Abstract

This graduate thesis analyzes the security policy of the United States during the previous administration of President George W. Bush and the current administration of President Obama. The first section is devoted to a detailed analysis of the security strategies of both administrations as well as to their practical applications, not only in the field of defense and military, but also in foreign trade and building of alliances and partnerships. Based on this analysis the first part concludes that, although the Obama's security policy is criticized for being just a "Bush lite," it differs clearly in almost all mentioned areas. The thesis identifies, as the most essential, the difference in the overall concept of the security policy, which is multilateral and less militarily engaged at the time of the Obama administration than during the Bush administration which is characterized by unilateral approach with pre-emptive use of force. The second part of this thesis thus builds on these major differences. Based on previous analysis of both policies then generates hypotheses which aim at finding a cause of this change. To test the hypotheses this study makes use of three classical theories of international relations, which include elements that have been previously identified as a possible driving force for both policies. Neorealism analyzes the U.S. position of power and change in the international structure, liberal theory deals with the preferences of both the U.S. and other countries in the international system, constructivism examines the impact of social interactions between states on the state external behavior. Finally the thesis concludes that constructivism is the only theory able to explain the security policy changes that have occurred when President Obama took office in 2009.