "neglected."¹³⁰

Further into the speech, Carter said:

We simply must have an international policy of democratic leadership, and we must stop trying to play a game of power politics. We must evolve and consummate our foreign policy openly and frankly. There must be bipartisan harmony and collaboration between the President and the Congress, and we must re-establish a spirit of common purpose among democratic nations.¹³¹

In the first sentence of the above passage, where Carter said, "We must stop trying to play a game of power politics," he directly refers to realism's centralizing focus: the relative power among states and their manipulation of it,¹³² and says that in its regard that "we must stop." In his statement, Carter essentially said that the U.S. must abandon realist-inspired foreign policies. He then described what should replace realism: liberalism—"we must re-establish a spirit of common purpose among democratic nations."¹³³ The focus on democracy and its promotion in the world is a liberal idea, and goes against the grain of realism.¹³⁴

Carter continued his pro-liberal rhetoric:

¹³⁰ Carter "A Community of the Free," 115.

¹³¹ Carter "A Community of the Free," 116.

¹³² Walt, "International Relations," 31.

¹³³ Carter "A Community of the Free," 116.

¹³⁴ James Lee Ray "Does Democracy Cause Peace," *Annual Review of Political Science* vol. 1 (1998): 27-46, 1.

We need to consider how, in addition to alliances that were formed in years past for essentially military purposes, we might develop broader arrangements for dealing with such problems as the arms race and world poverty and the allocation of resources. The time has come for us to seek a partnership between North America, Western Europe, and Japan. Our three regions share economic, political and security concerns that make it logical that we should seek ever-increasing unity and understanding.¹³⁵

His reference to “alliances formed for military purposes” is an acknowledgement of existing realist alliances—left-over from previous wars. Although he does not want to abolish them, he does want to reform them along liberal lines to deal with “the arms race and world poverty and the allocation of resources.”¹³⁶ This passage focuses on the use of alliances, which can be both realist and liberal—the difference is in how and why an alliance would be created, maintained, utilized and ultimately terminated. Thus, rhetoric concerning alliances in general is inherently neither realist nor liberal. However, Carter did describe his intentions for these alliances, which enables one to infer which paradigm of international relations theory he prefers. He stated three objectives for his alliances; the first was to deal with the arms race. Again, this could go either realist or liberal. If the multilateral solution to the arms race were to increase U.S. military power relative to the other great powers, then, dealing with the arms race would be a realist foreign policy; however, if the multilateral solution to the arms race were to decrease U.S. military power relative to the global powers, then, it would go against realist logic but may or may not still be liberal. A liberal solution to the arms race would likely include international organizations to enforce a minimal level of arms in an effort to reduce global armament and thus also reduce the risk and devastation from global conflicts, in an effort to promote a *perpetual peace*.

The second of Carter’s proposals for alliances was to solve “world poverty.” Aside from being an enormously high goal, ending global poverty is also a clearly non-realist goal.

Admittedly, there could be a few instances where reducing poverty would serve the realist

¹³⁵ Carter “A Community of the Free,” 116.

¹³⁶ Carter “A Community of the Free,” 116.

interest in national security. For example, a realist would say to the United States that combating poverty in Mexico may be worthwhile if it would create a more stable society, a more cooperative ally and a safer border between the two states. But even that is a bit of a stretch for realism. Other examples occurred around the globe during the Cold War when the United States provided financial assistance to the states that actively opposed communism and its spread, but any serious realist would readily admit that the purpose of such aid served primarily militaristic strategic objectives and directly opposed the forces that most greatly threatened the security of the U.S. Liberals always want to reduce poverty; a realist does, only when it is in the national interest to do so.¹³⁷ Realists are not overtly concerned with poverty—as Jimmy Carter was—until it becomes a threat to national security, unlike liberals who often view poverty in a more moral sense, as Carter did.¹³⁸

When Carter spoke about global poverty in this speech, he did not attach it to any concept of power, strategy or security; he did not connect poverty to realism or a national interest. Generally, when Carter spoke of poverty, he spoke from the perspective of human compassion. Before running for the presidency, Carter had been a politician and governor of the state of Georgia, where poverty was abundant and often associated with racial issues and a lack of equal rights and even a neglect of human rights. Along with being a champion of racial integration and equality, he spoke out against poverty, which played a crucial role in race relations throughout the South.¹³⁹ Thus, Carter was well known for taking an active stand against poverty, which had led him to success in Georgia. It is not surprising then that during his run for the presidency he took his old platform from his days in Georgia's political scene and applied it to the greater world as his would-be presidential foreign policy. As the governor of Georgia, he was deeply opposed to social injustice and poverty; as a candidate for the presidency

¹³⁷ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 55.

¹³⁸ Jimmy Carter "It's the Poor Who Suffer," (Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida, USA October 29, 1975) in: Jimmy Carter, *A Government as Good as Its People* (New York 1977) 65.

¹³⁹ Morris, *Jimmy Carter: American Moralist*, 252.

he also opposed injustice and poverty. The transition was logical—all poverty is bad, in his view, and should be ended. This notion is quite consistent with the goals of liberalism, but not realism.

The final purpose for Carter's international alliances of the future was to "allocate resources," which at first seems to straddle the border between global liberalism and some sort of global socialist or even communist idea. Or this could have been simply a reiteration of his opposition to global poverty; however, when one tailors Carter's idea of using international alliances (or loosely arranged international organizations) to promote trade to the U.S. and its specific place within the global economy, one realizes that the U.S. is a resource-rich country, especially in regards to agricultural products. Thus, the promotion of global trade serves the U.S. national interest, something any realist could appreciate. However, realists would never want to be dependent upon the cooperation of the international community for its procurement of resources. Classical liberals such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo were staunch believers in international trade, while contemporary liberals believe that participation in international organizations, which promote trade, can reduce conflict. The idea of using international alliances and organizations to facilitate trade seems more liberal than realist.

Furthermore, there is the issue of fossil fuels. Carter's campaign for the presidency took place between the two great oil crises in the United States. Thus, he was campaigning in an era that had already experienced one oil shock and was well aware that another could transpire, leading to many great concerns about the global availability of cheap crude oil. Thus Carter's liberal line about using global alliances to allocate resources could also be interpreted as an attempt to use the nation's alliances to ensure the U.S. would have easy access to natural resources, including global sources of petroleum, which is not only a particular resource the U.S. cannot function without, but also one for which the U.S. was increasingly relying upon foreign sources. Looking out for the national interest is also a realist objective. Using alliances to ensure U.S. access to petroleum is both a liberal and realist objective; however, Carter's rhetoric about it

is decidedly more liberal than realist, given his emphasis on multilateral cooperation, not the national interest and strategic objectives.

Carter mentioned yet another aspect of liberalism during his speech to the Foreign Policy Association when he proposed a grand intercontinental/global alliance of states which happen to be the world's most stable democracies. He said that this alliance should be created for "economic, political and security concerns."¹⁴⁰ This is clearly part of a liberal agenda. The main concept of liberalism is that democratic states will create international organizations and economic interdependence to foster greater peace and prosperity.¹⁴¹ This line from Carter's speech simply explains which states will start the cycle, and its no coincidence that he chose to mention the world's most democratic regions. And finally, his notion of "unity and understanding"¹⁴² is definitely more in keeping with the liberal concept of states coming together in peace than it is with realpolitik's power maximization and manipulation in pursuit of the national interest.

In the end, Jimmy Carter summed up his views on foreign policy by saying to the Foreign Policy Association:

What I do have is a strong sense that this country is drifting and must have new leadership and new direction. The time has come for a new direction. The time has come for a new thrust of creativity in foreign policy ... The time has come for a new architectural effort ... with peace and justice its constant goal.¹⁴³

Carter's belief that the U.S. should restructure its foreign policy for "peace and justice"¹⁴⁴ is simplistic, but at the same time quite profound. First, he is saying that the U.S. needs a new approach: that the previous reign of realpolitik needs to end. Then he suggests that a more liberal "goal" of "peace and justice" should be pursued. Again, just to make clear, most

¹⁴⁰ Carter "A Community of the Free," 116.

¹⁴¹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 35.

¹⁴² Carter "A Community of the Free," 116.

¹⁴³ Carter "A Community of the Free," 122.

¹⁴⁴ Carter "A Community of the Free," 122.

reasonable realists would like to see a world of peace and justice; however, they accept the anarchy of the global order, understand the threat it imposes upon national security and utilize the power relations of states to maximize and ensure the stability, longevity, prosperity and security of the state. Realists do not believe that peace and justice will triumph in the world of anarchy, and thus do not focus upon it, whereas liberals do believe that the ultimate global peace can be achieved.¹⁴⁵ In his speech, Carter outlined how and why the U.S. should fundamentally shift its global strategy from one based upon the realist perspective to one based upon the liberal perspective.

Carter's commencement address to the graduates of the University of Notre Dame

Every year, as the spring season approaches in the United States, colleges and universities scramble to recruit the most prestigious members of the U.S.—and even the global—community to give the commencement address during their graduation ceremonies. Naturally, as one of the most prominent individuals in American society, presidents are highly sought after speakers, and as president, Jimmy Carter could easily have spoken at any number of institutions. A few months after being sworn in as president, Carter went to the University of Notre Dame to deliver the commencement speech. There are certainly many things to be said about him going to Notre Dame—primarily centered around Carter's strong identity as an evangelical Christian and Notre Dame's affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church—but these are not the concern of this essay, although the Christian connection of the university and Carter's inspiration for policy is noteworthy. However, this commencement address is relevant to this essay because it was primarily about foreign policy, which admittedly is a bit odd for a commencement speech, but nonetheless, the speech provides great insight into Carter's foreign policy and is clearly an example of his liberal rhetoric.

¹⁴⁵ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 17.

At the beginning of his speech, Carter established his notion of liberal foreign policy by saying:

I want to speak to you today about the strands that connect our actions overseas with our essential character as a nation. I believe we can have a foreign policy that is democratic, that is based on fundamental values, and that uses power and influence, which we have, for humane purposes. ... We can reject the arguments of those rulers who deny human rights to their people. We are confident that democracy's example will be compelling, and so we seek to bring that example close to those from whom in the past few years we have been separated and who are not yet convinced about the advantages of our kind of life. ... Democracy's great recent successes—in India, Portugal, Spain, Greece—show that our confidence in this system is not misplaced. Being confident of our own future, we are now free of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear. I'm glad that's being changed.¹⁴⁶

Carter's belief that the U.S. can have a democratic, values-based foreign policy which uses its power for humane purposes¹⁴⁷ is essentially the definition of the liberal paradigm of international relations theory.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, Carter's rejection of international leaders who disregard human rights is a diversion from the realist approach, since a realist foreign policy strategy would not place such a matter at the foundation of a state's foreign policy. Realism does not deny actions intended to defend human rights; however, it would only condone such actions if there was no jeopardy to the broader national interest. For a realist, the national interest always comes first, regardless of human rights concerns.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Jimmy Carter, "Address at Commencement Exercises of the University of Notre Dame," *University of Notre Dame Commencement Ceremony* (Notre Dame, Indiana, USA: May 22, 1977) accessed from the University of California at Santa Barbara at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=7552#axzz1GslXLHVq>, 10-16.

¹⁴⁷ As stated in the second sentence of the above excerpt.

¹⁴⁸ Michael W. Doyle, "Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace," *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 99, no. 3 (August 2005) 463.

¹⁴⁹ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 46.

The last line of the above excerpt is worth repeating again: “We are now free of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear.”¹⁵⁰ The “embrace” that Carter spoke of is the willingness to form alliances with illiberal regimes, such as that of Chile’s Augusto Pinochet, among others. In this statement Carter acknowledged that the United States had previously formed alliances which do not support the globalization of liberal principles; essentially these alliances of which he spoke were formed for strategic reasons for the sake of greater national security—in other words, they were foreign policies based upon realism. This statement was quite important not only because he recognized the previous realism of U.S. foreign policy—as the previous chapter of this thesis explored—but also because he said, “we are now free of that.”¹⁵¹ Although he did not explicitly state that the United States would transition from a realist foreign policy to a liberal one, an in-depth analysis of his words makes that intention emphatically clear. Given that the Notre Dame Commencement speech was delivered in the beginning of his presidency, the obvious question that comes to mind is: How successful was Carter in reorienting the foreign policy of the United States from realism to liberalism?

However, before answering that question, Carter’s commitment to the liberal rhetoric of foreign policy should be further demonstrated. The three thousand words of the Notre Dame Commencement speech did not contain a mere trite reference to international liberalism, but rather it was the main thesis of the speech. Carter took the opportunity in an early part of his presidential term to explain his religiously inspired morally liberal paradigm of international relations at one of the most prominent religious institutions in the United States, which further emphasized that his approach to foreign policy was based upon his religiously inspired views of morality, equality and human rights, instead of the dirty realpolitik of his predecessors. It is not necessary to thoroughly analyze all such liberal points in his speech; they all harmoniously complement one another in expressing Carter’s liberal views on foreign policy—or at least they

¹⁵⁰ Carter, “Address at Commencement Exercises of the University of Notre Dame,” 16.

¹⁵¹ Carter, “Address at Commencement Exercises of the University of Notre Dame,” 16.

demonstrate his liberal rhetoric on the matter. Here are some of the liberal highlights from the Notre Dame Commencement address:¹⁵²

- “Our policy ... was guided by two principles: a belief that Soviet expansion was almost inevitable but that it must be contained and the corresponding belief in the importance of an almost exclusive alliance among non-communist nations on both sides of the Atlantic. That system could not last forever unchanged.
- “We can no longer separate the traditional issues of war and peace from the new global questions of justice, equity and human rights.
- “We have reaffirmed America’s commitment to human rights as a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy.
- “You may be interested in knowing that at this NATO meeting, for the first time in more than 25 years, all members are democracies. Even more important, all of us reaffirmed our basic optimism in the future of the democratic system. Our spirit of confidence is spreading. Together, our democracy can help to shape the wider architecture of global cooperation.
- “[The arms race is] morally deplorable.
- “We set in motion an international effort to determine the best ways of harnessing nuclear energy.
- “But all this I’ve described is just the beginning. It’s a beginning aimed towards a clear goal: to create a wider framework of international cooperation suited to the new and rapidly changing historical circumstances.
- “We will cooperate more closely with the newly influential countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. We need their friendship in a common effort as the structure of world power changes.

¹⁵² Carter, “Address at Commencement Exercises of the University of Notre Dame,” 19-60.

- “The western democracies, the OPEC nations, and the developed communist countries can cooperate through existing international institutions in providing more effective aid. This is an excellent alternative to war.
- “Although these are our close friends [“nations in this hemisphere”] and neighbors, our links with them are the same links of equality that we forge for the rest of the world. We will be dealing with them as part of a new, worldwide mosaic of global, regional and bilateral relations.
- “We see ... China as a key force for global peace. We wish to cooperate closely ...
- “Let me conclude by summarizing: Our policy is based on a historical vision of America’s role. Our policy is derived from a larger view of global change. Our policy is rooted in our moral values, which never change. Our policy is reinforced by our material wealth and by our military power. Our policy is designed to serve mankind. And it is a policy that I hope will make you proud to be Americans.”

Although Carter never specifically used terms such as “liberal theories of international relations” or “Kantian system,” these concepts certainly provided the analytical tools and conceptual framework that created the speech. Democracy and international cooperation were repeatedly mentioned as ways to increase peace, morality and human rights. Jimmy Carter clearly used the liberal paradigm of international relations to develop his foreign policy rhetoric, as evidenced by his commencement address to the graduates and audience of the University of Notre Dame.

It is crucial to remember that the previous pages merely present an analysis of rhetoric, and that there is a significant difference in analyzing what one says versus what one does. This has been an analysis of what Carter said on the campaign trail and early in his presidency which may or may not give an indication of the policies he crafted as president. The words of any leader, or in fact any person, may or may not correspond to their actions. In seeking to understand the

apparent discrepancy between foreign policy and its rhetoric one must analyze each separately. With the above analysis of Carter's rhetoric in mind, it is time to turn to his actual policies.

CARTER AND THE TWO CHINAS

Given this essay's previous discussion about U.S. President Richard Nixon and his revolutionary diplomatic breakthrough with China—a historic visit by a U.S. president—it only makes sense to follow through and cross the partisan divide of U.S. political culture and see how Jimmy Carter—a member of the political system's other major party—dealt with the continuation of Nixon's China policies.

As previously mentioned, in his speech to the Foreign Policy Association in New York City during his campaign for the presidency, Carter spoke out against Nixon's realist approach to China:

We have sometimes tried to play other nations one against another instead of organizing free nations to share world responsibilities in collective action. We have made highly publicized efforts to woo the major communist powers while neglecting our natural friends and allies. A foreign policy based on secrecy inherently has had to be closely guarded and amoral, and we have had to forgo openness, consultation, and a constant adherence to fundamental principles and high moral standards.¹⁵³

Although this was another candidate's vague approach to policy, it seems clear, with a little intuition, that he was addressing the U.S. relations with the communist states when he said: "... play other nations against one another instead of organizing free nations ...". This is certainly a reference to Nixon's move to weaken the relative power of the Soviet Union by replacing it as the most powerful ally of the world's most populous state, China.

There is of course the chance that he was referring to other instances or at least bundling up several scenarios into one generalized statement. For example, the "the secrecy" could have

¹⁵³ Carter "A Community of the Free," 115.

been a reference to the policies of the Vietnam War in which supply chains in neighboring countries were certainly attacked. However, this speech was given during his campaign for the presidency against Gerald Ford, who had continued and expanded Nixon's policies toward China, while putting an end to the Vietnam War once and for all. Given the competitive nature of U.S. presidential campaigns, it is highly unlikely that Carter would have wanted to remind anyone of the disastrous policies that began the unpopular Vietnam War during two previous administrations headed by the Democratic Party, to which Carter himself belonged. Thus it is much more likely that he was addressing the relationship with China in this portion of his speech.

Although Nixon's trip to China did not transform China into a democratic republic in the image of the United States, it did effectively end the Soviet Union's political and economic influence over China.¹⁵⁴ In his speech Carter criticized this method of conducting foreign policy—using China to weaken the Soviet Union—by saying that the United States should rather focus on “organizing free nations to share world responsibility in collective action.”¹⁵⁵ He implied that it was wrong to enter into a diplomatic relationship with a state that restricts freedom. Carter made the case that the Nixon-Kissinger-Ford administration and foreign policy team and its realist policies should be ended in favor of his more liberal, free-democratic-centric approach to U.S. foreign policy.

Two and a half years later—about two years after taking the oath of office—President Jimmy Carter issued the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China on January 1, 1979. It is interesting that after being so critical of Nixon's China policy, he chose to take it one step further. Carter's communiqué said, in reference to the United States and China: “Neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region of the world and each is

¹⁵⁴ James Mann, *About Face: A History of America's Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York 1998) 35.

¹⁵⁵ Carter “A Community of the Free,” 115.

opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony.”¹⁵⁶ This pledge is a direct contradiction of what a realist state would do,¹⁵⁷ and thus indicates that not only would the U.S. end its realist tradition, but that it also believes China will no longer engage the world as a realist actor.

Carter went on in the communiqué to say, “We do not undertake this important step for transient tactical or expedient reasons.”¹⁵⁸ The previous chapter of this essay already explained Nixon’s “tactical” and “expedient reasons” for establishing diplomatic relations with China. Such reasons were clearly present, and by denying such claims in the communiqué, he essentially acknowledges that there were “tactical” and “expedient reasons” for creating ties with China and that these reasons did not motivate him, but rather the opportunity to pursue his liberal foreign policy agenda, including the pursuit of world peace. It is quite clear that Carter was distancing himself rhetorically from the ideology of realist international relations, while explaining the continuation and expansion of a realist-inspired foreign policy.

After distancing himself and his China policy from realism, through his rhetoric, Carter then gave clear confirmation of his liberal, global peace-promoting agenda:

To strengthen and expedite the benefits of this new relationship between China and the United States, I am pleased to announce that Vice Premier Teng has accepted my invitation and will visit Washington at the end of January. His visit will give our Governments the opportunity to consult with each other on global issues and to begin working together to enhance the cause of world peace.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ *Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China* (Washington, DC, USA and Peking, China January 1, 1979) in: Jimmy Carter, “Speech on Establishing Diplomatic Relations with China (December 15, 1978) Jimmy Carter” Scripps Library and Multimedia Archive, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia (Charlottesville, Virginia, USA) accessed at: <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3935>, 5.

¹⁵⁷ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 41.

¹⁵⁸ *Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China*, 12.

¹⁵⁹ *Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China*, 18.

Carter went on to acknowledge his predecessors, perhaps to indicate that the strategic reasoning behind the initiative truly belonged to them and not to him and his peace agenda, by saying that the new relationship with China was an “effort of our own country to build a world in which peace will be the goal and the responsibility of all nations.”¹⁶⁰

Carter concluded the Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and China with the following paragraph: “The normalization of relations between the United States and China has no other purpose than this: the advancement of peace. It is in this spirit, at this season of peace that I take special pride in sharing this good news with you tonight.”¹⁶¹ If there had been a doubt in anyone’s mind, this closing statement’s purpose was to clarify once and for all that the only global issue of relevance for Jimmy Carter was the liberal issue of peace and not the realist concerns of power. However, again, as explained previously, there clearly were reasons for solidifying a Sino-American alliance that had little to do with liberal peace and everything to do with the realist global strategies of power politics. It is not really surprising that Carter, the liberal peace-promoting, anti-realist failed to mention the elephants in the room—the Soviet Union, the Cold War and the Sino-Soviet divergence, which initially prompted the realist strategy.

However, the Carter administration’s realist approach to China is evidenced not only by the continuation of previous administrations’ realist policies, but also through the National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who, much like a previous notorious National Security Advisor—Henry Kissinger—was a realist. Brzezinski viewed international power structures as a zero-sum game in which the United States could only increase its power and security if another—namely the Soviet Union—lost power. His realist paradigm led him to the conclusion that the best method for containing Soviet expansion was for the United States to reach out

¹⁶⁰ *Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China*, 19.

¹⁶¹ *Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China*, 20.

diplomatically to China, a previously staunch Soviet ally.¹⁶² Brzezinski's advice was naturally a top priority for the president, who in turn, chose to follow through with diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China.

One Carter biographer, who discussed the role of human rights and the influence of international relations theory on the administration's policies, was Peter Bourne. He admits that Carter preferred liberal principles in general, but points out that Carter chose to use diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China as a method for bending the Soviets to his will during the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) negotiations.¹⁶³ This essentially means that Carter *preferred* liberal internationalism over *realpolitik* and Bourne explains the liberal strategies used in the SALT negotiations, but when that was insufficient to achieve the goal, Carter utilized the principles of *realpolitik* to recognize and cooperate with an illiberal state, confirming the prominence of realist strategic reasoning in the decision to diplomatically recognize the human rights abusing, undemocratic, freedom suppressing, communist regime of the People's Republic of China.

Although establishing a diplomatic relationship with China was at face-value a liberal act—in line with Carter's liberal rhetoric—there were also strong realist incentives to do so as well and Carter was well aware that using China to pressure the Soviet Union could help him achieve his goals. Carter used the principles of realism to play China against the Soviet Union, despite his campaign promises not to engage in *realpolitik*.

Liberal rhetoric for China; realpolitik for Taiwan

As has been demonstrated, Carter's rhetoric regarding the relationship between the United and China was highly influenced by liberalism, and at face-value his policies regarding China were as well—peace with the world's most populous state. It is true that the liberal paradigm of international relations theory prescribes the establishment of diplomatic relations with foreign

¹⁶² Bourne, *Jimmy Carter*, 440.

¹⁶³ Bourne, *Jimmy Carter*, 391.

leaders and participation in international trade. However, as the chapter concerning Nixon demonstrated, the United States' relationship with China was also firmly rooted in the principles of realism, especially the desire to drive a wedge into the communist bloc. From this dynamic alone, one could conclude that Carter was perhaps both a liberal and a realist in his foreign policy management, but a liberal in his rhetoric.

However, when the U.S. relationship with Taiwan is taken into consideration, realism takes over. Carter's establishment of official relations with mainland China was also the unilateral termination of U.S. diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan), leading also to the termination of the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty. This was essentially an official betrayal of the U.S. liberal commitment to Taiwan, although the subsequent Taiwan Relations Act attempted to counterbalance that by replacing the lost official relations with unofficial ones. Clearly, the Carter administration's decision to swap U.S. official diplomatic relations with Taiwan for those of the mainland was a calculated move, fit for any realist, despite the liberal rhetoric.

On January 25, 1979, about three and a half weeks after the communiqué was released, President Carter delivered his annual State of the Union Address to the United States Congress and the general public. It contained only one paragraph about the U.S. relationships with China and Taiwan.

We are entering a hopeful era in our relations with one-fourth of the world's people who live in China. The presence of Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping next week will help to inaugurate that new era. And with prompt congressional action on authorizing legislation, we will continue our commitment to a prosperous, peaceful, and secure life for the people of Taiwan.¹⁶⁴

Basically, this small paragraph summarized the previously discussed communiqué and raised the same issues as mentioned above: a focus on liberal ideas such as peace and complete disregard

¹⁶⁴ Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address 1979," (Washington DC 1979) 26, accessed from: <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/speeches/su79jec.phtml>.

for the realist strategy concerning the relative power of the United States, China, Taiwan and the Soviet Union. This showcases once again how President Carter used the rhetoric of the *liberal* paradigm of international relations theories to describe policies heavily formulated with inspiration from the *realist* paradigm of international relations theories.

In the final analysis of President Carter's policy and rhetoric regarding China, a phenomenon typical of U.S. politics is apparent. As discussed previously, common wisdom would have us believe that Nixon and Carter were about as different as possible, including their views on foreign policy. Of course, neither was truly Machiavellian nor truly Kantian, but they represented the conceivable ends of the spectrum of electable presidential politicians in the United States of America. However, despite this difference, there was a remarkable continuation and stability of the official U.S. policy towards the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. The administrations of both presidents participated in high-level diplomatic visits and reached official diplomatic agreements outlining the new relationship of international cooperation and global trade. Also, as discussed throughout the previous pages, both presidents downplayed the strategic reasons for implementing their policies, as prescribed by the realist paradigm of international relations theories; instead, choosing to publicly focus on the peace-promoting aspects from the liberal paradigm of international relations theory. So, both presidents used liberal rhetoric to discuss and sell a realist-inspired foreign policy to the public.

Chapter V

Conclusion

U.S. Presidential rhetoric and foreign policy are back in the headlines across the world. One rarely sees direct discussions of the theories of international relations discussed in the media, but an understanding of them goes a long way in framing the debate concerning the current military action underway in Libya. The liberal paradigm of international relations theory has greatly shaped President Barack Obama's rhetoric regarding not only the humanitarian mission in Libya and the recent democratic revolution in Egypt, but liberalism has also shaped the president's general rhetoric concerning international affairs. However, liberalism cannot explain everything, especially given the lack of presidential leadership concerning the humanitarian crises unfolding in Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Iran, Saudi Arabia, China, Pakistan, etc. If the president's liberal rhetoric is insufficient to explain these contemporary foreign policies, then there must be another explanation. The power politics of the U.N. Security Council, the Arab League, NATO and the states of the northern Atlantic can better explain why this type of action is unfolding in Libya, and not anywhere else.

Historically, realism has been the key to explaining U.S. foreign policy. There have certainly always been nods to liberalism in presidential rhetoric, but the bottom line has also always been realist, as was certainly the case during the presidencies of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter. As is the case with nearly all historical phenomena, one should ask: Does the historical precedent still pertain today? Or has there been a fundamental break with the past? The answers to these questions could form the foundation for important research in the near future.

The method for sorting it all out

How can one explain the interactions between the United States and the global community? In answering such a question, one must first realize that all U.S. foreign policies are implemented within a global context; thus, the analysis of U.S. foreign policy should also be placed within a global context. This global dynamic is not unique to the United States, it would be applicable to many states' foreign policies, but small states do not usually have a comparable global impact, especially in regards to the great powers. As the most powerful of the great powers; the foreign policies of the U.S. are especially important to the political branch of the field of global studies.

With the proper global context in mind, one can then begin to properly study the foreign policy of the United States. The primary explanations for U.S. foreign policy are based upon two broad sets of international relations theory: realism and liberalism. Although the first known evidence of the principles of realism comes from the ancient civilizations in Greece, India and China, contemporary realism was reborn during the philosophical boom of early modern Europe, as best exemplified in the works of Thomas Hobbes and Niccolò Machiavelli. Realism explains that states seek survival in the anarchic global system by accruing power and mastering the great global game of power politics, in pursuit of the national interest.

Like realism, liberalism's roots extend as far back as the antiquities, where the principles of democracy and cooperative organization were implemented. These proto-liberal ideas were also reborn during the Enlightenment in the writings of Adam Smith, John Locke, Hugo Grotius and most significantly, Immanuel Kant. Liberalism claims that global anarchy can be replaced with peace and universal human rights through the spread of democracy, international organizations and economic interdependence.¹⁶⁵

Of course, there are other theories used to explain the activities of the global community, but realism and liberalism overwhelmingly dominate the discourse. They are widely studied and publicly discussed; they are the intellectual backbone of U.S. foreign policy. These two paradigms of international relations exist because they can both be utilized to explain the

¹⁶⁵ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, 24.

diplomatic history of the United States. The elements of both realism and liberalism help explain the American Revolutionary War, the Monroe Doctrine, the Manifest Destiny, the Mexican-American War, the American Civil War, the Spanish-American War, both World Wars and the Cold War. However, no state can always employ both theories at the same time; many global events demonstrate a conflict of interest between the two, and any state that tries to pursue both—tries to eat the cake and have it too—will fail in the pursuit of at least one of the approaches. Thus, the great debate of U.S. foreign policy is: realism or liberalism?

One of the foremost contemporary international relations theorists (and a realist), John Mearsheimer, believes that U.S. and global foreign policies are predominantly based upon the principles of realism. He acknowledges the great appeal of liberalism; its positive outlook and strong values are consistent with U.S. values and thus greatly appreciated by the U.S. electorate. Liberalism is an explanation of the world that so many U.S. citizens want to believe in, and in many cases, liberalism explains why their ancestors came to the New World in the first place.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, many Americans dislike the ideas of realism, especially its concept of perpetual global anarchy and the reliance upon brute force and warfare. Sometimes it is difficult for people to understand why their family members and friends must fight wars in faraway places to preserve the global balance of power. Many people in the U.S. staunchly reject the pursuit of global hegemony—the ultimate goal of realism. But if one is to believe Mearsheimer, the appeal of liberalism and the desire for a perpetual peace is not enough to negate the harsh realities of realism.¹⁶⁷

The dichotomy of realism and liberalism in the eyes of the U.S. public manifests itself as a foreign policy dichotomy of pursuing the *realist* national interest and pursuing *liberal* national values abroad. Mearsheimer further explains that this foreign policy dichotomy creates a political conundrum for the president of the United States, whose ultimate responsibility is to ensure the national security of the U.S. by pursuing the national interest; however, it is the U.S. citizenry

¹⁶⁶ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 24.

¹⁶⁷ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 21.

which elects the president and the people have largely liberal values.¹⁶⁸ If an individual wants to be elected president, he or she must typically share the values of the electorate, but to do the job effectively, he or she must pursue the national interest. Thus, Mearsheimer explains, U.S. presidents use liberal values in their rhetoric to win elections and maintain their popular support, but govern according to the realist interest of the state, which is necessary for success.¹⁶⁹

Mearsheimer is not alone in observing this discrepancy between presidential rhetoric and policy, regarding foreign affairs. Statesman Dr. Henry Kissinger has also directly acknowledged this phenomenon in his book *Diplomacy*,¹⁷⁰ echoing his former boss's own statements a few years earlier. President Richard Nixon acknowledged this phenomenon as discussed in the conclusion of this essay's third chapter.¹⁷¹ His quotation bears a repeat here: "We should practice power politics [or realism] because that's the way the world is. But it must be cast in idealistic [liberal] terms in order to get people to support it."¹⁷² In this regard, Nixon was a man and president who practiced what he preached, and his trip to China was perhaps the most spectacular example. It was obvious that Nixon wanted to drive a wedge between China and the Soviet Union, dividing the global communist bloc, and thus reducing its threat to the U.S., a vital national interest. However, Nixon rarely, if ever, acknowledged this publicly. Instead, he spoke about his "journey for peace"¹⁷³ to the world's most populous state, a far more liberal notion.

Reluctantly, President Jimmy Carter later followed in his footsteps. The unprecedented circumstances of the Watergate scandal opened the political door for an unconventional politician to ascend to the presidency. Lacking the more traditional foreign experience, Carter turned to his faith to inspire his moral approach to governance, including foreign policy. However, he ultimately subverted his liberal orientation of peace and human rights with his

¹⁶⁸ Remember, within the context of foreign policy, "liberalism" is actually *classical liberalism*, inherited from the Enlightenment, not the contemporary *social liberalism* of the Democratic Party.

¹⁶⁹ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 25.

¹⁷⁰ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 706.

¹⁷¹ See page 72.

¹⁷² Sulzberger, *The World and Richard Nixon*, 50.

¹⁷³ NixonFoundation, "President Nixon announces trip to China."

desire for success, and a typically realist approach to foreign policy. After pursuing his human rights agenda with the Soviet Union, Carter realized that a realist strategy of further distancing Beijing from Moscow via official diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China would pressure the Soviets into accepting his proposal to limit strategic arms (SALT II).¹⁷⁴

From hypocrisy to ironic consistency

Despite their location at different ends of the political spectrum in Washington, D.C., both Presidents Nixon and Carter shared not only a fundamentally realist approach to foreign policy, but also a rhetoric firmly rooted in the principles of liberal internationalism.

Once it is clear that realism has been used to formulate the foundation of U.S. foreign policy while liberalism is used rhetorically, the frequent hypocrisy of U.S. foreign policy becomes easily understood. The policies themselves were not hypocritical, just the manner in which they were discussed with the public. This explains why the U.S. sent its military forces abroad to overthrow the imperial Japanese and Nazi regimes, while it accepted the presence and illiberal policies—including poignant violations of human rights—in the regimes of Stalin and Pinochet among others. The policies to overthrow some regimes and not others were not based upon liberal concerns but rather realist ones.

Imperial Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor and Nazi Germany had declared war against the United States after conquering several U.S. allies in Europe. They directly threatened the national security of the United States, thus, the U.S. policy was to confront them. On the other hand, neither Stalin nor Pinochet directly attacked the U.S., thus the U.S. did not forcefully overthrow their regimes. In fact, both dictators, despite their distasteful policies, could help the U.S. pursue its own national interest: Stalin helped to overthrow Hitler, who had been a greater threat to the United States. Pinochet served the U.S. national interest by helping to stop the

¹⁷⁴ Mann, *About Face*, 85.

encroachment of socialism and communism in Latin America, thus his otherwise illiberal policies were tolerated.

The blatant realpolitik of the Cold War may at first glance challenge this concept, but it remained cold and not hot because neither side was willing to engage in direct warfare. The United States had a strategic interest in leaving the Soviet Union and China alone, but it had a strategic incentive to defeat Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany because of the imminent threat they posed. There is a striking similarity in the foreign policies of the U.S. from the World War, Cold War and post-Cold War eras: U.S. presidents used liberal ideas and theory to discuss their policies based upon the principles of realpolitik, as was clearly demonstrated by the administrations of both Nixon and Carter.

BEYOND THE CASE STUDIES

Once an understanding of the historical pattern of the discrepancy in U.S. foreign policy between liberal rhetoric and realist policy is established, the next logical issue to consider is whether or not this trend continues into the present and if it will continue even further into the future. History itself would indicate that endurance of the trend is more likely than demise. After all, the discrepancy has existed throughout history.

This essay only considered two case studies from the Cold War, but, as was mentioned above, the early history of the United States of America seems to indicate that the discrepancy has always existed. Most, if not all, major U.S. foreign policies throughout history have had a strong connection to liberal values, while also adhering to the realist paradigm of international relations theory.

If the discrepancy between liberalism and realism in U.S. foreign policy could survive previous fundamental transitions in global history, then why couldn't it also survive the breach of a despised wall in a distant foreign city?

To the East: realism and liberalism

The fall of the Iron Curtain was a complicated matter, and the United States was out of the loop for much of it; however, the United States did play a heavy role in the most important aspect: German Reunification. The administration of U.S. President George H. W. Bush may have been caught off-guard when the Berlin Wall was breached, but it certainly did not simply sit back and watch the chips fall where they may.¹⁷⁵ While British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher began taking back her rhetorically liberal support for unification to play the game of realpolitik by asking her archrival the Soviet Union to maintain its presence in East Germany to ensure that a united German state would not attack Britain for the third time in a century,¹⁷⁶ on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the Bush administration was coming to a different conclusion, one which allowed it to credibly maintain its liberal rhetoric.¹⁷⁷

For the United States, the reunification of Germany was the perfect opportunity to score a victory at the expense of the Soviet Union both in terms of liberal and realist global strategy.¹⁷⁸ Concerning liberalism, accession of the East German *Länder* to the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and NATO was a sure method for ensuring the spread of stable democracy, capitalism and (friendly) international institutionalism to the former East Germany. This corresponded to the realist national interest and geostrategic goals of the United States because German reunification included the expansion of NATO into the crumbling Warsaw Pact and strongly showed to the world how weak the Soviet empire had become. By supporting reunification, the Bush administration was able to ensure that the Iron Curtain came down in a manner consistent with both the liberal and realist interests of the United States, while supporting its ally, Europe's largest nation, achieve a decades-old goal. The collapse of the Berlin Wall created a convenient convergence of realism and liberalism for the United States. By

¹⁷⁵ Klaus Wiegrefe, "Germany's Unlikely Diplomatic Triumph: An Inside Look at the Reunification Negotiations," *Spiegel Online* (September 29, 2010), accessed from <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,719848,00.html>, 3.

¹⁷⁶ Wiegrefe, "Germany's Unlikely Diplomatic Triumph," 1.

¹⁷⁷ Wiegrefe, "Germany's Unlikely Diplomatic Triumph," 7.

¹⁷⁸ Wiegrefe, "Germany's Unlikely Diplomatic Triumph," 7.

helping Germany reunite, the U.S. was able to triumph over the Soviet Union and win the Cold War in Europe without fighting a battle.¹⁷⁹

The initial rise and fall of liberal interventionism

A quick look further into the 1990's seems to indicate that an attempt at true liberalization of U.S. foreign policy—and a rejection of realism—failed. Power politics remained the primary impetus. The militarized humanitarian mission in Somalia in 1994 was supposed to mark the great transition to a truly liberal world order—the U.S. military being used to protect global peace and human rights and to advance global liberalism instead of the often violent and manipulative realpolitik. The book and Hollywood movie *Black Hawk Down*¹⁸⁰ present quite clearly why this transition was quickly reversed—the mission in Somalia turned out to be a great blunder for the U.S. military, as the Somali people turned against the force that was ostensibly attempting to help them. The disaster in Mogadishu so shocked the administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton that at the first outbreaks of violence in Rwanda, it quickly pulled its presence out of the country, leaving 800,000 people to be slaughtered during the Rwandan Genocide.¹⁸¹

Due to their lack of crucial resources and global political clout, neither African state played a role in the realist national interest of the United States. After the liberal humanitarian intervention in Somalia notoriously and poignantly failed, the administration abandoned the policy prescriptions of the liberal paradigm and reverted back to the realist paradigm, which prescribed staying out of the situations lacking a U.S. national interest, including Rwanda.

However, liberal rhetoric came back in full force during the U.S. and NATO's involvement in the Kosovo War. Liberal internationalism clearly influenced the president's rhetoric about ending the ethnic cleansing campaign, preventing genocide and protecting the basic human rights of the Kosovar Albanians, who were under attack from Serbian authorities.

¹⁷⁹ Wiegrefe, "Germany's Unlikely Diplomatic Triumph," 13.

¹⁸⁰ Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (Berkeley, California, USA 1999). Movie: *Black Hawk Down*, prod. Jerry Bruckheimer and Ridley Scott, dir. Ridley Scott, 2 hr. 24 min., Columbia Pictures, 2001.

¹⁸¹ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York, 2002) 366.

However, given the geographic location of Kosovo and Serbia in southeastern Europe, there were great concerns about the massive flow of refugees destabilizing the region, which included key NATO allies. NATO's intervention in Kosovo also conveniently allowed NATO to demonstrate its relevancy despite the Soviet Union's collapse while also driving a wedge between Serbia and its cultural and political ally Russia. The involvement of the United States via NATO in the Kosovo War is a good example of the marriage between realism and liberalism in U.S. foreign policy and a restoration of the foreign policy ironies of the past.

A new U.S. foreign policy?

The real great debate over the continuation of the discrepancy of liberal rhetoric and realist policy concerns U.S. foreign policy after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. To be sure, there was a lot of presidential rhetoric about the national security of the United States and its citizens, especially regarding the overthrow of the Taliban in the pursuit of al-Qaeda. This realist rhetoric extended to the discourse about Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction. But there was a lot of liberal rhetoric as well, especially after the initial military victories.

Regarding Afghanistan, the liberal rhetoric answered what would replace the Taliban's grossly illiberal rule. The new liberalism for Afghanistan was to include: human rights, especially for women; education, for girls as well as boys; freedom from religious and political suppression; and, of course, democracy. Before the U.S. invasion, Iraq had been a more liberal society than Afghanistan, despite the violation of the human rights of minority groups and the lack of democracy. Once the Taliban had been displaced (in Afghanistan) and it became apparent to all that there were no weapons of mass destruction (in Iraq), the basis for the realist rhetoric was gone, leaving only the liberal rhetoric about equality, freedom, voting and women's rights to justify the initial invasions and unending occupations.

For both Iraq and Afghanistan it seems at first glance that the old discrepancy was back: the administration used liberal rhetoric to justify realist invasions. However, there is a difference

between a policy to launch an invasion and a policy to continue an occupation. Despite copious dissent, President George W. Bush continues to argue that it was in the U.S. national interest to overthrow the Afghan and Iraqi regimes,^{182, 183} but only liberalism can explain the never-ending occupations. Perhaps the most fascinating development of all is that President Barack Obama was electorally successful in large part due to his opposition to the war and occupation of Iraq, but yet continues to support the same liberal cause (initiated by Bush) to justify the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan, for which there is also little realist justification.¹⁸⁴ Obama also initiated U.S. military action in Libya along with plenty of liberal rhetoric, but no clear national interest.

In terms of policy, the Iraq War and the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan challenge the concept that U.S. foreign policy's connection to liberalism is based upon rhetoric only, while realism drives the actual policy. Actually, liberalism—in this case a militarized version—does a much better job of explaining U.S. foreign policy in the age of the War on Terror. However, one must also realize that not all supporters of liberal internationalism also support militarized liberal interventionism. It is completely logical that many liberals would reject militarized “liberal” interventionism because it is ironic that one would advocate using war to create the perpetual peace,¹⁸⁵ especially after the failure of the “Great War”—the war that failed to end all wars, and in fact, actually set the stage for the most brutal war of all.

The new dynamic duo of U.S. foreign policy: neoconservatism and liberal interventionism

Unlike the liberal humanitarian-based missions in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo—and the mission that could-have-been in Rwanda—the “liberal” missions in Iraq and Afghanistan are philosophically more closely related to the neoconservative movement, which is itself a mixture

¹⁸² George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (New York 2010) 184.

¹⁸³ Bush, *Decision Points*, 224 and 253.

¹⁸⁴ Charles V. Pena, “Get out of Afghanistan,” *The National Interest*, November 4, 2009.

¹⁸⁵ Michael W. Doyle, “The Folly of Protection: Is Intervention Against Qaddafi’s Regime Legal and Legitimate?” *Foreign Affairs* (March 20, 2011) 10.

of the realist commitment to preserving the national interest at all costs and the liberal commitment to democracy, freedom and human rights. Could the rise of neoconservative and liberal interventionist foreign policy in the United States actually be the turning point that ends the long tradition of realist foreign policy cloaked in liberal rhetoric? This would make for an excellent topic of further research.

Theoretically, neoconservatism attempts to bridge the gap between realist policy and liberal rhetoric by accepting liberalism's claim that a democratic world would be safer, but then using realist strategies to make it happen, by force if necessary. Neoconservatism quite nicely explains the discrepancy between the rhetoric and the policies of the Bush administration's Iraq War and continued occupation of Afghanistan. One cannot dismiss the realist incentives for the U.S. military to enter either of these countries; however, the unending commitment to nation building cannot be explained by realism alone as the U.S. continually plunges further into debt with China, a quickly rising global power that shares neither the U.S. national interest (realism), nor U.S. values (liberalism).

Of course, it is also possible that the fad of neoconservatism will follow in the footsteps of the fad of liberal interventionism and quickly die out—as it did in the early 1990's. However, as the United States attempts to conduct yet another regime change, one must consider if this is in fact a new era of U.S. foreign policy, quite distinct from the past. Only time will tell if the U.S. will give up the neoconservative doctrine of democratization through force, as it previously gave up on humanitarianism through force, which is apparently now back in vogue à la Libya.

Although Stephen Walt has written extensively about the division of U.S. foreign policy theorists into realist and liberal camps, he has also identified the new dynamic duo of U.S. foreign policy: neoconservatism and liberal interventionism. The realists and the liberals deal with theory from a scholarly perspective, while the neoconservatives and liberal interventionists combine elements of both realism and liberalism to make public policy prescriptions at think tanks and to directly make and implement the policies in positions of power within the

government. Walt has concluded that there is little fundamental difference between the neoconservatives and the liberal interventionists because both have similar objectives which they attempt to achieve through similar means. Both combine the most popular elements of realism and liberalism. For Walt, this is the major problem with contemporary U.S. foreign policy, which manifests itself in the quagmires of Afghanistan, Iraq and now Libya. A president associated with neoconservatism started the first two, while a president associated with liberal interventionism revitalized one and started an additional one.¹⁸⁶ Of course, more time and evidence are clearly needed, but the relationship between neoconservatism and liberal interventionism will undoubtedly be the subject of future studies, as well as their relationship to the two dominate theoretical paradigms.

Of course, the 21st century did not usher in this new era of U.S. foreign policy; the U.S. mission with the United Nations in Somalia in 1993 was also a product of liberal interventionism. As mentioned earlier, the fad of liberal interventionism quickly died out, as demonstrated by the quick U.S. withdrawal from Rwanda, as the violence escalated. However, it came back with a significant dose of *realpolitik* during the Kosovo War and remained highly influential throughout the following decade alongside its counterpart from across the political aisle, neoconservatism.

It is easy to see how Walt is tempted to believe that *neoconservative liberal interventionism* is the new foundation of U.S. foreign policy, but within its latest application in Libya, one can clearly see its decline. In stark contrast to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Obama has proclaimed that there will be no U.S. troops sent to Libyan soil. This indicates his awareness of the people's opposition such action, which he clearly understands since he rode the wave of opposition to Bush's neoconservative liberal interventionism all the way to the Oval Office.

Does President Obama's ambivalent approach to his own neoconservative liberal interventionism indicate the true collapse of this new type of foreign policy? Only time will tell

¹⁸⁶ Stephen Walt, "What intervention in Libya tells us about the neocon-liberal alliance," *Foreign Policy* (March 21, 2008) accessed at: http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/03/21/what_intervention_in_libya_tells_us_about_the_neocon_liberal_alliance.

if future policies will be based upon a similarly hobbled together combination of realism and liberalism. However, the realist and liberal paradigms of international relations theory will remain relevant. The recent shift towards neoconservative liberal interventionism is merely a reshuffling of realist and liberal ideas; it is a combination of some their most important elements. Regardless of how the realist and liberal paradigms are broken down and reassembled, their basic ideas remain intact, which means that understanding the basic concepts and how they work becomes even more important when trying to comprehend U.S. foreign policy.

All recent presidents (and probably all of their predecessors) have had to deal with the balance between the realist and liberal paradigms of international relations in their rhetoric and policies. During the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan employed liberal rhetoric about the “Evil Empire” to explain to the U.S. public why it needed to confront the world’s other leading superpower, the only one that could challenge the U.S. national interest, a primary realist concern. As mentioned above, President George H. W. Bush was able to combine realism and liberalism during the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the creation of a new Europe, a staunch U.S. ally. President Bill Clinton turned away from liberal humanitarian interventionism after the disaster in Somalia, and only returned to liberal principles and rhetoric when realist interests were at stake in the Balkans. President George W. Bush relied upon liberal rhetoric to justify wars that he started in the effort to defend the (realist) national interest as he saw it. It seems that although President Obama has kept the tradition of liberal rhetoric alive, his revitalization of the War in Afghanistan and his military action in Libya have eschewed the realist policy agenda in favor of militarized liberal interventionism; however, history also indicates that the age-old practice of using liberal rhetoric to discuss realist foreign policies is a tough one to break. It is possible—if not probable—that the current and future presidents will come to the same conclusions that Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter did when choosing to use liberal rhetoric while implementing realist policies.

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Abstract (English)

As the United States of America, with the support of an international coalition, begins its third “military engagement” with a Muslim country in a decade, naturally questions abound concerning the motivations of U.S. foreign policy. Amidst the claims to protect human rights, prevent massacres, confiscate weapons of mass destruction and foster stable democracies, are the age-old concerns regarding the national security and national interest of the U.S., within the great game of power politics. Undeniably, the global community changed greatly when the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed leaving the United States as the premier global power. Because the U.S. plays such a significant role in global affairs, an understanding of U.S. foreign policy is crucial in understanding many global relations. But how can one make sense of U.S. foreign policy when U.S. presidents claim to be protecting human rights while pursuing political agendas such as those to induce regime change? How can the foreign policy of the United States be explained? One should turn to theory and history for an answer. The most important paradigms of international relations theory in the U.S. are realism and liberalism. From the rhetoric of recent and past presidents, it is clear that liberalism is relevant to U.S. foreign policy, while the actual policies themselves indicate the importance of realism. At first glance it is not clear, however, which is the most relevant. An analysis of past presidencies can provide a clearer understanding of how the U.S. interacts with the world.

Although Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter are the standard-bearers of realist and liberal foreign policy respectively, a closer analysis reveals that there is a remarkably consistent trend. Despite Nixon’s shrewd efforts of *realpolitik*, his rhetoric was often quite liberal; while, Carter’s obviously liberal rhetoric was often merely a façade for his realist policies. This is noteworthy because these two presidents were from opposing political parties, but yet demonstrated the same hypocrisy between their rhetoric and policy. However, one can reconcile this hypocrisy through an understanding of democratic politics and the role of public opinion.

Abstract (German-Deutsch)

Als die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika mit Unterstützung einer internationalen Koalition eine dritte "militärische Aktion" mit einem muslimischen Land in einem Jahrzehnt begann, sind viele Fragen über die Motivation der US-Außenpolitik aufgetreten. Inmitten der Ansprüche Menschenrechte zu schützen, Massaker zu verhindern, Massenvernichtungswaffen zu beschlagnahmen und Demokratie zu pflegen sind die uralten Sorgen bezüglich der nationalen Sicherheit und der Staatsräson der USA, innerhalb des großen Spiels der Machtpolitik, wieder aktuell. Unbestreitbar veränderten der Fall der Berliner Mauer und der Zusammenbruch der Sowjetunion die globale Gemeinschaft stark, da die USA als die führende Weltmacht übrigblieb. Weil die USA eine so herausragende Rolle in globalen Beziehungen spielt, ist ein Verständnis der US-Außenpolitik entscheidend, um die globalen Vorgänge in der Welt zu verstehen. Aber wie macht die Außenpolitik der USA Sinn, wenn die US-Präsidenten einerseits erklären Menschenrechte schützen zu wollen, andererseits eine Politik verfolgen die auch zu Regimewechsel führt. Wie kann man die Außenpolitik der USA erklären? Für eine Antwort sollte man die Geschichte und Theorien befragen. Die wichtigsten Paradigmen der „International Relations-Theory“ der USA sind Realismus und Liberalismus. Von der Rhetorik der letzten aber auch der früheren Präsidenten zu schließen, ist es klar, dass Liberalismus für die US-Außenpolitik relevant ist, während die tatsächliche Politik die Wichtigkeit des Realismus aufzeigt. Auf den ersten Blick ist es trotzdem nicht klar welche Theorie am relevantesten ist. Eine Analyse der vergangenen Präsidentschaften kann ein klareres Bild darüber erzeugen, wie die USA mit der Welt interagiert.

Obwohl die Präsidenten Richard Nixon und Jimmy Carter als Befürworter von Realismus und Liberalismus in der US-Außenpolitik stehen, enthüllt eine genauere Analyse, dass es bemerkenswerte Übereinstimmungen gibt. Trotz Nixons gefinkelter Realpolitik, war seine Rhetorik oft doch sehr liberal. Während Carters offensichtlich liberale Rhetorik oft nur eine Fassade seiner Realpolitik war. Dies ist insofern bemerkenswert, weil diese zwei Präsidenten

unterschiedlichen Parteien angehörten, aber bei beiden ein Unterschied zwischen Politik und Rhetorik festzumachen ist, welcher auch als scheinheilig beschrieben werden kann. Man kann diese Heuchelei durch ein Verstehen von demokratischer Politik und der Rolle der öffentlichen Meinung in Einklang bringen.

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Microcosm, Dickinson College Yearbook

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Organizations Editor, September 2003-May 2004

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