Bush the Transnationalist: A Reappraisal of the Unilateralist Impulse in US Foreign Policy, 2001-09

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Abstract

This article challenges the common characterisation of George W. Bush's foreign policy as "unilateral." It argues that the Bush administration developed a new post-9/11 understanding of terrorism as a *trans*national, networked phenomenon shaped by the forces of globalisation. This led to a new strategic emphasis on bi- and multilateral security co-operation and counterterrorism operations, especially outside of Afghanistan and Iraq, driven by the perceived need to counter a transnational security challenge present in multiple locations. This (flawed) attempt to engage with *trans*national security challenges supplemented the existing *inter*nationalist pillar of the Bush administration's foreign policy. Highlighting the transnational realm of international relations and the ways in which the Bush administration was able to co-opt other states to tackle perceived transnational challenges also shows the high importance the administration attached to concerted action even as it frequented eschewed institutional multilateralism.

Key words

Bush, transnationalism, strategy, multilateralism, bilateralism, security co-operation

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Though there is some debate over its precise meaning, the epithet "unilateral" has been widely used by scholars and commentators critiquing the foreign policy strategy of the George W. Bush administration. Sometimes the word is left undefined, as a generally negative descriptor of the administration's conduct (Haley 2006: 3; Forsythe 2004: 81; Ayoob 2004: 169; Prestowitz 2003: 14, 268; Leffler and Legro 2008: 2-4; Van Evra 2008: 19; Power 2008: 137; Kennedy 2008: 167; Fabbrini 2006: 3-26). Occasionally it is used literally – to mean 'acting alone' (Van Evra 2008: 28; Prestowitz 2003: 271). According to David Skidmore, America's post-Cold War unilateralism 'rests more upon the raw application of military power and less upon the willingness of other states to follow,' and under Bush this became 'a default preference' (2011: 3-4). Most often, the term 'unilateral' is not meant literally, but refers to the Bush administration's proclivity for acting outside of established international institutions. David Dunn (2003: 285) describes the United States' 'assertive unilateralism' when it came to Iraq, and its willingness to put its own national interests before international norms and institutions. (See also Higgott 2004: 157; Jervis 2003: 347; Lynch and Singh 2008: 36-43; Ritchie and Rogers 2007: 143-5; Daalder and Lindsay 2003: 13-14; Brands 2014: 159). Others point to Bush's rejection of the International Criminal Court Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Kyoto agreement on global warming (Dumbrell 2002: 279-87; Carter 2003: 17-22; Prestowitz 2003: 3, 16; Alvarez 2004: 189; Hoff 2008: 160-61; Halper and Clarke 2004: 121-30). For G. John Ikenberry, this approach amounted to 'a new strategic orientation' (2003: 533), and 'a new logic of global order' (2009: 8) with the United States asserting the 'right to use force anywhere in the world… largely outside the traditional alliance system through coalitions of the willing' (2009: 7).

The almost binary distinction between unilateralism and multilateralism that is often invoked is challenged by political scientists such as Sarah E. Kreps (2011), Martha Finnemore (2004), Stephen Brookes and William Wohlforth (2005), who offer more nuanced theories of a spectrum of action that spans pure unilateralism at one end, and comprehensive institutional multilateralism at the other, taking into account both procedural and operational dimensions of policy. These theories tend to eschew descriptions of US foreign policy as *either* multilateral *or* unilateral, positing instead that pure unilateralism is rare, and that – in Kreps words – 'multilateralism can take many forms' – its character dependent on equality of decision-making, use of established multilateral institutions, and differing levels of operational commitment (Kreps 2011: 4, 15-21).

Taking a historical approach, this article builds on Kreps' analysis, and extends our understanding of the Bush administration's attitude to coalition building and alliance management by focusing on its approach to *trans*national challenges – a realm thus far overlooked, and one in which the administration recognised that 'acting alone' was impossible because transnational challenges crossed borders and were therefore inherently multilateral. My argument is here is that after 9/11 the Bush administration developed a *transnational* security outlook and, over time, this was visible in its practice too. The devastating asymmetric attacks by a transnational network of non-state actors on September 11, 2001, were the catalyst for a new appreciation of transnational challenges and networked adversaries. This newfound transnational sensibility led, out of necessity,

to the evolution of many policies and strategies that were deliberately bilateral and multilateral in practice – activities that took place concurrently in multiple locations in order to tackle transnational challenges. Although the Bush administration's aversion to institutional multilateralism remained, it recognised that working with allies was of the highest operational and strategic importance when it came to tackling transnational threats. What is missing from the much of the existing literature, with its focus on state-based issues and the constraints imposed by international organisations, is that the Bush administration's aversion to institutional multilateralism did not mean that it downplayed the importance of working with allies when it came to transnational issues; in fact this was considered to be the *sine qua non* of a successful approach to tackling them. The result was the gradual development of a global constellation of bilateral and multilateral initiatives, led by the United States, designed to tackle transnational terrorism – considered by the Bush administration to be the most salient transnational danger of the 21st century. This was, I will argue, an imperfect response to a transnational problem: while the Bush administration sought to work with multiple partners across a diverse set of locations, only a supranational authority could reach out beyond Washington's preferred coalition partners and co-ordinate truly comprehensive global action.

In making this argument, I defer to Akira Iriye's definition of transnationalism, which refers to 'movements and interactions among people, goods, and interactions across national boundaries, as well as to non-national entities' (2012: 121-41). This, of course, was not a new phenomenon, but something that had speeded up immensely as a result of the contemporary wave of globalisation that first took hold in the 1970s (Tyrrell 2015: 6,

Sargeant 2011: 49-64). After 9/11, the administration began to recognize the existence of security challenges that were shaped by the contemporary revolution in communications technology. It developed a heightened awareness of challenges that crossed borders, and could not be tackled successfully by any single state acting alone.[1] This resulted in a new approach to transnational terrorism and, more broadly, an appreciation of what Joseph Nye calls the transnational realm of international relations (2004a: 1-32). For the Bush administration, then, it was not so much a decent respect for the opinions of mankind that was behind its multilateral and bilateral initiatives, but the strategic imperative of operating in multiple locations in an attempt to tackle transnational and non-state security threats.

It is important to note, however, that the new recognition of salient transnational problems did not mean that the administration was no longer interested in state-based threats, such as Iraq, or that it was abandoning the post-Cold War commitment to preventing the rise of rival superpowers. The Bush administration maintained its *inter*nationalist perspective, but *supplemented* this with another thoroughly 21st century goal: to confront and defeat networked transnational challenges. In this way, it attempted to ensure continued American primacy in a world where conventional state-based adversaries were no longer the only challenges to US hegemony. As the Department of Defense put it in 2004, the goal for the 21st century was 'full spectrum dominance' from conventional through to irregular warfare (DoD 2004: 23). This required a comprehensive national strategy premised on both internationalism *and* (however imperfectly) transnationalism.

The final caveat to this argument about transnationalism is that it should not be interpreted as an attempt to cast the Bush foreign policy in a progressive light. Multilateralism is no guarantee of strategic wisdom or ethical probity; it indicates only that other states believed it was in their interest to work with rather than against the United States. As Brooks and Wohlforth comment, 'Any policy may be wise or unwise, and many policies followed by the Bush administration doubtless fall into the latter category' (2005: 510). What an examination of the administration's multilateral and bilateral initiatives demonstrates is the extent to which its foreign policy interests were often shared by other countries and that, for all the controversy surrounding the invasion of Iraq, and despite the impact of that event on America's 'soft power' appeal (Nye 2004b), the United States government was far from isolated during the Bush years.

9/11 AND THE NEW SECURITY LANDSCAPE

The destruction wrought on the United States on 9/11 by a transnational network of terrorists challenged the conventional state-based national security paradigm that had guided US foreign policy in previous decades and, gradually, led to the development of a new consensus in the administration on transnationalism and, by extension, bilateralism and multilateralism. For Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Advisor, the asymmetric nature of the attack challenged long-standing assumptions about the primacy of conventional state-based challenges: "The United States was the most powerful country in the world – militarily and economically. And yet, we had not been able to prevent a devastating attack by a stateless network of extremists, operating from the

territory of one of the world's poorest countries. Our entire concept of what constituted security had been shaken" (Rice 2011: 79).

For Rumsfeld, the 9/11 attacks confirmed his view of the contemporary security environment: it was 'a transformational event that cries out for us to rethink our activities, and to put that new thinking into action' (DoD 2003a: foreword). In fact, even before 9/11 Rumsfeld had begun to warn that a state-based view of global security might be out-dated: in his guidance to the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), he called for the review to consider US vulnerabilities in an age of 'open borders and open societ[ies]' (Rumsfeld 2001: 3). Reflecting Rumsfeld's Terms of Reference, the final QDR report, released three weeks after 9/11, acknowledged that a planning system that focused primarily on conventional threats was out of date because the nature of armed conflict was changing 'in ways that render military forces and doctrines of great powers obsolescent' (DoD 2001: 3). In a globalized world 'it is not enough to plan for large conventional wars in distant theaters. Instead, the United States must identify the capabilities required to deter and defeat adversaries who will rely on surprise, deception, and asymmetric warfare to achieve their objectives.' It should be capable of imposing its will 'on any adversaries, including states or non-state entities' (DoD 2001: iv, 12). Even the President, who preferred to act as 'the decider' rather than propose policy initiatives of his own, recognized that the 9/11 attack did not come from a conventional state adversary: 'this would be a different kind of war. We faced an enemy that had no capital to call home and no armies to track on the battlefield.' (Bush 2010: 141; CNN 2006).

7

From 2002 onwards, the national strategy reports produced by the White House increasingly reflected the dilemmas of confronting new types of transnational threats in a globalized world. The National Security Strategy (NSS) of September 2002 acknowledged the impact of globalization on international security and the diminishing frequency of industrial inter-state war: 'Enemies past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering… Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us' (NSS 2002: foreword, 1). The subsequent NSS in 2006 was more explicit stating

> In recent years, the world has witnessed the growing importance of a set of opportunities and challenges that were addressed indirectly in National Security Strategy 2002: the national security implications of globalization… These new flows of trade, investment, information, and technology are transforming national security. Globalization has exposed us to new challenges and changed the way old challenges touch our interests and values (NSS 2006: 47).

The first National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) released in 2003 reinforced points made in the 2002 NSS. This document acknowledged that although states continued to play some role in facilitating terrorism – because 'Terrorists must have a physical base from which to operate' – it was important to move away from a state-centric view of the world because 'the classic net assessment of the enemy based on the number of tanks, airplanes or ships does not apply to these non-state actors' (NSCT 2003: 16,6, 17-18). In fact,

the terrorist challenge has changed considerably over the past decade… While

problems of state sponsorship of terrorism continue, years of sustained

counterterrorism efforts, including diplomatic and economic isolation, have

convinced some governments to curtail or even abandon support for terrorism as a

tool of statecraft (NSCT 2003: 7).

This was combined with 'dramatic improvements in the ease of transnational communication, commerce, and travel' that now allowed terrorist groups to 'twist the benefits and conveniences of our increasingly open, integrated, and modernized world.' While the Taliban's toleration of Al Qaeda had been important, the terrorist group now functioned primarily as 'a flexible transnational structure, enabled by modern technology and characterized by loose interconnectivity both within and between groups' (Ibid: 7, 8, 15). Confronting Al Qaeda was the antithesis of fighting a large conventional army: 'The attacks of September 11 demonstrate that our adversaries will engage asymmetrically, within and across our borders. They will exploit global systems of commerce, transportation, communications, and other sectors to inflict fear, destruction, and death' (Ibid: 25). At the Department of Defense (DoD), military planning increasingly reflected this new analysis of security threats in the 21st century. According to the 2006 National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism, there was 'no monolithic enemy network with a single set of goals and objectives… [but] a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals – and their state and non-state supporters.' Al Qaeda was understood as a 'complex and ever-shifting network of networks' (Chair JCS 2006: 13-14).[2] Faced with this transnational adversary, the United States needed the support and co-operation of other countries.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY

Building security capacity in partner states was an essential part of the war on terror from the outset because of the transnational character of the most salient security threat the United States faced. Bilateral and multilateral train and equip programmes designed to bolster internal security in allied states that were allegedly vulnerable to terrorist penetration were a key component of the war on terror. Train-and-equip programmes were nothing new in and of themselves, but after 9/11 the rationale for them was different. Whereas during the Cold War these programmes were designed to ensure that states – often those located in the Global South – did not tilt towards the Soviet Union, in the war on terror these programmes targeted weak and failing states. Where once state sponsorship of terrorism had been the problem, now it was 'ungoverned space' that threatened the United States. According to the 2002 NSS, 'America is now less threatened by conquering states than failing ones' (NSS 2002: 1).[3] 'Poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks' the NSS stated. Where weak states could be susceptible to terror networks, 'we will help ensure the state has the military, law enforcement, political, and financial tools necessary' to prevent this, the NSS stated (NSS 2002: foreword, 6-7). The transnational scope of the problem was such that 'no support will be more important to success than that from the other nations that have the will and resources to combat terrorism with us' (NSCT 2003: 20). The Pentagon's National Defense Strategy – written to operationalize the vision set out in the NSS – reiterated this:

While the security threats of the 20th century arose from powerful states that

embarked on aggressive courses… the key dimensions of the 21st century –

globalization and the powerful proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – mean

great dangers may arise in and emanate from relatively weak states and ungoverned

areas.

Accordingly, 'the US and its allies, and partners, must remain vigilant to those states that

lack the capacity to govern activity within their borders' (DoD 2005: 1). In an age

characterised by irregular as well as conventional security challenges, 'the United States

cannot achieve its defense objectives alone.' Improving proficiency against irregular

challenges meant 'working together with other elements of the U.S. Government, allies,

and partners (including indigenous actors).' In 2005, increasing the capabilities of

partners was listed as one of the military's key operational capabilities (DoD 2005: 12,

18, 19). By 2006, multilateralism had become a key strategic principle in defence

planning. According to the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, which set defence

priorities for the next four years, 'Whenever possible the United States works with or

through others: enabling allied and partner capabilities, building their capacity, and

developing mechanisms to share the risks and responsibilities of today's complex

challenges' (DoD 2006a: 88). The result of this renewed emphasis on building partner

capacity was a constellation of ad hoc bilateral and multilateral partnerships, resembling a

hub-and-spoke network, dedicated ostensibly to counterterrorism, with the United States

at the centre.[4]

The "war on terror" on the periphery

The earliest security building partnerships were instituted in the secondary, or "peripheral", fronts of the war on terror across Africa, in the Philippines, and in the former Soviet republic of Georgia (Ryan 2011). The train-and-equip programmes in these regions became the model for what would become a global train-and-equip authority. The war on terror in Africa began in October 2002 with the establishment of a multilateral regional task force, led by the United States, based in the tiny East African country of Djibouti. The Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) included Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, the Seychelles, and host nation, Djibouti. (Later it supplemented its 'area of operations' with an expansive 'area of interest' comprised of Yemen, Tanzania, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda, the Comoros, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda. See Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, 2010). According to the Task Force Public Affairs Officer, Major Steve Cox, the purpose of the force was 'to oversee operations in support of the global war on terrorism in the Horn of Africa.' More specifically, it would 'detect, disrupt and defeat terrorists who pose an imminent threat to coalition partners in the region. We'll also work with host nations to deny the re-emergence of terrorist cells and activities by supporting international agencies working to enhance long-term stability for the region.' According to Major General John F. Sattler, Commander of the Djibouti task force, 'the porous borders with Somalia' were a key concern, but the mission as a whole was 'very broad, in that we [are] to track transnational terrorism across the Horn of Africa, going from Yemen across the Gulf of Aden, and then, you know, the entire Horn' (DoD 2003b).

In 2002-03, the Department of State (DoS) also established a multilateral counterterrorism programme designed to diminish the likelihood of transnational terrorists operating across the African Sahel region. In August 2002, the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) was launched.   According to the State Department, this was 'a State-led effort to assist Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania in detecting and responding to suspicious movement of people and goods across and within their borders through training, equipment and co-operation. Its goals support two US national security interests in Africa: waging the war on terrorism and enhancing regional peace and security' (DoS 2002). The PSI was developed in response to 'the Sahel being identified as the USG's number two focus in Africa (the 'Horn' remains number one) in the War on Terrorism' (Smith Jr., undated). US European Command (EUCOM – responsible for all US military activity in Africa outside the Horn) would 'train and equip company-sized forces to conduct rapid-reaction operations to stem the flow of illicit arms, goods and people; and to preclude terrorists and terrorist organizations from seeking or establishing sanctuaries in the Sahel' (Smith Jr. undated: 3; DoS 200b, DoS 2003c, DoS 2003d).

The PSI started with just $7.75m for building partner capacity across Chad, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania. However, the perception of success and of greater need fuelled the expansion of the programme into the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) in early 2005. According to the State Department the PSI had been 'very successful' but 'the need for the TSCTI stemmed from ongoing concern over the potential for expansion of operations by Islamic terrorist organizations in the Sahel' (DoS 2006; DoS 2005).[5] The

new Initiative included nine countries in total: the original PSI four (Chad, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania) and an additional five: Nigeria, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. According to Theresa Whelan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, it would be 'just a physical impossibility' for the US to fight terrorism across the Sahel by itself, 'so you have to build the capacity of like-minded states to be able to help you confront the threat. And that's what the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative represents' (Cited in Miles 2005).

In the Philippines, the Bush administration launched a train and equip programme dubbed Operation Enduring Freedom—the Philippines (OEF-P) in early 2002. OEF-P was directed against what the Bush administration claimed was the South East Asian branch of Al Qaeda – the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) – a terrorist group fighting for an independent Islamic state in the southern Bangsamoro region of the Philippines. There was little evidence of direct contact, let alone meaningful co-operation, between Osama Bin Laden's group and the ASG (DoS 2003: 20-23; DoS 2004: 26-28).[6] Nevertheless, in February 2002, six hundred US troops, including one hundred and sixty Special Forces, were sent to the Philippines for the annual bilateral Balikatan ('shoulder-to-shoulder') military exercises. By April this had increased to over six thousand troops and the exercises involved the live fire pursuit of leaders of the Abu Sayyaf (Reid 2006: 155; Bello 2002; Radics 2004: 124). This was followed by the establishment of a Joint Special Operations Task Force in Manila, which conducted lengthy annual joint exercises and training with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, still ongoing in 2016, making OEF-P the longest-running campaign of the war on terror (US Special Operations Command

2007: 130). The two countries also took steps to integrate their armed forces and promote policy co-ordination. Joint military training exercises promoted interoperability meaning that Philippine armed forces could serve under US command in future joint operations (De Castro 2009: 407-8; Rivera 2005: 132; Abinales and Quimpo 2008: 79-80). In August 2002, Rumsfeld and his Philippine counterpart, Angelo Reyes, signed an agreement creating a Bilateral Defense Policy Board composed of civilian officials from both sides tasked with managing the alliance, addressing common security challenges, and promoting policy co-ordination (Garamone 2002). In May 2003, Arroyo made a state visit to Washington during which the Philippines was formally designated a Major Non-Nato Military Ally, a coveted status enjoyed at the time by only ten other countries (White House 2003).

Similarly, in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, the Bush administration agreed a train-and-equip programme with the government in Tbilisi that sought to bring security to the lawless Pankisi Valley region – an area that extremists linked to Osama Bin Laden had allegedly sheltered in after 9/11. For the Georgian government, however, it was the presence of approximately 2,000 Chechen separatist fighters in the Pankisi Gorge, and the central government's repeated failure to assert control over the area, that was the primary consideration (Davdariani 2002; Cohen 2002; Quinn-Judge 2002). In October 2001 when Georgian President, Eduard Shevardnadze, visited Washington, Bush agreed to offer military assistance to the Georgians to help combat terrorism in the Pankisi region. This led to the deployment of 1,200 Special Forces to Georgia in February 2002 for nearly two years under the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP). Under the

GTEP, US forces trained their counterparts in border security and counterinsurgency. According to Colonel Robert M. Waltemayer, the commander of the GTEP, the ultimate purpose of the mission was to 'help the Georgian armed forces improve their ability to maintain stability and sovereignty in this region, which would obviously deny safe haven to any of those types of terrorist organizations that would seek haven or transit through this region.' Waltemeyer also confirmed that as a result of the GTEP training, Georgian forces would 'understand US doctrine, which is heavily steeped in standard NATO agreements' and have military equipment that 'in many cases, especially the communications gear, will be interoperable with our own' – thus facilitating further bilateral and multilateral action under United States command (Areshidze 2002; Brady 2002; DoD 2002; Rhem 2002).

Expanding Security Assistance

The train-and-equip programmes in Africa, the Philippines, and Georgia were the templates for a broader and more flexible security assistance authorization that permitted the Pentagon to undertake train-and-equip missions anywhere in the world. General John Abizaid, head of Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversaw the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa, praised the security assistance programmes claiming that

> Dollar for dollar, person for person, our return out here is better than anywhere in the CENTCOM (area of responsibility)… From capacity building and nation building perspectives, this investment is one of the best our country has ever made… Ultimately, globalization either works or it doesn't work. If you want to

make it work, you've got to engage in the places where it's most difficult and this is

precisely one of those places. (Cited in Dorfner 2006)

Although security assistance was nothing new, it now had an enhanced role in national

strategy on the basis that transnational challenges required a multilateral response. In a

globalized world, 'our strategic objectives are not attainable without the support and

assistance of capable partners', the DoD asserted. As a result, security co-operation

programmes had become 'one of the principal vehicles for… expanding international

capacity to meet common security challenges.' In fact, the DoD claimed in 2005, 'one of

our military's most effective tools in prosecuting the Global War on Terrorism is to help

train indigenous forces' (DoD 2005: 15).

For the Pentagon to have a global security assistance programme of its own was

historically unprecedented: under the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, all foreign security

aid flowed through the State Department to ensure the overall coherency of US foreign

policy. This meant the DoD did not have authority to identify or independently train-and-

equip foreign security forces (Serafino 2011: 1-2).[7] However, under Section 1206 of the

2006 National Defense Authorization Act, the DoD, with the concurrence of the

Secretary of State, was permitted to spend up to $200m per year to provide equipment,

supplies, or training to foreign security forces to build capacity to conduct

counterterrorism operations. This became known as Section 1206 funding (DoD 2006b:

322-24). As Eric Edelman, the Pentagon's Undersecretary for Policy, testified, Section

1206 funding facilitated co-operation with 'partner nations who know the local

geography, language, and culture' in a way that the United States never could. 'Although

17

we possess the finest military force in the world", Edelman said, "this global war will not be won without the help of partner nations' (Edelman 2006: 3; GAO 2006). The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), which administered the 1206 funding, noted that 'because threats often emanate from countries with which the US is not at war, the Department must work through these particular countries to address them.' In 2007, the Section 1206 funding was increased to $300m per year though the authority still required annual renewal (Edelman 2006: 6; DoD 2007: Section 1206). From fiscal years 2006-10 (i.e. October 2005-September 2010) $1.3 billion in Section 1206 funds was spent in thirty-four countries, *excluding* Afghanistan and Iraq for which there were separate, supplemental appropriations. This included bilateral and multilateral operations across Africa (Chad, Tunisia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, São Tomé and Príncipe, and other countries in the Gulf of Guinea), 'Greater Europe' (including Ukraine, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Poland, Estonia, and Georgia), Asia Pacific (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia and above all Indonesia and the Philippines), and the Middle East (Lebanon, Pakistan, and Yemen). The top seven recipients of the 1206 funding in this period were Yemen, Pakistan, Lebanon, the Philippines, Indonesia, Bahrain, and Malaysia – with the three Asia Pacific countries (the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia) accounting for 63% of the total (Serafino 2011: 25-31; GAO 2006: 17-21, 25; DSCA 2009: 424-7). According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the regional combatant commanders considered Section 1206 'the single most important tool to shape the environment and counterterrorism outside Iraq and Afghanistan.' In just three years, the DSCA claimed, the 1206 train-and-equip programme had become 'a key element of the overall security cooperation set of

programs conducted by the Department of Defense and the Department of State.' Every year, demand for 1206 funds exceeded their availability (DCSA 2009: 424; DSCA 2008/2009: 425).

In May 2007, with the support of State and the President, the DoD submitted the Building Global Partnerships Act to Congress to make the Section1206 authority permanent and requested that the funding ceiling be increased to $750m per year (DoD 2007b; Executive Office of the President 2007; *Inside the Pentagon* 2008). Robert L. Wilkie, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, described the Act as 'the centerpiece of our legislative program in 2007' (Pincus 2007). Rumsfeld was keen to push the Section 1206 program in Congressional testimony and requested talking points on the Pentagon's train-and-equip programmes (Rumsfeld 2005). Ultimately, however, members of Congress were sceptical of what Rep. Ike Skelton, Chair of the House Armed Services Committee, said 'appears to be the migration of State Department activities to the Defense Department.' Congress agreed only to continue the status quo, meaning the 1206 funding would continue to require annual approval (Tyson 2008; DoD 2008: Sections 1209-10). For the Pentagon, however, the train and equip authority was a key tool for tackling transnational threats on a global scale.

Another instantiation of the renewed emphasis on bi- and multi-lateral action was Rumsfeld's review of the DoD's Theater Engagement Plan process. In 1998, the Pentagon began requiring Combatant Commanders to publish Theater Engagement Plans encompassing peacetime security cooperation designed to proactively shape the

environment in advance of hostilities (Steinke and Tarbet 2000; Dyekman 2007).

However, the 1998 directive provided limited policy guidance or strategic direction, and

no priorities across different theatres (Dyekman 2007: 2) In 2003, Rumsfeld sought to

bring greater focus to these efforts by introducing a new Security Cooperation Guidance

document that required regional Combatant Commanders to develop an annual Theater

Security Cooperation Plan that would link bilateral and multilateral defence initiatives

with security cooperation objectives and US national interests (Dyekman 2007: 2).

Introducing the new security cooperation guidance, Undersecretary of Defense, Douglas

Feith, asserted

> one of our country's key strategic assets is the network of alliances and defense
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> partnerships that we maintain throughout the world… Indeed there are missions of
>
> paramount important – such as the war on terrorism – that can be accomplished
>
> only with the help of friends and allies.

Responding to accusations of unilateralism, Feith claimed 'It would be impractical,

indeed, foolish to fail to build upon the global network of U.S. strategic relationships. A

U.S. policy of 'unilateralism' would make no sense.' The new security cooperation

guidance focused on 'shar[ing] technology, information, activities and a frame of mind

about security issues' Feith stated, and went on to outline the more specific objectives of

security cooperation (Feith 2004). Updated guidance in 2005 provided Combatant

Commanders with ways to conduct security cooperation and priority countries. Examples

of such activities included the Caspian Sea Guard in the EUCOM area of responsibility.

According to General James L. Jones, then commander of EUCOM, the Initiative 'assists

Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in improving their ability to prevent and, if needed, respond

to terrorism, nuclear proliferation, drug and human trafficking, and other transnational threats in the Caspian region.' A similar programme – the Gulf of Guinea Guard – was also underway in West Africa. According to Jones, the United States would work with the Gulf coast states to enhance port security, improve control of littoral areas, and promote collective and cooperative maritime security beyond littoral areas (Jones 2006: 14-19; Wald 2005: 22-3). Reflecting the new emphasis on security cooperation, the DoD issued a new Directive in October 2008 announcing that 'security cooperation… is an important tool of national security and foreign policy, and is an integral element of the DoD mission' (DoD 2008b).

It should also be noted that security assistance and train-and-equip programmes were not forced on unwilling recipients, but relied instead on friendly and co-operative bilateral and multilateral relationships in which US allies were given some scope to shape the character of the US presence. They were, in essence, coalitions of the willing. In the Philippines, for example, the US presence was encouraged and welcomed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. In 2000, Arroyo had negotiated a security assistance training package from US Pacific Command (PACOM) to aid the Armed Forces of the Philippines in their battle against separatist forces in the Bangsamoro region (Briscoe 2004a and 2004b). After 9/11, she was keen to expand the bilateral programme and quickly cast Manila's battle against the ASG as part of the United States' war on terror: 'We have our own home-grown terrorism and to the extent that we can obliterate terrorism all over the world, then our own terrorism will be much easier to neutralize.' Arroyo candidly acknowledged 'the silver lining' of the tragedy: 'We expect to have

more international cooperation for our efforts' (Lander 2001). Arroyo also shaped the terms of the US intervention by making it clear that US forces could not have a combat role because this would violate the Philippine constitution: 'It's very clear that I have told him (President Bush) that I draw the line on soldiers on the ground and he respects the line I have drawn' Arroyo stated (cited in Abuza 2003: 204). The US programme would also be limited to assisting Philippine forces in pursuit of the ASG, not the other separatist groups, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) or the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The Philippine government made a distinction between the latter two groups, which were engaged in ongoing, though faltering, peace negotiations with Manila, and the ASG, which was not. At Arroyo's request, Washington kept both MILF and MNLF off the State Department's list of terrorist groups, but included the ASG (Niksch 2003: 8; Abuza 2004: 349). Similarly the GTEP was welcomed by the Shevardnadze government. Since 1999, Russia had been threatening to invade the Pankisi Gorge to root out Chechen separatist fighters. Shevardnadze wanted to preclude Russian incursions, but the Georgian military was unable to wrest control of the Gorge back from the Chechens (DoS 2001; Kleveman 2003: 34). Visiting Washington in October 2001, Shevardnadze stated that his meeting with Bush had resulted in a decision that 'our two countries, together with our friends, must join efforts to collectively fight a war against terrorists' (Gilmore 2001; Federal News Service 2001). Finally, Washington signed new military access agreements with fifteen countries across Africa: Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, São Tomé, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia (Ploch 2009: 9; Volman 2003: 580). Djibouti and Eritrea even competed for the right to host a base that would be the headquarters of the

22

US-led task force in the Horn of Africa (Sipher 2002; *Washington Times* 2002). Djiboutian President, Omar Guelleh, subsequently informed the US ambassador, Marguerita Ragsdale, that he wanted Djibouti to be one of the countries that was 'closest to the hearts of the Administration and to the President of the United States (DoS 2004b). US partners were not unwilling recipients of aid, but often welcomed US initiatives and in some cases shaped the parameters of the programmes.

The Section 1206 funding turned out to be one of Rumsfeld's enduring legacies. His successor, Robert Gates, supported the expansion of the programme and its conversion into a permanent authority. Gates asserted

> the most important military component in the war on terror is not the fighting we do ourselves but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern their own countries. The standing up and mentoring of indigenous armies and police—once the province of Special Forces—is now a key mission for the military (DSCA 2010: 455).

The Pentagon's Instruction on Security Force Assistance of October 2010 signified that this work had become a core activity of the general purpose forces. Security Force Assistance could occur 'across the range of military operations' and across all domains – air, land, maritime, and cyberspace – but 'shall be conducted primarily to assist host countries to defend against internal and transnational threats to stability' (DoD 2010). President Obama followed this in April 2013 with a Presidential Policy Directive, PPD-23, on Security Force Assistance that distilled into a single document lessons learned

since 9/11 about weak states, transnational threats, and bilateral action. Building partners'
security capacity was a cost-effective way to 'disrupt and defeat transnational threats;
sustain legitimate and effective public safety, security… maintain control of… territory
and jurisdiction waters, including air, land, and sea borders; and help indigenous forces
assume greater responsibility for operations where US military forces are present' (White
House 2013).

MARITIME SECURITY

Perhaps the best example of the Bush administration's understanding of the transnational
realm of international relations, and the need for multilateral action, came in its strategy
towards the world's oceans. The 2005 National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS)
recognized explicitly that the maritime domain was a transnational jurisdiction that was
not controlled by any single state, and that it was also subject to 'a variety of
transnational threats that honor no national frontier', some of which were unique to the
maritime domain, such as piracy (NSMS 2005: 25, 4-5). The oceans were 'of enormous
importance to …the security and prosperity' of all nations, and 'like all other countries,
the United States is highly dependent on the oceans for its security, and the welfare of its
people and economy.' But because the world's seas were part of the 'global commons
under no States's jurisdiction,' collective international action was essential:

> Success in securing the maritime domain will not come from the United States
> acting alone, but through a powerful coalition of nations maintaining a strong,
> united international front. The need for a strong and effective coalition is reinforced
> by the fact that most of the maritime domain is under no single nation's sovereignty

or jurisdiction. Additionally, increased economic interdependency and globalization, largely made possible by maritime shipping, underscores the need for a coordinated approach (NSMS 2005: 1, 13).

As part of this strategy, the United States would work closely with established transnational maritime institutions including the International Maritime Organization, the World Customs Organization, and the International Standards Organization, and would support the relevant conventions on maritime safety (Ibid: 14). These established transnational mechanisms would supplement new ad hoc multilateral initiatives established by the Bush administration. The 2003 Proliferation Security Initiative was an informal coalition of states ostensibly dedicated to interdicting WMD at sea. To all intents and purposes, however, the Initiative was aimed at preventing the acquisition of WMD by North Korea, Iran, Sudan, and Libya. To join, participants agreed to a Statement of Interdiction Principles; by 2004, the Bush administration claimed that the Initiative had sixty supporters, although only twenty had declared this publically (Esper and Allen 2004: 4). In 2004, several nations engaged in a much-publicized interdiction of alleged nuclear material bound for Libya from the infamous A.Q. Khan smuggling network based in Pakistan. The Initiative also promoted customs, legal, and diplomatic initiatives to enforce a norm of WMD interdiction, though details of any subsequent interdictions on the high seas are few and far between, even as the Initiative continues under Obama (DoS, undated a.). The success of the Proliferation Security Initiative remains questionable – but its rationale for multilateral co-operation at sea is clear: in this area 'an enhanced national effort is not sufficient. The challenges that remain ahead for the United States…compel us to strengthen our ties with allies and friends and to seek

new partnerships with others. Therefore international cooperation is critical' (NSMS 2005: 25).

Other manifestations of the administration's maritime security strategy included the 2004 Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) with Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. This focused on the Malacca Strait, a vital chokepoint for global shipping and oil supplies. In 2005, the Strait carried a quarter of the world's maritime trade; it also had the highest rate of piracy in the world and the lack of cross-border maritime patrols fed fears that terrorists could target the Strait (Sittnick 2005: 763-4). According to Admiral Thomas Fargo, head of PACOM, the Regional Maritime Security Initiative would 'assess and then provide detailed plans to build and synchronize interagency and international capacity to fight threats that use the maritime space to facilitate their illicit activity' (Fargo 2004). Before long, however, the RMSI was abandoned due to opposition from Indonesia and Malaysia. When Fargo testified to Congress that the US was considering placing Special Operations Forces in the Malacca Strait the governments in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur condemned the RMSI as a violation of their sovereignty and warned that the presence of US forces in the Strait would only fuel Islamic radicalism. However, the intent of the programme survived in a different form. Shortly afterwards, the Indonesian government suggested naval patrols with Singapore and Malaysia, which began in July 2004. (Thailand joined in 2008.) Since the participants were sensitive to issues of national sovereignty, each country controlled its own waters and there were no joint naval patrols. These exercises formed the basis of the Malacca Strait Patrols initiative. As a result, the instances of piracy declined from thirty-eight in 2004 to eleven in 2006, and seven in

2007 (Ministry of Defense 2008). This was not entirely without assistance from the US. Indonesia and Malaysia were opposed to non-nationals patrolling their waters, but they were prepared to accept other forms of assistance from Washington: in FY06 and FY07, the US gave Indonesia $47.1m in maritime security equipment, while Malaysia received $16.3m (Storey 2009: 44). This was further proof that US partners had the capacity to shape the character of the US presence in their region. Parallel regional maritime security initiatives were also implemented in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan (the Caspian Guard Initiative), and with ten West African countries in the Gulf of Guinea from 2007 onwards under the auspices of the Africa Partnership Station. By 2009, the international staff of 70 on board the *U.S.S. Nashville* in the Gulf of Guinea totalled more than 70, including 21 senior enlisted personnel from ten countries in the Gulf of Guinea, seven from Europe, and one from South America (Jones 2006: 18; DoS, undated b.: 396; DoS undated c.: 502-03; Clark 2007; Loeffler 2009; NSC 2008). These multilateral initiatives were designed to promote US interests at the transnational level by co-opting as many like-minded countries as possible.

CONCLUSION:
INTERNATIONALISM & TRANSNATIONALISM UNDER BUSH

Although the United States did not act alone when it invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, the intense focus on these two campaigns, and the Bush administration's bypassing of the United Nations in 2003 has obscured numerous other global and regional multilateral and bilateral initiatives established by the Bush administration designed to address transnational phenomena by pursuing concerted action across multiple locations. Highlighting some of these initiatives calls into question the common

scholarly emphasis on a unilateral tilt in US foreign policy under Bush. Although most of the Bush administration's bi- and multilateral initiatives were driven more by a pragmatic understanding of transnationalism than a principled commitment to concerted action via supranational institutions, the administration was nevertheless able to co-opt many other states in this endeavour. As John Agnew and co-authors Doug Stokes and Sam Raphael point out, one of the distinguishing features of post-World War II American hegemony has been its successful co-option of other nations that stand to benefit economically and strategically from US primacy (Agnew 2005; Stokes and Raphael 2010). Under the auspices of the "war on terror", the Bush administration was able to co-opt some Western and some non-Western states to its fight ostensibly against transnational non-state terrorists. Its approach was driven by a new appreciation of transnational phenomena, such as networked terrorism, and a belief that the most effective way to project American power in the face of transnational challenges was to co-opt other states and work together to tackle threats that crossed borders, with the US as the dominant – though not necessarily dominating – partner.

More broadly, American transnationalism in the Bush years was driven by the desire to preserve and extend the Western economic and political order led by the United States, which was now challenged by both conventional state-based *and* transnational phenomena. State-based conservative internationalism therefore remained a central component of US strategy under Bush – with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 the exemplar of this approach – but, in an age of globalization, a purely internationalist strategy was no longer sufficient to preserve US primacy. To maintain its position at the apex of the

Western alliance, the United States needed to co-opt other states to tackle shared transnational challenges. Thus the bilateralism and multilateralism of the Bush administration were not in the Wilsonian liberal internationalist tradition but were championed because policy makers believed that the United States simply had no choice. The Bush administration's actions were driven by pragmatism and a hard-headed assessment of the security interests required to maintain the United States' global position. For the most part, this did not mean working through supranational or transnational institutions because this would compromise American leadership – but this did not mean that working with allies was any less important when it came to the transnational dimension of US strategy.

There is little evidence that this approach to transnational security actually worked in practice. Despite billions of dollars spent on building security capacity in weak states outside of Iraq and Afghanistan, Islamist militancy continued to grow across Africa with the establishment in 2006 of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali, and al Shabaab in Somalia. In 2012, AQIM took over two thirds of Malian territory, though was later pushed back by a French military intervention. Al Shabaab expanded its operations into neighbouring Kenya, including the tragic siege of a shopping mall in Nairobi in September 2013 that ended with 67 deaths. In the Philippines, the strength of the Abu Sayyaf Group appeared undiminished; in September 2002, it was estimated at 200 men, and by 2007 at 427 strong (Garamone 2002b; International Crisis Group 2008: 15). Moreover, the complete lack of information about any maritime interdictions carried out under the auspices of the Proliferation Security Initiative after the A.Q. Khan seizure in

2004 suggests that the group has achieved little else since. However, the consensual

character of the US programmes in these regions suggests that Washington should not

shoulder the entire blame for these failed policies: while the United States was certainly

the more powerful partner and led these initiatives, it did not impose them on unwilling

recipients, but acted with the consent and active participation of other states that judged it

to be in their interest to work with the United States. If the label 'unilateralism' is to

mean anything it should not be applied to such policies. Moreover, when assessing the

extent to which a government tilts towards unilateralism, it is important to assess its

approach to transnational phenomena. As Ikenberry concludes, in the long-term

interdependence is likely to drive more multilateral policies (2003: 540). In other words,

the more salient transnational phenomena become, the less likely future administrations

are to embrace forms of unilateral action.

Notes

[1] This is *not* to suggest that transnational challenges were new, but that contemporary globalization was creating new types of networked transnational security challenges that the United States was not equipped to counter in the early 21st century. For a classic analysis of transnationalism and American power in the 21st century see Nye Jr, *The Paradox of American Power.*

[2] This language became commonplace in DoD strategy and planning documents. By 2006, the concept of state-sponsorship of terrorism had been relegated to a tertiary concern. The updated 2006 National Strategy for Combating Terrorism did not mention state-sponsorship until page 4 and it was absent from the 'Overview' of the strategy on page 1. See: http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nsct/2006/ (15/02/16)

[3] There are frequent references to "ungoverned space" in documents from this period. Examples include Douglas J. Feith, Speech, 'Transformation and Security Cooperation', 8 September 2004, http://www.dougfeith.com/docs/2004_09_08_National_Press_Club_Transformation.pdf

[4] I take the 'hub and spoke' analogy from Ikenberry (2004): 353-367.

[5] State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2005*, Chapter 5 http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/65468.pdf: 46 (14/02/13). The same judgment is made in DoS, 'Executive Summary of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative,' January 7 2005, Secret, obtained under FOIA; in author's possession.

[6] The State Department's annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* reports did not even allege a link between the ASG and Al Qaeda in its 2002 and 2003 editions. According to Admiral Dennis Blair, head of US Pacific Command, there was no concrete evidence of contemporary links between Al Qaeda and the ASG. Although there were some "historical" connections, the ASG was now "a group that is mostly criminal but certainly has the potential to be used by al-Qaida as a base of operations." See Interview with Admiral

Dennis Blair, PBS News Hour, 19 December 2001, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism-july-dec01-blair_12-19/ (15/07/16).
[7] This did not mean that the DoD did not provide any security training, but that it did this on behalf of and with the permission of the State Department, which was responsible for identifying and approving recipients. Foreign Assistance Act, Public Law 87-195, 4 September 1961, https://bulk.resource.org/gao.gov/87-195/00005462_317741.pdf (22/09/14)

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