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THE DIALECTICS OF INTERVENTION
AN ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE AND THEORETICAL
ACCOUNTS FOR CONFLICT INITIATION

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THESIS PROPOSAL

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Title:

Checking Morals At The Door: The Art Of Conflict Initiation In Contemporary Western Democracies

Proposed Topic:

In my thesis I aim to explore the relation between the realm of geopolitics and that of political communication; the core consideration is that, if the general population (at least as far as contemporary Western democracies are concerned) assumes that states' behavior is supposed to conform to the set of norms of liberal matrix codified in international law, while statesmen define their nations' best interest according to realist principles that might be in direct contradiction with those rules, there's bound to be a discrepancy between the (realist) behavior of a state and its own population's (liberal) expectations, unless a deceptive rhetoric is employed in order to present that behavior as adherent to liberal principles.

In his recent publication "Why Leaders Lie", John J. Mearsheimer calls this rhetoric "liberal lies"; he puts it down very bluntly: "when states act in ways that run counter to liberal norms or international law, their leaders often invent false stories that are designed to mask what they are doing"; and again, "problems arise [...] when realist and idealist imperatives are at odds with each other. In those cases, elites will usually

act like realists and talk like liberals, which invariably necessitates deception, including lying". Aside for lying, he identifies spinning and concealing as the other forms of deception commonly employed.

The idea is to concentrate on the case of conflict initiation, being it the most full-blown and recognizable manifestation of the phenomenon hypothesized. I aim to analyze how conflicts initiated by democracies are introduced to the public of those democracies themselves; how population support is achieved; which communication techniques are employed to do so; how the image of the opponent is created; how the conflict is legitimized (if recurring to logic or emotions - assuming that rationality is the logic-driven primary trait of realist behavior, one might expect legitimacy to be the emotion-driven primary trait of liberalism); and what is the aftermath if deception is exposed - both the public's and the government's reactions to such an event.

The main hypothesis to be verified, is if the message sent will be aimed at shifting the focus from the primary strategic, rational objectives, to ethical ones aimed at making the initiation of conflict legitimate, the war "just", and appealing to the emotions of the population - in line with the core consideration from which I departed. One might argue that these ethical objectives are not façade, but incidental; that it's not a case of deception as much as of coincidence. Indeed, there is no moral judgement inherent in the analysis I'll undertake: this aims to be a purely technical analysis of the means at disposal to successfully gain population support for the initiation of a conflict.

I plan to utilize both classic texts of political communication theory (Bernay, Lippman) as well as contemporary ones covering the subject of public opinion from the specific point of view of conflict involvement and initiation; I'll also make use of data-analysis studies on conflict initiation and outcome (Chiozza & Goeman, Gelpi & Griesdorf, Ireland & Gartner) that shed light on the connections between democratic political structures and leaders behavior, and works on the theory of just war (Walter, Orend, Zajac), particularly in relation to the preemptive/preventive war dualism. Furthermore, I'll make use of the analysis of war rhetoric by Ivie, Reid, and possibly others.

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DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, based on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography. The thesis as submitted is 143.817 keystrokes long (including spaces), i.e. 80 manuscript pages.

Francesco Corneo

Signature

In, Prague, Czech Republic, 18th May, 2012

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Abstract

The scope of this work is to critically assess the phenomenon of American interventions from the beginning of the post-Cold War era to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Departing from the analysis of the question of why an argument liable to disproof was chosen for legitimizing on legal grounds the 2003 invasion of Iraq, I proceed to the analysis of the relation between legitimizing discourse employed by the American administration domestically, and the one employed in the context of international institutions. The first one is concluded to take precedence over the second - at least for what concerns the timeframe taken into consideration in this work.

I then proceed to an analysis of the evolution of domestic legitimizing discourse from 1991 to 2003, providing a dialectic evolutionary model. Finally, competing theoretical interpretations of the phenomenon are tested against the findings of the research.

I. Introduction

This work aims to critically assess the phenomenon of American military intervention according to dialectics - thus trying to understand it in the entirety of its interconnected manifestations - from the beginning of the post-Cold War era to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

This particular timeframe has been chosen because it presents a high number of instances of armed conflict in a relatively short space; also, it offers major interventions of apparently varied nature: under the aegis of the United Nations, an invasion in defense of a third party (1991), a relief operation (1992), a peacekeeping operation (1995), and an invasion for self-defense (2001); without U.N. blessing, a NATO airstrike campaign (1999) and an invasion for pre-emptive self-defense (2003).

As mentioned, a dialectical approach will be used. Rather than analyzing the phenomenon departing from the understanding of a specific theoretical framework, existing contrasting models accounting for the questions arising from the observation of the phenomenon of conflict initiation and relevant side issues will be tested for coherence and accuracy, in an attempt to ultimately identify which overarching theory, if any, provides the most relevant description of intervention in the specific context analyzed.

Because of the complex nature of the phenomenon, a variety of studies ranging from juridical reports (Field, 2004), to empirical evaluations (Bueno de Mesquita & Sieverson, 1995; Chiozza & Goemans, 2003; Gause III, 2005; Gelpi & Griesdorf, 2001; Mansfield & Snyder, 1995, 2002; Newman, 2007; Quackenbush & Rudy, 2009) to polls analyses (Kull & Ramsay, 2001), to examples of discourse

analysis (Ivie, 1974, 1980, 2005; Graham, Keenan & Dowd, 2004; Said, 2003; Campbell, 1992; Nayak & Malone, 2009) will be used.

A variety of theoretical works (Arrighi, 1994; Rosenberg, 1994; Morgenthau, 1948; Mearsheimer, 2001, 2005; Téson, 2003; Keohane & Nye, 1977; Just, 2010; Kagan, 1998; Western, 2002) will be confronted in the final parts of the thesis to provide an answer to the original question in the light of the findings of the first two chapters.

As it was mentioned, the scope is limited to the timeframe 1991-2003, and to the United States of America. When particularly relevant - it is the case in the first part - the British case will also be taken into consideration. A variety of presidential addresses from the timeframe considered will be analyzed.

Although there exists a wide literature on the subject of conflict initiation, the vast majority tends to concentrate on a specific issue to it related - as illustrated by the choice of sources for this work; the most comprehensive work of which I'm aware is definitely Michael Walzer's "Arguing About War" (2004), which provided great inspiration. In this sense, I feel that what this thesis admittedly pays for in terms of lack of detail (after all, a comprehensive analysis of a single aspect of the phenomenon would require way more space than the entire length of this work), compensates for in scope, by providing a compact, unified analysis of the ever-changing network of relations which is the phenomenon itself.

After a brief section devoted to cover the evolution of just war theory and international law, I'll depart from the observation of an instance of conflict initiation, the Second Gulf War, peculiar because of the choice of the justifying reason brought forward by the Bush administration to the United Nations Security Council in order to advance the case of an armed intervention - namely, self-defense -, one which

appeared particularly difficult to uphold in the specific context, especially given the comparative viability of another argument, humanitarian intervention.

The question that arises in this situation is why an argument so liable to disproof was chosen for legitimizing the intervention on legal grounds at the international stage. From an analysis, it appears likely that this happened because of the tight connection between the legitimizing discourse employed by the U.S. administration in the context of the United Nations and that employed domestically. While it is possible to distinguish separate iterations, the two appear to maintain overlapping contents; however, this may at times mean for the administration having to choose between giving priority to domestic approval or international law; in the case analyzed, it appears that domestic approval was indeed given preference - which explains the limitations of the justifying reasons adduced to the UNSC.

The second part of this work proposes an extensive discourse analysis based on Graham, Keenan and Dowd's observations (2004) of the major addresses by U.S. Presidents to the American nation regarding military operations abroad in the period considered (Iraq 1991; Somalia 1992; Bosnia 1995; Yugoslavia 1999; Afghanistan 2001; Iraq 2003), trying to draw an outline of the evolution of the domestic legitimating discourse and of the relation between humanitarian intervention and national interest as it can be understood from them.

In the third part will be provided a dialectical evolutionary model of domestic legitimizing discourse (limited to the timeframe of interest), referencing the normative beliefs about conflict initiation which underpin it.

Finally, the attention will move from the appearance of the phenomenon to its essence, comparing its ontological interpretation according to neoliberal, neorealist, and radical theory.

II. On the Nexus Between Just War Theory and Legitimizing

Discourse

In the introduction to his work *Arguing About War*, Michael Walzer argues that understanding Just War Theory as a narrow framing of wars, detaching the immediate issues from the big picture, is a fallacy, in that, if it's true that "critics can distinguish between concocted excuses for war and actual reasons" (2004, p. xi), then the same can be said for proponents of Just War Theory; "it can be used to analyze a long chain of events as readily as a short one" (Walzer, 2004, p. xi), which is to say, it is a tool which scope is not fixed, and with which it is thus possible to produce different understandings of reality by employing it from different perspectives, by applying it to different temporal and spatial frames.

A war that, *per se*, appears to fulfill the criteria of a just war, might, then, lose its justness if it is possible to recognize and expose an existing imperialist frame in which it is inscribed; and this critique would itself come from Just War Theory - again, using the words of Walzer: "how can imperial warfare be criticized if not in just war terms? [...] Aggressive wars, wars of conquest, wars to extend spheres of influence and establish satellite states, wars for economic aggrandizement - all these are unjust wars" (2004, p. xi).

Arguably, this variability of interpretation lies, specifically, in the temporal frame in which the criterium of right intention is considered fulfilled. In fact, while it is for its very definition in the nature of imperial warfare to violate the criterium of right intention, it is also true that it becomes almost impossible to isolate univocal identifiers of imperialist behavior once legitimizing discourse shaped appositely in

order to make armed interventions fulfill the criteria of Just War Theory becomes routinely employed.

However, at times it is possible to notice some kind of inconsistency in the use of the legitimizing discourse in the international context - specifically, when an intervention is tentatively justified on the basis of a reason liable to heavy criticism, while more valid ones are available. Why does this happen? This chapter will try to answer this question departing from an analysis of the legitimizing discourse employed in the build up to the Second Gulf War, which appears to present such characteristic.

II.a A Brief Outlook on Just War Theory

In order to follow with my proposed analysis, it is first of all necessary to elucidate the key concepts behind Just War Theory; which tradition it arises from; and how it evolved through the centuries in order to apply to contemporary reality.

Just war was born essentially as a Christian doctrine (Walzer, 2004, p. 3), which sought to complement natural law. Its roots reside in Saint Augustine's (354 - 430) writings; still, it is only in Saint Thomas Aquinas' (1225 - 1274) so-called *Treatise on The Theological Virtues*, which forms part of the *Summa Theologiæ* (written between 1265 and 1274), that the criteria which make a war lawful - just - are expressed in a structured and coherent form. More specifically, they are outlined in the first article of the *Quæstio 40* from the second part of the second part of the opera previously mentioned, and are:

- the principle we currently indicate as of “competent authority”: that war can only be waged by sovereigns who enjoy such authority, never by a private (Aquinas, 1274?); furthermore, in Aquinas’ conception theirs is not simply a prerogative, but rather a duty, for they shall “recourse to the sword of war in defending the common weal against external enemies” (Aquinas, 1274?). This criterium builds on a piece by Saint Augustine in the *Contra Faustus Manichæum* (400, cited in Aquinas, 1274?), in which he declares that war shall be wage by those who hold “supreme authority” in order to maintain peace among people;
- the principle of “just cause”: that one can only be attacked if he deserves it - for having committed some wrong (Aquinas, 1274?). This references a passage from Augustine’s *Quæstionum in Heptateuchum* (n.d., cited in Aquinas, 1274?): “A just war is wont to be described as one that avenges wrongs, when a nation or state has to be punished, for refusing to make amends for the wrongs inflicted by its subjects, or to restore what it has seized unjustly”; and
- third and final, the principle of “right intention”, which implies a good cause and no evil intention (Aquinas, 1274?) as the reason for the intervention. “For it may happen that the war is declared by the legitimate authority, and for a just cause, and yet be rendered unlawful through a wicked intention” (Aquinas, 1274?). This again references the *Contra Faustus Manichæum* (Augustine of Hippo, 400, cited in Aquinas, 1274?), in which the desire for cruelty, vengeance, revolt and power are condemned.

A further, extensive scholastic treatise on Just War Theory comes from another Dominican friar (Saint Thomas Aquinas was one), namely Francisco de Vitoria (ca. 1492 - 1546). In the *De Jure Belli Hispanorum In Barbaros* (1532), later to

form part of the *Relectiones Theologicæ* (1557), drawing upon the core concepts outlined by Aquinas, as well as on Augustine's, Thomas' and Aristotle's authority, de Vitoria (1532) covers four key questions, specifically in relation to the Spanish conquest of the West Indies and Mesoamerica: "first, whether Christians may make war at all; secondly, where does the authority to declare or wage war repose; thirdly, what may and ought to furnish causes of just war; fourthly, what and how extensive measures may be taken in a just war against the enemy".

The answer to the first question is, in line with his predecessors, more or less a simple "yes". In response to the second, he identifies the concept of "perfect state", "one which is complete in itself, that is, which is not a part of another community, but has its own laws and its own council and its own magistrates, such as is the Kingdom of Castile and Aragon and the Republic of Venice and other the like" (de Vitoria, 1532, sec. 7); furthermore, he argues that only the heads of perfect states shall be allowed to wage war (de Vitoria, 1532, sec. 7).

As for the causes of just war, first de Vitoria lists those that are not: "difference of religion" (1532, sec. 10), "extension of empire" (1532, sec. 11), and the "personal glory of the prince nor any other advantage to him" (1532, sec. 12); he concludes that the only possible just cause left for conflict initiation must then be "a wrong received" (1532, sec. 13), and not a slight one at that: as, for war itself is "of a severe and atrocious character" (1532, sec. 14), some kind of proportionality shall be in force; thus, "the degree of the punishment ought to correspond to the measure of the offense" (1532, sec. 14).

The fourth and last questions deals mainly with what will come to be known as *jus in bello* rather than the *jus ad bellum*, and is thus not of immediate concern for the purpose of this analysis.

In this part, de Vitoria covered the criteria of competent authority, just cause and right intention; further on, he introduces that of comparative justice (that injustice on one side notably outweighs that on the other side), when he refers to the doubtful cases (1532, sec. 27-30), as well as that of last resort: “if one party wants to settle and make a division or compromise as to part of the claim, the other is bound to accept his proposal, even if that other be stronger and able to seize the whole by armed force; nor would he have a just cause for war” (1532, sec. 28; also sec. 21 and 29). A point is also raised which bridges the principles of macro-proportionality and proportionality: “great attention [...] must be paid to [...] the obligation to see that greater evils do not arise out of the war than the war would avert”. (1532, sec. 37; also sec. 38-49).

II.b From Just War Theory to International Law

The very same year Francisco de Vitoria completed his treatise on Just War Theory in Salamanca, the first edition of Niccolò Machiavelli’s *De Principatibus* was being published in Rome, paving the way for the flourishing of the realist tradition in international relations. “Worldly prudence triumphed over worldly justice; realism over what was increasingly disparaged as naive idealism”, as Walzer puts it (2004, p. 5).

Still, at least at a theoretical level, Christian Just War Theory found a sequitur in the works of Alberico Gentili (*Commentationes De Jure Belli*, 1588-89, and *De Jure Belli*, 1598) and, most notably, in Hugo Grotius’ *De Jure Belli Ac Pacis* (1625), which builds upon Gentili’s writings and is regarded, together with them, as a foundational work of international law. The first book of Grotius’ magnum opus mainly deals with

whether such thing as a lawful (“solemn”) war may exist (1625, Book I, Ch. II) and the principle of competent authority (1625, Book I, Ch. III and V). He argues that war, in principle, doesn’t violate neither natural law (1625, Book I, Ch. II, Sec. I-III), nor the law of nations - international law - (1625, Book I, Ch. II, Sec. IV), nor divine law (1625, Book I, Ch. II, Sec. V-X); as for the only authority allowed to conduce a public war, he identifies the holder of supreme civil power similarly to de Vitoria’s head of a “perfect state” (1625, Book I, Ch. III, Sec. VII; Ch. V, Sec. I).

In Book II, Grotius indicates the just causes for war: namely, self-defense (1625, Book II, Ch. I, Sec. II-III, XV), recovery of property and punishment of an injury committed (1625, Book II, Ch. I, Sec. II); perhaps even more importantly, he traces the distinction between real and pretend causes of war - or, in his words, “motives” and “justifying reasons” (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. I), harking back to Polybius, and adds: “there are those who alledge some sort of justifying reasons, but such as, being weighed in the balance of right reason, are found to be unjust. And in this case, (to use Livy’s expression) *the dispute is not who is in the right, but who is the most powerful*” (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. IV; original emphasis); still, some space is left for collateral advantage expected to be gained in a war grounded on just reasons (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. XV) - and this little disclaimer can be arguably said to leave the door open for every kind of contrasting interpretation of military interventions, given that inverting the respective positions of intention and collateral effects is by no means an impossible stunt to pull.

Among others, unjust reasons for war include for Grotius the “dread of [...] [a] neighbor’s encreasing strength” (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. V), which lacks the certainty of the “full intention to injure” (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. V); advantages to be obtained (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. VI-IX); the desire of liberty nor that of

ruling over others (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. XI-XII), and interpretation of divine prophecies (1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. XV).

The rest of the second book deals with the dubious causes of war (1625, Book II, Ch. XXIII), the principle of last resort (1625, Book II, Ch. XXIV, Sec. I-III), proportionality (1625, Book II, Ch. XXIV, Sec. V), and introduces that of probability of success: “*no prince should ever make war upon another, who is of equal strength with himself, on the account of inflicting punishment*: for as the civil magistrate is supposed to have greater power than the criminal; so should he also who attempts to revenge injuries by arms, be stronger than him he attacks” (1625, Book II, Ch. XXIV, Sec. VII; original emphasis). Grotius also covers the issues of intervention via an alliance, which is to be considered lawful as long as the initial reason for war is just (and thus doesn’t posit a limit to the scenario of collective defense, but, rather, contemplates collective proactive intervention) (1625, Book II, Ch. XXV, Sec. IV-VI), and, furthermore, poses the bases for the theory of humanitarian intervention: “if the Injustice be visible, as if a [...] [ruler] exercise[s] such tyrannies over subjects, as no good man living can approve of, the right of human society shall not be therefore excluded” (1625, Book II, Ch. XXV, Sec. VIII); and continues: “I may make war upon a man, tho’ he and I are of different nations, if he disturbs and molests his own country” (1625, Book II, Ch. XXV, Sec. VIII).

Finally, Book III mainly deals with *jus in bello*, and is thus not of central concern for this analysis.

The birth of realist thinking - which finds an antecedent in Niccolò Machiavelli’s “*Il Principe*” (1532) - and the appearance of what is today known as the Westphalian order at the end of the Thirty Years’ War (1648) marked the beginning of an era in

which the interest of the sovereign state almost entirely replaced the norms of morals and international law (Walzer, 2004, p.7), the system of international anarchy. As Walzer puts it, “States claimed a right to fight whenever their rulers deemed it necessary, and the rulers took sovereignty to mean that no one could judge their decisions” (2004, p. 7).

The theoretical rejection of this headless system was formulated by Immanuel Kant, who, in the classic “Perpetual Peace”, argued for the necessity of a collective security agreement between nations in the form of a federative “league of peace” (1795, sec. II.2) with the set objective of “terminat[ing] all wars forever” (1795, sec. II.2). This league would not violate the sovereignty of the member states in any way, Kant argued, but rather guarantee it through the peaceful reconciliation of differences achieved with the establishment of a “surrogate of the civil social order” (1795, sec. II.2).

The first iteration of Kant’s vision was the unsuccessful League of Nations (1918-1946), established in the aftermath of the Great War under the auspices of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson (although the United States never joined the organization) in order to prevent similar conflicts to happen ever again.

Another important example of the idealist wind blowing during the interwar period was the stipulation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, an international agreement still technically valid and binding today (Swanson, 2011), in which the subscribers formally agreed to renounce recourse to war “as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another” (1928) altogether.

The use of force in the present day international framework is fundamentally regulated by the Charter of the United Nations, the organization created after the failure of the League of Nations and the tragedy of World War II. The most relevant articles for the purpose of this overview are number 2, 42, and 51.

Article 2 (4) states the prohibition to members of the organization to resort to “the threat or use of force” (United Nations, 1945) against any other state. This general rule is amended in article 42: “the Security Council [...] may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security” (United Nations, 1945); and 51: “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations [...]” (United Nations, 1945)

Together, these articles define the only circumstances in which a state is, today, legally allowed to use military force against another: for self-defense (unilateral or collective) or in order to enforce a Security Council resolution, thus under the authority of article 42 of the Charter.

One last thing must be added, that it is commonly understood that the Security Council can legally “authorize humanitarian intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter” (Bellamy, 2005, p. 33).

II.c A Gap Between International and Domestic Legitimizing Discourse

An interesting scenario, as was suggested earlier, arises in the situation in which a country decides to enter war employing a justifying reason of dubious legitimacy when other justifying reasons would have proven more reasonable - for

example, on the ground of preemptive self-defense, while a humanitarian intervention could have been pursued; analyzing the degree of legitimacy of all the possible justifying reasons while taking into consideration which one is ultimately employed, and the reasons for this happening, can help to understand the relation between the international “legitimizing discourse”, the domestic one, and the “motives” of intervention.

The above case is perhaps most notably exemplified in reality by the “coalition of the willing”’s - the group of nations led by the United States in the “War on Terror” - intervention in Iraq of spring 2003.

As Field notes in his comprehensive study (2004), the rhetoric employed in the build up of the Second Gulf War gravitated around the idea that Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction posed a threat to the safety of the United States, of western democratic countries in general, and to the stability of the Middle East; not just directly - that means, in the case of a formal military attack by Iraq - but also indirectly, through the possible supply by Saddam Hussein’s regime of WMDs to terrorist organizations.

This can be seen very well in then-President George W. Bush’s State of the Union address of 2003:

“Today, [...] the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation.” (Bush, G. W., 2003)

The same argument can be found in Colin Powell's address to the United Nations Security Council of February 5th, 2003; remarking the similarity between Bush's address to the domestic audience and Powell's speech is important, in that it reveals how domestic and international legitimizing discourse are tightly connected, and, albeit having to serve different functions (garner voters' support as opposed to providing a legal justification for the intervention), they seem to have to maintain a fundamental similarity.

As we saw, under the United Nations Charter, single nations are allowed to use force in individual or collective self-defense, as a response to aggression. The so-called "Bush Doctrine", summed up in the sentence "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts [the 9/11 attacks] and those who harbor them" (quoted in Field, 2004, p. 10), would have provided the nexus between the legitimate intervention in Afghanistan (which was recognized by the United Nations as a response to armed aggression) and the prospected operation in Iraq; however, the claim of a connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime never appeared sufficiently backed by evidence in the months leading to the war, and was completely discredited in its aftermath. Field quotes former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, talking about the issue respectively before and after the war:

"Whenever I am asked about the linkage between Iraq and Al Qaeda, the truth is there is no information I have that directly links Iraq to September 11. If I can be absolutely frank with you, there is some intelligence evidence about loose links between Al Qaeda and various people in Iraq, but I think that the

justification for what we are doing in respect of Iraq has got to be made separately from any potential link with Iraq.” (quoted in Field, 2004, p. 12)

“I’ve not seen any indication that would lead me to believe that I could say that [there was a link between Iraq and 9/11].” (quoted in Field, 2004, p. 13)

The separate justification Blair referred to was the argument for preemptive self-defense - the claim that Iraq was both in possession of weapons of mass destruction, and intentioned to use them.

We can find this expressed, again, in the 2003 State of the Union address, and Powell’s presentation:

“Year after year, Saddam Hussein has gone to elaborate lengths, spent enormous sums, taken great risks to build and keep weapons of mass destruction. But why? The only possible explanation, the only possible use he could have for those weapons, is to dominate, intimidate, or attack.” (Bush, 2003)

“Saddam Hussein's intentions have never changed. He is not developing the missiles for self-defense. These are missiles that Iraq wants in order to project power, to threaten, and to deliver chemical, biological and, if we let him, nuclear warheads.” (Powell, 2003)

The same line was followed by the British Government (Field, 2004, p. 14).

The questions, here, lie in whether the threat presented by Hussein's regime was sufficiently grave, clear and present as to allow the invoking of the right of preemptive self defense under the so-called "Caroline test" (Field, 2004, p. 14-15); and what kind of countermeasures would have been acceptable, assuming this threat to fulfill the previous requirements (Field, 2004, p. 16).

The answers to the first question are mixed: in theory, it's true that WMDs, per se, would certainly represent a grave enough threat; yet, it is open to debate whether it's possible at all to assert with sufficient (if not absolute) certainty the intention to resort to their use in a first strike. In practice, in any case, the fact that almost no trace of weapons of mass destruction was found on Iraqi soil in the aftermath of the invasion, is sufficient to discard the possibility that the threat existed in the first place.

It is due to cover here, albeit briefly, the possibility that the claims of the United States' and British governments regarding the existence of WMDs in Iraq represent not a "failure of intelligence" but rather a distortion of reality operated in bad faith in order to elicit the approval of both the domestic and international audiences.

Formal allegations of "sexed up" intelligence dossiers appeared in Great Britain as early as May 2003, with the infamous dispute between the BBC and the British Government over the truthfulness of parts of the "September Dossier" - a document released eight months earlier by Downing Street covering the status of Iraqi chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs - which ultimately led to the suicide of David Kelly, employee of the British Ministry of Defense and informant. More recently, with regard to the same dossier, heavier allegations have appeared in the context of "The Iraq Inquiry", the investigation started under former Prime Minister Gordon Brown set out in order to shed light on the "run-up to the conflict in Iraq, the

military action and its aftermath” (The Iraq Inquiry, 2011?). These include the testimony of Michael Laurie, then Director General Intelligence Collection, in response of Alistair Campbell’s (at the time Director of Communications and Strategy for Tony Blair) declarations regarding the September Dossier:

“Alistair Campbell said to the Inquiry that the purpose of the Dossier was not “to make a case for war”. I had no doubt at that time this was exactly its purpose and these very words were used. The previous paper [...] was rejected because it did not make a strong enough case. [...]

We could find no evidence of planes, missiles or equipment that related to WMD, generally concluding that they must have been dismantled, buried or taken abroad. [...]

In summary, we knew at the time that the purpose of the Dossier was precisely to make a case for war, rather than setting out the available intelligence” (Laurie, 2010).

Without any doubt, the publishing of the findings of The Iraq Inquiry, expected for the summer of 2012 at the earliest, will allow to have a few certainties on the operate of the British Government in the build up of the 2003 intervention; these, in turn, are likely to provide further critical evidence in favor of the conclusions presented in this work.

Also, relevant documents which are not part of those considered in the official investigation have appeared following the Freedom of Information Act, including a minute from John Scarlett (then head of the Joint Intelligence Committee) to David Manning (then British Ambassador to the USA) which seems to confirm that the

informations contained in the September Report were framed specifically and intentionally in order to deceive the public: “You may still wish to consider whether more impact could be achieved if the paper only covered Iraq. This would have the benefit of obscuring the fact that in terms of WMD, Iraq is not that exceptional.” (Scarlett, 2002). Leaked documents (for example, the “Manning Memo” and the “Downing Street Memo”) also seem to confirm the fact that the intention to intervene in Iraq preceded, and stood independently from, the justifying reasons adduced.

For what concerns the United States, the “Curveball affair” may be interpreted in different ways. What is known for sure is that the intelligence relied heavily (especially in regard to the existence of chemical weapons in Iraq) on the testimony of bad sources, among which the most notorious is Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi (“Curveball”), whose claims were later discovered to be fabricated; these are the findings of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (2005, p. 48).

The conclusions of the Commission are that, while “the Intelligence Community was dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgements about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction”, “no indication that the Intelligence Community distorted the evidence regarding Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction” was found; and finally, that “what the intelligence professional told you [the President] about Saddam Hussein’s programs was what they believed. They were simply wrong.” (2005, Transmittal Letter).

Yet, this interpretation of the event appears to be in direct opposition with the scenario that looks likely to be delineated in the British “Iraq Inquiry”, particularly in light of Michael Laurie’s declarations; also, there exist public declarations by former American officials, particularly Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson’s, Colin Powell’s Chief of

Staff at the time of the events, which seem to contradict those conclusions (“the intelligence was being worked to fit around the policy” (Wilkerson, 2012)).

However, as Field notes, the argument for preemptive self-defense (which is what Iraq’s possession and intention to use weapons of mass destruction would theoretically imply and allow), albeit vastly preponderant, represented only one of the “three possible justifications adverted to” (2004, p. 8), the other two being the argument for the enforcement of existing UNSC resolutions and that advocating an humanitarian intervention in Iraq.

Intervention through the enforcement of existing UNSC resolutions is an argument which is based on the principle of legitimacy of UN-sanctioned military operations. This argument as well was expressed perhaps more extensively by US Secretary of State Colin Powell in his previously mentioned address to the United Nations Security Council, where he argued that Iraq’s material breach of the obligations imposed by UNSC resolution 687 of 1991, which “Decides that Iraq shall unconditionally accept the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless, under international supervision, of: (a) All chemical and biological weapons [...]; (b) All ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometers [...]” (UNSC, 1991, p. 5, par. 8), and “that Iraq shall unconditionally undertake not to use, develop, construct or acquire any of the items specified in paragraphs 8 and 9 above [...]” (UNSC, 1991, p. 5, par. 10); and, by extension, resolution 1441 of November 8th, 2002, which “afford[ed] Iraq [...] a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations [...] established by resolution 687” (UNSC, 2002, p. 3, par. 2) and “warned Iraq that it will

face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations” (UNSC, 2002, p. 5, par. 13). The conclusion of Powell’s speech was:

“My colleagues, we have an obligation [...] to see that our resolutions are complied with. We wrote 1441 not in order to go to war, we wrote 1441 to try to preserve the peace. We wrote 1441 to give Iraq one last chance. Iraq is not so far taking that one last chance.

We must not shrink from whatever is ahead of us. We must not fail in our duty and our responsibility to the citizens of the countries that are represented by this body.” (Powell, 2003)

Bush’s explanation of the issue in the State of the Union address expressed the same concept without the technicalities, and only indirect references to UNSC resolutions 687 and 1441:

“We have called on the United Nations to fulfill its charter and stand by its demand that Iraq disarm” (Bush, G. W., 2003)

“Twelve years ago, Saddam Hussein [...] agreed to disarm of all weapons of mass destruction. For the next 12 years, he systematically violated that agreement. He pursued chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, even while inspectors were in his country. Nothing to date has restrained him from his pursuit of these weapons, not economic sanctions, not isolation from the civilized world, not even cruise missile strikes on his military facilities.” (Bush, 2003)

The profound limitation of this argument lies in the fact that an Iraqi failure to comply with the provisions detailed in UNSCR 1441 would not implicitly result, according to the vast majority of legal interpretations of the resolution itself, in the use of armed force against the breacher (Field, 2004, p. 20). This interpretation was implied in the acts of both the Australian House of Representatives' and the British Parliament's preceding the war - albeit with variations regarding the way in which the authority to intervene militarily granted by UNSCR 678 ("[The Security Council] Authorizes Member States [...] to use all necessary means to [...] restore international peace and security in the area" (UNSC, 1990) - which originally refers to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait of August 1990) would have to be understood as revived (Field, 2004, p. 19). Furthermore, even if UNSCR 1441 was understood as reviving the authorization contained in UNSCR 678, the conduct of the British and American representatives in the Security Council "demonstrated their lack of confidence in the argument" (Field, 2004, p. 21); both, through their representatives, called for follow up resolutions to UNSCR 1441, thus demonstrating that they "did not believe there was sufficient authority already granted by the UN at that time for the use of force against Iraq" (2004, p. 21).

The argument for humanitarian intervention is arguably the most complex. This doctrine, as we've seen when examining Grotius' contribution, long predates the contemporary international law system, yet never enjoyed full implementation because of the rule of the Westphalian tradition first, which interpreted it as an unacceptable foreign intromission in domestic affairs, and of the Cold War scenario later, in which the veto system prevented for 40 years UN-sanctioned intervention from happening.

Humanitarian intervention can exist under the aegis of the United Nations, or outside of it; contemporary interpretations grant legitimacy to both types, as long as they fulfill a series of criteria: that a supreme humanitarian emergency exists; that the intervention intends to bypass a long-standing deadlock in the Security Council; that it is judged as acceptable by the international community; proportionality, both in terms of force and of time frame of the intervention; and the absence of collateral benefit for the initiator (Field, 2004).

Problems arise in the definition of these criteria (Field, 2004): for example, what are the scale of the atrocities and the time frame over which they need to occur for the “supreme humanitarian emergency” to exist; how much time shall the Security Council be allowed before being considered “deadlock”; whether a single state’s intervention would have to be considered illegitimate, when others would back down by virtue of considering the intervention too costly; whether a massive deployment of force would in fact be preferable, as it would be more effective in order to normalize the situation in a shorter timeframe; or whether an intervention shall be allowed to be prolonged in time in order to prevent further disorders - a scenario which de facto borders occupation.

As for collateral benefit, it is worth to spend a word now, anyway reserving a more extensive coverage of the issue for the third part of this work.

Generally speaking, the literature on humanitarian intervention is divided between an idealist and a realist understandings; while they both shed lights on aspects of the subject, they seem unfit to describe the entirety of factual reality; specifically, the realist understanding fails to explain humanitarian intervention leading to no strategic or economic collateral benefit, while the idealist one falls short when faced with instances of non-intervention in humanitarian crises (Stegner, 2008). It is thus

necessary to elaborate a new, more complex model for understanding the reality of humanitarian intervention - one that does not depart from moral (or amoral) considerations but rather from an observation of the phenomenon in se.

Going back to our case study, we can find in President Bush's State of the Union address (2003) hints to the argument:

"The dictator who is assembling the world's most dangerous weapons has already used them on whole villages, leaving thousands of his own citizens dead, blind, or disfigured. Iraqi refugees tell us how forced confessions are obtained, by torturing children while their parents are made to watch. International human rights groups have cataloged other methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq: electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, and rape. If this is not evil, then evil has no meaning." (Bush, G. W., 2003)

As well as in Colin Powell's address to the UN Security Council:

"But there is one more subject that I would like to touch on briefly. And it should be a subject of deep and continuing concern to this council, Saddam Hussein's violations of human rights. [...]

Saddam Hussein's use of mustard and nerve gas against the Kurds in 1988 was one of the 20th century's most horrible atrocities; 5,000 men, women and children died.

His campaign against the Kurds from 1987 to '89 included mass summary executions, disappearances, arbitrary jailing, ethnic cleansing and the

destruction of some 2,000 villages. He has also conducted ethnic cleansing against the Shia Iraqis and the Marsh Arabs [...]. Saddam Hussein's police state ruthlessly eliminates anyone who dares to dissent. Iraq has more forced disappearance cases than any other country, tens of thousands of people reported missing in the past decade.” (Powell, 2003)

While this argument does definitely appear in the build up rhetoric, we can clearly distinguish the fact that it takes at best the role of an “add on” to the argument of self-defense, a “back up basis for attacking Iraq” (Field, 2004, p. 30). Furthermore, very much the same can be said for the British experience (Field, 2004, p. 30).

In any case, we shall analyze the legitimacy of the claim in terms of compliance with the previously mentioned criteria. The evidence of human rights violations mentioned was clearly present; creating some problems is rather the fact that the mass executions Powell directly referred to took place around three lustra earlier; yet, the systematic use of torture sanctioned by the Iraqi government might represent a viable justification for intervention (Field, 2004, p. 31).

As for the criteria of last resort, the fact that a wide range of coercive measures short of direct military intervention had been in place for a decade in order to stop Saddam Hussein’s regime abuse of human rights to little or no avail seems to fulfill it (Field, 2004, p. 31).

The participation in the American operation of Great Britain, Australia and Poland from day one, and the political stance assumed by many other countries, including José María Aznar’s Spain and Silvio Berlusconi’s Italy, represent, while certainly not an expression of the common will of the international community, at least a fulfillment of the criteria of collective action (Field, 2004, p. 31).

The argument for the fulfillment of the condition of proportionality is an indirect one, in that, given the long-standing instability in the aftermath of the intervention, it can be argued that the amount of force employed was perhaps even below the threshold sufficient to guarantee a positive long-term outcome (Field, 2004, p. 32).

Finally, there is the question of collateral benefit for the initiator. This issue is open, as we saw, to much debate, with opposite conclusions dictated a priori by the theoretical framework of interpretation of reality employed (realism or idealism). As I mentioned, I'll dwell on the issue more in detail in the final part of this work. For the moment, let's simply ignore the criteria, as in any case there is absolutely no consensus regarding its interpretation, let alone its possible fulfillment.

From this analysis, Field concludes that the case for humanitarian intervention was viable, and that, were the efforts concentrated on "finding evidence to support a war based on humanitarian intervention" (2004, p. 32) rather than on self-defense, a strong case could have been presented (2004, p. 32).

It is finally the moment to propose an answer to the first question. Certainly, given the obvious flaws in the argument for intervention under UNSC mandate, and the failure of that for self-defense, it's legitimate to wonder why the argument for humanitarian intervention - which appears as the most solid by exclusion - was not chosen as the centerpiece of the legitimizing discourse; and why, on the other hand, the argument for self-defense was picked.

There seems to be a generally agreed upon explanation for the first part of the question, according to which governments generally stray from humanitarian intervention as the domestic political costs it generates are simply too high. The backlash of possible difficulties - particularly a high number of casualties -

encountered during operations is accounted by policy makers before deciding in favor of or against the deployment of troops, and this leads to a low rate of interventions. This explanation fits in a monadic interpretation of democratic peace theory, according to which democracies are more peaceful than other regimes in general, and, what is more, their leaders tend not to initiate conflict because of the risk of losing office involved. In their empirical analysis, Chiozza and Goemans find that “democratic leaders have a higher probability of losing office, and the higher the probability of losing office, the lower the probability of conflict initiation” (2003, p. 456); such findings seem to describe perfectly why humanitarian intervention is not methodically enacted.

This argument, however, takes for granted the validity of three propositions: that policy makers are aware of, and influenced by, the position of the electorate; that those same policy makers are able to interpret correctly, and thus react logically to, the position of the electorate; and finally, as a consequence, that the electorate’s position must necessarily be of opposition towards interventions.

While the first proposition doesn’t present a problem per se, it is possible to find, when analyzing the issue more in depth, flaws in the other two.

To begin, to say that policy makers are able to interpret correctly the position of the electorate is an assumption rather than a fact. Kull and Ramsay’s work, which focus specifically on the nexus between policy making and the public in the context of armed intervention, extensively demonstrate that, while policy makers indeed do believe to be abiding to the will of the public (2001, p. 210), they actually have a completely distorted perception of it.

First, Kull and Ramsay conducted interviews with policy makers and their staff, in an attempt to trace an outline of their understanding of positions of the public; questions

focused on the perceived effect of fatalities on the public's attitude towards ongoing operations, and the perceived public support to intervention unlinked to national interest. They find that, in the policy community, the assumption that even a small number of casualties is sufficient to provoke a steep decline in public support, and that the majority of the public would request for an immediate withdrawal is well established; furthermore, there seem to be a division in two parts of the policy community, with one expecting low public support for any military intervention, the other instead convinced that "support would be more stable if there was a direct connection to US interests" (2001, p. 212).

Right after this, Kull and Ramsay polled the general public on the same issues (using both real-life scenarios - among others Somalia, the Gulf War and Bosnia - and hypothetical ones) in order to verify if the results were in line with the perceptions of the policy makers; their finding is that not simply there is no direct correlation between the reality of voters' opinion and the perception of policy makers, but even that the two are oftentimes in direct opposition.

They find that the American public is "not likely to respond reflexively to losses by wanting to withdraw from a military operation" (Kull & Ramsay, 2001, p. 224). Rather, as long as the public supported the operation to begin with, it is likely to continue supporting it as long as it appears likely to succeed, independently of the casualties count (Kull & Ramsay, 2001, p. 224); furthermore, "even when confidence in a mission is low, this will not necessarily lead to a desire to withdraw" (Kull & Ramsay, 2001, p. 224)

What we can take from Kull and Ramsay's analysis is that the notions that public support for military operations, when these are decoupled from clearly identifiable national interests (as is the case for instances of humanitarian

intervention like Somalia or would have been for Rwanda), lasts only as long as there are little to no casualties; and that public support for military operations is, in general, very low to begin with, are fatally flawed. “The critical determinant” - they conclude - “of the public’s response is [...] whether the operation is perceived as likely to succeed” (Kull & Ramsey, 2001, p. 205).

The paradox that lies at the heart of applying a model like Chiozza and Goeman’s to humanitarian interventions, it is possible to understand now, is that it completely ignores the fact that the “risk of losing office” variable is itself independent from the attitude of voters towards crises. This means, assuming their model to be formally correct, that, while democratic peace may exist because of the “risk of losing office”, this can not be derived directly from the domestic costs associated with conflict initiation, but, rather, it predates them.

The conclusions derived by Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson's (1995) and confirmed by Gelpi and Griesdorf's (2001) empirical researches, on the other hand, seems to be more appropriate to describe the probability of an humanitarian intervention to happen: departing from the same assumption - “that *policymakers* want to stay in power for the rents, as well as for the policy opportunities thus afforded [...] and [...] observing that declining security [...] shortens time in power” (de Mesquita and Siverson, 1995, p. 853) -, they get to the conclusion that “democratic leaders select wars to participate in that have a lower risk of defeat than is true for their authoritarian counterparts” (de Mesquita and Siverson, 1995, p. 852); such a conclusion does indeed align with the “critical determinant” (likelihood of success) identified by Kull and Ramsey.

In any case, the answer to the question of why humanitarian intervention was not chosen as the core of the legitimizing discourse for the operations in Iraq seems to be that policy makers believed it to be unable to garner sufficient domestic support - even if we have reason to believe that the contrary might actually have been the case.

From this follows, by contrast, the answer to the second part of the original question - why the argument for self-defense was employed as core of the legitimizing discourse although flawed: because appealing to national interest in its most basic expression, self-defense (intended as an act necessary for survival), is understood to be an almost sure-fire way of obtaining the domestic support required by a democratic leader to pursue a conflict without incurring in the risk of losing tenure; in the case of the United States' public opinion at the beginning of last decade, furthermore, we can't ignore the fact that the argument of self-defense must have enjoyed a peculiar status in the light of the events of 9/11.

The conclusion we can draw from this case study is that the legitimizing discourse employed in the international context by the United States bears great similarities, and is at least in part sub-ordered - and with this it is possible to answer to the initial question -, to the domestic legitimizing discourse.

Furthermore, it can be argued that, given the fact that justifying reasons for intervention of dubious validity happened to take precedence over far surer (according to international law) ones, these - and, by extension, adherence to the criteria of just war in itself -, albeit necessarily part of the legitimizing discourse in order to not blatantly breach international law, appear to be contingent rather than structural in nature. That is to say that legitimizing discourse, generalizing, shall be

understood as expressing *how* a contemporary democracy manages to rack up the domestic consensus necessary to initiate a war, rather than the reason *why* it initiates the war in the first place; which of course does not imply that coincidence of intention and justification is necessarily an impossibility, but rather that legitimizing discourse shan't be taken a priori at face value; and that, by extension, the intention to initiate conflict may, at least in certain cases, predate the justifying reasons given.

It can be argued that this discrepancy between the "how" and the "why" that can at times be exposed, as it may in the case of the intervention in Iraq of spring 2003, is reason enough to call for a critical analysis of the domestic iteration of the legitimizing discourse and its cross-relations with foreign policy; the following chapters are meant to provide an attempt at outlining of this area of focus.

II.d An Evaluation of the "Regime Change" Practice in the Light of a Selection of Empirical Analyses

On a side note, it could be interesting to conclude this chapter spending a few words on the theoretical implications of the practice of regime change, or, more specifically, its so-called "export of democracy" variant.

In the summer preceding the Second Gulf War, then-Vice President of the United States of America Cheney framed a possible intervention in Iraq with these words: "Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits for the region. When the gravest of threats are eliminated, the freedom-loving peoples of the region will have a chance to promote the values that can bring lasting peace." (quoted in Kristol, W., 2002). The idea expressed is based on the common understanding of monadic

democratic peace - according to which a democratic neighborhood would be a peaceful neighborhood. In the 2003 State of the Union Address, though, the framing of the issue changes; the assumption that monadic democratic peace can be achieved is not removed, but flanked by the understanding that hostile regimes represent not simply a direct threat to security, but also an indirect one, through their support to terrorist organizations. Former President Bush words were: "Evidence [...] reveal[s] that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own". Colin Powell's address to the UN Security Council of February 5th, 2003 portrays as well this link between the Iraqi regime's possession of WMDs and the threat represented by terrorist groups:

"Our concern is not just about these illicit weapons. It's the way that these illicit weapons can be connected to terrorists and terrorists organizations that have no compunction about using such devices against innocent people around the world. Iraq and terrorism go back decades. [...] But what I want to bring to your attention today is the potentially much more sinister nexus between Iraq and the al-Qaida terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder. Iraq today harbours a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, an associated collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida lieutenants." (Powell, 2003)

Immediately after the 9/11 events, the then-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of Great Britain Straw evidenced the connection between power vacuums and terrorist groups proliferation: "Terrorists are strongest where

states are weakest. Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda found safe havens in places not just in Afghanistan but where government and society have collapsed.” (quoted in BBC, 2001).

The argument that follows from the ideas expressed in these declarations is one that understands and describes the export of democracy - especially when referring to the Middle East and North Africa - as a form of self-defense, and is built around the hypotheses that: because hostile regimes may harbor, or at least collaborate with terrorist groups, the replacement of those regimes with democracies in the region represents a necessary condition for international peace (and, as self-identified primary targets of terrorist threats, the United States' and British domestic security); and that, solid states being less fertile ground for terrorist groups than weak or failing states, it is in the western democracies' best interest to embark not simply in regime change operations, but to follow them with solid nation-building efforts.

This argument appears to be flawed in that “there is [...] no solid empirical evidence for a strong link between democracy, or any other regime type, and terrorism, in either a positive or a negative direction” (Gause III, 2005, p. 67); furthermore, it seems unlikely that existing terrorist groups would accept the principle of majority rule, fundamental in a democracy, if this was to - as it likely would - prevent them from achieving their goals, thus, paradoxically, their behavior in the case of a regime change might get more violent (Gause III, 2005, p. 68). Also, at least one study (Newman, 2007) demonstrates that fact that the weakness of a state is a concurrent rather than necessary condition - and certainly not sufficient - to explain the presence of terrorist groups on their territory.

A question that arises is whether the democratic process applied to the Arab world would actually necessarily produce governments more receptive towards

American (or western in general) policy goals. Gause notices that, at least in the foreseeable future, given “public opinion surveys and recent elections in the Arab world, the advent of democracy there seems likely to produce new Islamist governments” (2005, p. 63), as in the case of the 2006 success of Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative Elections.

Another point worth of consideration is the possible aftermath of the process of democratization of single countries in a region in terms of variation of probability of conflict initiation instances.

The phenomenon of democratic peace, as I noted earlier, is generally described according to one of two possible definitions; the monadic understanding of democratic peace holds that democracies, because of the receptivity to costs built in the democratic process, are less likely to initiate conflict than other regime types. On the other hand, the dyadic understanding holds that democracies are unlikely to initiate conflict against other democracies, but likely to do so against non-democracies.

In their study, Quackenbush and Rudy demonstrate that, while democratic dyads enjoy low probabilities of entering a confrontation, lower than non-democratic dyads, mixed dyads “are significantly more likely to fight than jointly autocratic dyads” (2009?, p. 18); while they recognize the fact that, in this scenario, democracies are more likely to be targeted than to initiate conflict, the variation is not particularly significant (Quackenbush & Rudy, 2009?, p. 20). Their conclusion is that “contrary to the expectations of the monadic democratic peace argument, democracies are more likely to initiate disputes versus non-democracies than non-democracies are” (Quackenbush & Rudy, 2009?, p. 21). Finally, proximity appears to

be a relevant factor in the probability of conflict initiation (Quackenbush & Rudy, 2009?, p. 20).

In their empirical studies, Mansfield and Snyder found that countries undergoing the process of democratization (non-mature democracies), “are more likely to fight wars than are stable democracies or autocracies” (1995) and even than countries which experienced a shift towards autocracy; also, that countries in which the process of democratization stalled before reaching completion, present particularly aggressive behavior (2002, p. 334).

Quackenbush and Rudy’s study also confirms that diverging foreign policy goals, as expected, lead to an higher incidence of conflict (2009?, p. 20); this, together with Gause’s prediction that Islamist democratically-elected governments would generally not share western interests, means that the probabilities of conflict between these new democracies and western powers would remain in the upper bracket of the democratic dyads’ range.

In the light of all of these insights, it seems difficult to argue that, at least in the short term, the forced democratizations of states through the practice of regime change - especially in the absence of extensive nation-building efforts to follow - would result in a more stable international environment, both at a regional and global level. Quite the opposite, from the empirical models we briefly covered, neighborhoods composed of mixed autocracies and developing democracies, which furthermore are unlikely to share the policy goals of external actors, appear to be prime candidates for the eruption of hostilities.

III “How”: Structure of the Domestic Legitimizing Discourse

In their discourse-historical analysis (2004), Graham, Keenan and Dowd provide a detailed outline of the enduring features of the “call to arms” genre of speech; they identify a series of commonalities shared by the leaders of western societies’ speeches in instances of conflict initiation over the past thousand years. According to Graham, Keenan and Dowd, these are: an appeal to a “legitimizing power source external to the orator” (2004, p. 204); a reciprocal grounding of the legitimizing power source in the history of the audience, and vice versa (2004, p. 209); the construction of an “evil Other” (2004, p. 211); and “an appeal for unified action under the external legitimating force” (2004, p. 214).

Utilizing this framework, I’ll proceed to expose the defining traits of the American post-Cold War legitimizing discourse and to trace its evolution, by analyzing a representative series of “call to arms” speeches uttered in the 1991-2003 timeframe: George H. W. Bush’s address on the 1991 invasion of Iraq and his announcement of the intervention in Somalia (1992); Bill Clinton’s addresses to the nation regarding the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia (1995) and the bombing of Yugoslavia of 1999; and finally George W. Bush’s address to the Congress introducing the notion of “War on Terror” in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, his announcement of the beginning of military operations in Afghanistan (2001), and the 2003 State of the Union Address, already widely covered in the previous chapter, which is perhaps the most complete statement of intentions regarding the invasion of Iraq of March 2003.

After this, I'll propose a brief overview of the explanations for the trends and recurring tropes identified in my analysis given by a selection of the existing literature on the subject, that contributes to a more complete understanding of the domestic legitimizing discourse.

III.a The Triumph of Order: Operations Desert Storm and Restore Hope

The 1991 intervention in Iraq fits in the brief historical moment, immediately following the end of the Cold War, in which the collapse of Communism led to an apparent resurgence of the Wilsonian ideals. It should not surprise, then, that the rhetoric employed by President H. W. Bush in the Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf (January 16, 1991) revolves around the model of liberal democratic order embodied in the United Nations.

For H. W. Bush, the fundamental objective of the war was to be the restoring of freedom and order. In his own words:

"This conflict started August 2nd when the dictator of Iraq invaded a small and helpless neighbor. Kuwait - a member of the Arab League and a member of the United Nations - was crushed; its people, brutalized. [...]

Our objectives are clear: Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait. The legitimate government of Kuwait will be restored to its rightful place, and Kuwait will once again be free. Iraq will eventually comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions [...]" (1991)

This passage also introduces the “legitimizing power source” for the intervention, which is exactly the liberal democratic order, manifesting itself through United Nations resolutions (“This military action, taken in accord with United Nations resolutions [...]” (Bush, G. H. W., 1991)); it is important to notice how here freedom comes to equate with order, in that lack of freedom implies non-adherence to the order, and lack of order implies a violation of freedom - something that order itself won’t tolerate (“I am convinced [...] that out of the horror of combat will come the recognition that no nation can stand against a world united, no nation will be permitted to brutally assault its neighbor.” (Bush, G. H. W., 1991)).

And so, this war, which has as a practical declared objective the liberation of Kuwait, comes in truth to signify much more:

“We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order - a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations. When we are successful - and we will be - we have a real chance at this new world order, an order in which a credible United Nations can use its peacekeeping role to fulfill the promise and vision of the U.N.’s founders.” (Bush, G. H. W., 1991)

The second feature of the “call to arms” genre, the grounding into the historical memory of the population, is, albeit brief, present in the speech; arguably, the magnitude of the change derived from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fact that the events referred to are very close in temporal terms to the moment of the speech allow the President to evoke the connection between the American population and the liberal democratic order in the space of two short sentences: “This

is an historic moment. We have in this past year made great progress in ending the long era of conflict and cold war.” (Bush, G. H. W., 1991).

A very interesting feature of the American post-Cold War discourse is that it is definitely more inclusive than what preceded it; the “evil Other” is identified with an autocrat (or a minority) - in this case Saddam Hussein - rather than with the target country at large.

Saddam Hussein, in Bush’s words, “started this cruel war against Kuwait”; “systematically raped, pillaged, and plundered a tiny nation, no threat to his own. He subjected the people of Kuwait to unspeakable atrocities - and among those maimed and murdered, innocent children”; “sought to add to the chemical weapons arsenal he now possesses, an infinitely more dangerous weapon of mass destruction - a nuclear weapon.”; “dug in and moved massive forces into Kuwait”; “met every overture of peace with open contempt. While the world prayed for peace, Saddam prepared for war”; “arrogantly rejected all warnings” (1991).

On the opposite, the President says, “We have no argument with the people of Iraq. Indeed, for the innocents caught in this conflict, I pray for their safety.”, and adds that “when peace is restored, it is our hope that Iraq will live as a peaceful and cooperative member of the family of nations, thus enhancing the security and stability of the Gulf” (Bush, G. H. W., 1991).

The subject population is decoupled from the autocrat; it represents a victim in itself, oppressed by its tyrant, suffering for its reckless behavior both directly, through the moral and material violence inflicted by him, and indirectly, for they happen to be in the way of justice.

On the opposite, in Cold War discourse, such a distinction was not as marked, if at all. Compare Bush's approach to his predecessor's, Ronald Reagan, as presented in his famous "Evil Empire" speech:

"Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness - pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world." (Reagan, 1983)

Here the population of what used to be the Soviet Union has, indeed considering the Judeo-Christian context in which the speech is situated, the possibility of redemption, of conversion, and of return to the path of God, which happens to coincide with the path of good, of liberal democracy, of America; and yet, it is in no way victim of a regime, but rather a (more or less willing) accomplice of it.

The final feature of the "call to arms" genre is, as we said, the appeal for unity under the previously identified legitimizing power. In George H. W. Bush's Address, this takes the form of the soldiers' own words. They "know why they're there" (Bush, G. H. W., 1991), he says, and lets them be the exhorting voice of order:

"Listen to Hollywood Huddleston, Marine lance corporal. He says, "Let's free these people, so we can go home and be free again." And he's right. The terrible crimes and tortures committed by Saddam's henchmen against the

innocent people of Kuwait are an affront to mankind and a challenge to the freedom of all.

Listen to [...] Marine Lieutenant General Walter Boomer. He said: "There are things worth fighting for. A world in which brutality and lawlessness are allowed to go unchecked isn't the kind of world we're going to want to live in."

Listen to Master Sergeant J.P. Kendall of the 82nd Airborne: "We're here for more than just the price of a gallon of gas. What we're doing is going to chart the future of the world for the next 100 years. It's better to deal with this guy now than 5 years from now."

And finally [...] listen to Jackie Jones, an Army lieutenant, when she says, "If we let him get away with this, who knows what's going to be next?" (Bush, G. H. W., 1991)

At the end of 1992, due to the near-breakdown of the UNOSOM initiative, President George H. W. Bush, at the time a mere couple of months away from the end of his mandate, proposed to the UN an auxiliary military intervention in order to guarantee the success of the humanitarian relief operation in Somalia.

The address in which the President announced the military operation to the nation (December 4, 1992), albeit not exactly a "call to arms" in the strictest sense of the concept, follows the same general structure delineated by Graham, Keenan and Dowd, and must be analyzed to get a fuller idea of what the ideal "New World Order" was intended to be like before the failure of this same operation and the successive non-intervention in Rwanda.

Again, we can see how the intervention is legitimized by the United Nations, specifically in their role of guarantors of order; the tragedy in Somalia is caused, very

simply, by lack of order: “There is no government in Somalia. Law and order have broken down. Anarchy prevails” (Bush, G. H. W., 1992); only the use of force can guarantee the salvation of the Somalis.

Order leads to life, anarchy to death; the job of the United Nations - and particularly of the United States, the only nation with “the global reach to place a large security force on the ground in such a distant place quickly and efficiently and thus save thousands of innocents from death” (Bush, G. H. W., 1992) - is to “restore hope” in the Somali people: to “ease their suffering”, to “help them live” (Bush, G. H. W., 1992). These are self-imposed moral as much as material obligations that the United States must comply with, a sort of comprehensive “Responsibility To Protect” principle *ante litteram*, in adherence to which the American citizens shall unite.

President Bush reminds to his people how the United States have been involved in the relief operation from the beginning, with the delivery of “200,000 tons of food, more than half the world total” (1992); and that, as mentioned earlier, some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement” (1992). The United States are necessary for the maintaining of order, and order, in turn, is the legitimating source for United States action.

The “evil Other”, here, is represented by the absence of order, anarchy itself, as noted above. It is personified in “armed gangs roving the city”, “ripping off their own people, condemning them to death by starvation”; by “outlaw elements in Somalia” (Bush, G. H. W., 1992).

Summing up, the key traits of President G. H. W. Bush’s rhetoric are: the cardinal role of order, embodied in the United Nations, from which derives legitimacy; the distinction between autocrats and their subjected populations, threatening violent

minorities and victimized majorities, in which the aperture to all nations, even temporarily hostile ones, to join the constituted order is grounded; and the depiction of intervention finalized to maintain or restore order as a moral obligation for the American people independently from the domestic interest; finally, and most importantly, all of these traits appear to be based on a strong sense of idealistic internationalism.

III.b A Turn In Tide: from the “Mogadishu Effect” to Kosovo

After the Battle of Mogadishu (October 3-4 1993) and the progressive retreat from Somalia of all American and UN forces over the following months, something changed in the approach to intervention abroad of U.S. Presidents. The so-called “Mogadishu effect” - the “unwillingness of the United States and some other states to take casualties in the course of [...] UN peacekeeping missions or, for that matter, to participate in such operations at all” (MacFarlane & Khong, 2006, p. 135) - led President Clinton, in office at the time, to decide for non-intervention in the Liberian Civil War and the Rwandan Genocide.

The Mogadishu effect reverberates in the words employed by Clinton in the announcement to the nation of the launch of a peacekeeping operation in Bosnia (November 27, 1995), where the idealistic appeals to moral obligations of H. W. Bush’s rhetoric are abandoned in favor of the realist necessities of national interest; the importance of bringing relief to the local populations is equated - or, rather, sub-ordered, considering the experience of Rwanda - to that of pursuing what is best for the nation:

“In fulfilling this mission, we will have the chance to help stop the killing of innocent civilians, especially children, and at the same time, to bring stability to Central Europe, a region of the world that is vital to our national interests. It is the right thing to do.” (1995)

“this terrible war has challenged our interests and troubled our souls” (1995)

Disorder, we see, is still the major enemy to be faced - in fact it becomes the “evil Other” itself -, but, again, not for moral reasons, but rather because non-conductive to the national interest.

“There are times and places where our leadership can mean the difference between peace and war, and where we can defend our fundamental values as a people and serve our most basic, strategic interests.” (Clinton, 1995)

“Securing peace in Bosnia will also help to build a free and stable Europe. Bosnia lies at the very heart of Europe, next-door to many of its fragile new democracies and some of our closest allies. Generations of Americans have understood that Europe's freedom and Europe's stability is vital to our own national security. [...]

If we're not there [...] the peace will collapse; the war will reignite; the slaughter of innocents will begin again. A conflict that already has claimed so many victims could spread like poison throughout the region, eat away at Europe's stability, and erode our partnership with our European allies.” (Clinton, 1995)

The “evil Other”, as I mentioned, is only vaguely personified. President Clinton makes a reference to “war criminals”, and mixed allusions to the responsibility of the populations at large (“Bosnian Serb shelling once again turned Bosnia's playgrounds and marketplaces into killing fields. [...] After so much bloodshed and loss, after so many outrageous acts of inhuman brutality, it will take an extraordinary effort of will for the people of Bosnia to pull themselves from their past and start building a future of peace.” (1995)), but the main adversary of the United States remains the lack of order; this because order equals freedom, and freedom equals America (“America has embodied an idea that has become the ideal for billions of people throughout the world. [...] America is about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Clinton, 1995)). The forces of anarchy (“intolerance and destruction; terrorism; ethnic, religious and regional rivalries; the spread of organized crime and weapons of mass destruction and drug trafficking” (Clinton, 1995)) “threaten freedom and democracy, peace and prosperity” (Clinton, 1995), and in so doing, they threaten America. To intervene against the spread of these forces is not only necessary because they will come to threaten the nation, but also because it permits to maintain solid the leadership of America; for “when America does not lead, the consequences can be very grave, not only for others but eventually for us as well” (Clinton, 1995).

The other traits of a call to arms are also present. The grounding of the pursuit of freedom/national interest (not a blend of the two: the two, as one) in history is there:

“Our people fought two World Wars so that freedom could triumph over tyranny. After World War I, we pulled back from the world, leaving a vacuum that was filled by the forces of hatred. After World War II, we continued to lead

the world. We made the commitments that kept the peace, that helped to spread democracy, that created unparalleled prosperity, and that brought victory in the cold war.” (Clinton, 1995)

“[...] we have stood up for peace and freedom because it's in our interest to do so and because it is the right thing to do.” (Clinton, 1995)

As well as the appeal to unity: “America has always been freedom’s greatest champion. If we continue to do everything we can to share these blessings with people around the world, if we continue to be leaders for peace, then the next century can be the greatest time our Nation has ever known.” (Clinton, 1995)).

The rhetoric didn’t change much in President Clinton’s announcement of the 1999 airstrikes against Yugoslavia in relation to the Kosovo conflict; again, the address is filled with references to the national interest, which overlaps entirely with morality and values:

“We act to protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo from a mounting military offensive. We act to prevent a wider war, to diffuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe that has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results. And we act to stand united with our allies for peace. By acting now, we are upholding our values, protecting our interests, and advancing the cause of peace.” (1999)

“Ending this tragedy is a moral imperative. It is also important to America's national interest.” (1999)

“Do our interests in Kosovo justify the dangers to our Armed Forces? [...] I am convinced that the dangers of acting are far outweighed by the dangers of not acting - dangers to defenseless people and to our national interests.” (1999)

The great difference between the intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo, though, lies in the fact that, while the first was invoked and legitimized by the United Nations, the second lacked such blessing. This is obviously a major change, a worrying precedent that sparked a heated confrontation between the United States and the Russian Federation, which interpreted the NATO campaign as a blatant refusal to follow the consensus-based cooperative peacekeeping model in place, an illegitimate act of aggression which violated the United Nations Charter and, specifically, led to the erosion of the European security system as a whole (Danilov, 1999, p. 53; Lavrov, 2010). The implicit shift, in this new example of presidential discourse, is that the national interest (whatever this might be; the declared one, coinciding with morality and values, or any other alleged one) is not anymore a co-requisite for action, but, rather, becomes sufficient reason to bypass the proceedings of the United Nations Security Council - which is to say, to bypass the international order itself; it represents the beginning of a progressive shift towards unilateralism which will culminate a few years later with the second invasion of Iraq.

The other elements of the “call to arms” model are all in place: President Clinton reminds his citizens of the recent intervention in Bosnia, and, furthermore, suggests how preemptive action would have made a major difference in the past:

“Just imagine if leaders back then [World War I and II] had acted wisely and early enough, how many lives could have been saved, how many Americans would not have had to die” (1999); the image of the “evil Other” is created through presenting a beastly Serbian army, at the orders of Slobodan Milošević, “moving from village to village, shelling civilians and torching their houses” (Clinton, 1995); waging not “war in the traditional sense”, but rather “an attack by tanks and artillery on a largely defenseless people whose leaders already have agreed to peace” (Clinton, 1995).

The appeal to unity again shows how national interest takes the first place in the hierarchy of importance, and thus becomes the legitimizing source itself, completing the shift of focus begun with the reactions to the Battle of Mogadishu - consistently with Kull and Ramsay’s findings (2001) reported in the previous chapter:

“I have a responsibility as President to deal with problems such as this before they do permanent harm to our national interests. America has a responsibility to stand with our allies when they are trying to save innocent lives and preserve peace, freedom, and stability in Europe. [...]

If we've learned anything from the century drawing to a close, it is that if America is going to be prosperous and secure, we need a Europe that is prosperous, secure, undivided, and free. [...] That is the foundation on which the security of our children will depend. [...] It is this challenge that we and our allies are facing in Kosovo” (Clinton, 1999)

We can conclude, then, that during Bill Clinton’s presidency there was a shift in the legitimizing discourse from a focus on the international order as external legitimizing source of power to one on the *raison d’état*; this didn’t mean dropping

entirely the arguments for order - especially given that “order” had become a synonym for “freedom”, “democracy”, and, by extension, “America”; rather, the legitimizing source nominally remained the same - order - but its embodiment ceased to be the United Nations Security Council, to become the United States themselves. Also, we witnessed a shift from an idealist, internationalist discourse to what seems to be an ultimately realist one grounded in exceptionalism (but that - as I’ll argue in the next chapter - can more accurately be said to portray and appeal to something different, a sort of “pragmatic idealism”).

III.c George W. Bush’s “War on Terror”

The presidency of George W. Bush was marked, as is widely known, by the events of September 11, 2001; as a reaction to these, the so-called “War on Terror” was proclaimed, an umbrella term for a no holds barred campaign announced in the days following the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon and that formally still continues nearly eleven years later, at the time of writing.

The announcement is contained in the Address to the Congress of September 20, 2001, that indeed takes, once again, the form of a “call to arms”; actually, every major public intervention of then-President Bush in the period between the attacks and the announcement of the intervention in Afghanistan seems to follow the structure identified by Graham, Keenan and Dowd; in their work (2004) they cover the “Today we mourned, tomorrow we work” speech of September 16, 2001, while here I’ll show how it is applicable to the declaration of the War on Terror just

mentioned as well as to the announcement of the intervention in Afghanistan of October 7, 2001.

In George W. Bush's rhetoric, we find the same tendency of equating "freedom" and "America" that was present in President Clinton's, yet here this is taken to its logical extremes; the two concepts are not simply directly correlated anymore, they literally become one and the same thing - a shift made possible by the 9/11 events: while in Bill Clinton's legitimizing discourse we could clearly identify the need for making explicit the link between foreign policy and national interest, with speeches that at times appear almost apologetic, in President Bush's discourse this problematic is not present by virtue of the direct attacks the United States experienced - that is to say, the connection between intervention and national interest became self-evident and the need for making explicit the connection decayed:

On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars [...] Americans have known the casualties of war [...] Americans have known surprise attacks [...]. All of this was brought upon us in a single day - and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack. (Bush, G. W., 2001a)

What is more, "order" comes to be replaced by "freedom" as the fundamental source of legitimacy ("The advance of human freedom, the great achievement of our time and the great hope of every time, now depends on us." (Bush, G. W., 2001a)); while the two remain closely related, the primacy of the second over the first will allow a progressive decoupling of American foreign policy and United Nations Security

Council decisions, which will culminate in a second non-UN sanctioned intervention in the span of four years, the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The appeal for unified action under this legitimizing source appears broken in two, with the first part at the very beginning of the speech, and the second at the very end; in a sense, it serves both as an introduction to the oration, and as its logical conclusion.

“Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.” (Bush, G. W., 2001a)

“Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice, assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come.” (Bush, G. W., 2001a)

The core feature of this speech, arguably, is the definition of the “evil Other” that America is to face in this confrontation, the enemy that led the mentioned attack on freedom and, in so doing, opened the hostilities. While this enemy is somehow identified by President Bush, it is defined in extremely broad terms, in a way that leaves space open for many interpretations and even more possible interventions. The primary target is identified as “a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda” (Bush, G. W., 2001a), “a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam” (Bush, G. W., 2001a) and whose objective “is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere” (Bush,

G. W., 2001a). Bush notes how “There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries” (2001a), a statement that seems to imply that a war against it can not be waged by a standing army inside of clearly defined national boundaries; yet, he argues, it is possible to trace a link between terrorists and existing nation-states, in the form of more or less evident support of local governments to the terrorist network:

“The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country” (Bush, G. W., 2001a)

“Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists and every government that supports them.” (Bush, G. W., 2001a)

These statements, and the one that follows, clearly define a cardinal principle of what will come to be known as the “Bush Doctrine”: that, according to the American President, there is no formal difference between directly attacking the United States and harboring individuals - or groups of individuals - who led an attack - or are intentioned to lead one - on his country:

“we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.” (Bush, G. W., 2001a)

As Graham, Keenan and Dowd note, the definition of the “evil Other” employed in Bush’s discourse is so open and elastic as to turn “11 September into a world-historical *opportunity* to reshape the entirety of human affairs” (2004, p. 213. Emphasis in the original). The scope of this war is enormous (“Our war on terror begins with Al Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.” (Bush, G. W., 2001a)), and the possibilities for intervention are thus endless.

The defining trait of the “evil Other” is its barbarism. In President Bush’s speech it is described as incarnating the opposite values of democratic societies (“They hate [...] a democratically elected government. [...] They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other” (2001a)), and Afghanistan represents its “vision for the world” (2001a); the fight against these terrorists, then, is more than America’s fight, it becomes “civilization’s fight” (2001a), the “fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom” (2001a) - a fight, he explains, between “freedom and fear, justice and cruelty” (2001a).

Coherently with the identification of an enemy which only partially overlaps a specific land, George W. Bush presents the Afghan population in very much the same way his father talked about the Iraqi people a decade before, as victims themselves of the forces of fear: “Afghanistan’s people have been brutalized, many are starving and many have fled. [...] The United States respects the people of Afghanistan [...] but we condemn the Taliban regime”.

President Bush grounds his discourse historically by drawing a parallel between Al Qaeda and the enemies of the past - Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia -, enemies which have all succumbed to righteous America:

“We have seen their kind before. They're the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies.” (2001a)

The Address to the Nation of October 7, 2001, in which President Bush announced the beginning of the military operations in Afghanistan against the Taliban regime and Al Qaeda, is the speech that complements the one previously analyzed, and, by extension, the first phase of the narrative of the War on Terror.

As it is legitimate to expect, this speech draws heavily and references continually the Address to the Congress of September 20, 2001. “Freedom” remains the key word and legitimating source, so much as to give the name to the intervention: “The name of today's military operation is Enduring Freedom. We defend not only our precious freedoms but also the freedom of people everywhere to live and raise their children free from fear.” (Bush, G. W., 2001b)

President Bush maintains the fundamental ideas expressed in the previous speech untouched: “Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader” (2001b) directly echoes “Our war on terror begins with Al Qaida, but it does not end there” (2001a) - and continues with restating his manichean understanding of reality: “Every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground. If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves. And they will take that lonely path at their own peril.” (2001b).

The distinction between barbaric terrorists and hostile regimes on one hand, and innocent local population on the other is maintained as well:

“The United States of America is a friend to the Afghan people, and we are the friends of almost a billion worldwide who practice the Islamic faith. The United States of America is an enemy of those who aid terrorists and of the barbaric criminals who profane a great religion by committing murder in its name.” (Bush, G. W., 2001b)

The historical grounding is a tad peculiar. Rather than appealing to the common historical precedents of wars fought by the United States in the name of freedom, Bush underlines the novelty of the scenario of the war on terror; yet, in the act of doing this, he introduces the trope of innocence, of the “nation of reluctant warriors” (Ivie, 2005, p. 58):

“I’m speaking to you today from the Treaty Room of the White House, a place where American Presidents have worked for peace. We’re a peaceful nation. Yet, as we have learned so suddenly and so tragically, there can be no peace in a world of sudden terror. In the face of today’s new threat, the only way to pursue peace is to pursue those who threaten it. We did not ask for this mission, but we will fulfill it.” (2001b)

At the end of the speech we find the appeal for unity, which is perhaps the highlight of the whole oration - the melting testimony of the patriotism and

selflessness in the name of freedom of a 10 year old girl, fit already to lead by example the whole nation in its moment of greatest peril and trial:

“I recently received a touching letter [...] from a fourth grade girl with a father in the military: “As much as I don't want my dad to fight,” she wrote, “I'm willing to give him to you.”. This is a precious gift, the greatest she could give. This young girl knows what America is all about. Since September 11, an entire generation of young Americans has gained new understanding of the value of freedom and its cost in duty and in sacrifice.” (2001b)

A year and a half after the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, George W. Bush's foreign policy experienced a qualitative shift with the escalation of tension first, and invasion later, of Iraq.

The rhetoric employed by President Bush in the build-up of the intervention in Iraq of October 2003 is peculiar in that it is framed in the context of the War on Terror, a defensive war, and yet is configured at the same time as an aggression - thus needs to be presented as a preemptive defensive war.

In the 2003 State of the Union Address, President Bush draws upon the key features of the War on Terror delineated after the 9/11 events, and shapes the announced intervention in Iraq in order to fit in that framework of understanding.

The most notable feature of the speech is a return to the necessity of making explicit the connection between the intervention and the national interest, for lacks a direct link.

This is done by identifying - or at least associating - the new enemy (Saddam Hussein's regime) with the old one (the terrorists who conducted the attacks on

America in 2001), and in so doing presenting the intervention in Iraq as a form of self-defense, vital for the very survival of the United States, in accord with the first principle of the Bush Doctrine:

“Today, the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation.” (Bush, G. W., 2003)

“Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own.” (Bush, G. W., 2003)

While “freedom”, and, by extension, “peace” remain cardinal in the discourse, safety - thus the national interest - comes to assume a role of paramount importance: “Once again, this nation and all our friends are all that stand between a world at peace, and a world of chaos and constant alarm. Once again, we are called to defend the safety of our people, and the hopes of all mankind.” (Bush, G. W., 2003).

At the same time, “order” - as intended according to George Bush Sr. discourse - definitely ceases to be the fundamental legitimizing source; internationalism at this point is only nominal, and the United Nations Security Council, far from representing the highest of authorities, appears as a limit to the righteous behavior of America:

“We have called on the United Nations to fulfill its charter and stand by its demand that Iraq disarm. [...] Yet the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others. Whatever action is required, whenever action is necessary, I will defend the freedom and security of the American people.” (Bush, G. W., 2003)

“The United States will ask the U.N. Security Council to convene on February the 5th to consider the facts of Iraq's ongoing defiance of the world. [...] We will consult. But let there be no misunderstanding: If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him.” (Bush, G. W., 2003)

The historical grounding is one we saw before, made of references to the American victories achieved over the course of the previous century: “America's duty is familiar. Throughout the 20th century, small groups of men [...] set out to dominate the weak and intimidate the world. In each case, [...] [their] ambitions [...] were defeated by the will of free peoples, by the strength of great alliances, and by the might of the United States of America.” (Bush, G. W., 2003).

President Bush maintains here the distinction between the hostile regime and its oppressed population; Hussein is “a brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression, with ties to terrorism” (2003), and his demise will mark for “the brave and oppressed people of Iraq [...] the day of [...] liberation” (2003).

Also, we find the narrative of innocence, employed here by President Bush to appeal for unity in the effort. Somehow paradoxically, fighting is the necessary choice in order to maintain peace, and at the same time it is something imposed on the

America; the nation, once again, is portrayed as the virtuous, selfless, reluctant warrior:

“This nation fights reluctantly, because we know the cost and we dread the days of mourning that always come. We seek peace. We strive for peace. And sometimes peace must be defended. [...] If war is forced upon us, we will fight in a just cause and by just means [...] with the full force and might of the United States military - and we will prevail. [...] We exercise power without conquest, and we sacrifice for the liberty of strangers.” (Bush, G. W., 2003)

From this analysis of six “call to arms” speeches uttered by U.S. Presidents between 1991 and 2003, I believe that it is possible to draw slightly different conclusions about the evolution of the primary legitimizing source from those of Graham, Keenan and Dowd: in their study, they conclude that “Bush’s appeal to American nationalism would seem to suggest that the Nation-State is still the most important legitimating source of external power” (2004, p. 208). While I agree on the fact that in George W. Bush’s rhetoric the national interest is indeed of paramount importance, I disagree with the assertion that this has been the case for his predecessors, and especially in the case of his father, whose legitimizing discourse of choice is defined by its internationalism.

It seems appropriate to say that the external legitimizing power source, rather than simply evolving through progressive layering (Graham, Keenan & Dowd, 2004, p. 209), appears recursive in nature, in that it is picked with the specific intent to fit in the contingent context.

III.d Final Considerations

As it was noted in the first chapter, and as it can be also deduced from the previous analysis, the dimension of legitimizing discourse is as much domestic as it is international. There coexist two iterations of it, one delivered to the peers in the international system (i.e., Colin Powell's address to the UNSC), and one to the domestic audience (i.e., the 2003 State of the Union Address), with different primary concerns (legitimizing intervention in legal terms versus garnering domestic approval), but that are ultimately tied - in the sense that they can not propose diametrically opposed justifications in order to maintain coherence.

In the specific case of the Second Gulf War, it seems that the domestic discourse is given precedence by the administration - which is in line with the expected behavior of state leaders, whose primary concern is, at least supposedly, to guarantee themselves the voters' approval.

The key for reading and understanding domestic legitimizing discourse seems to be the notion of identity, the implications of a "Self" constructed in opposition to an "Other". As Campbell notes, "given that difference is a requisite for identity, danger is inherent to that relationship" (1992, p. 92); in a world spatially divided into identities - "social space[s]" created by the "paradigm of sovereignty" (1992, p. 85) - different unities embody different moralities, and this conclusion reinforces the original construction (1992, p. 85). The most apparent result of the inside/outside partition is the phenomenon of "Orientalism" (intended here more widely than in the original acceptance of the term), the willing misrepresentation of the Other (and, specifically,

the non-Western) as barbaric “for a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting” (Said, 2003, p. 273).

The narratives that can be derived from it serve then not simply to create one’s own identity, but, rather, to justify acts of aggression and oppression towards the savage, barbaric, anarchic Other in the name of civilization (Campbell, 1992, p. 154; Ivie, 2005).

In our times, the discriminant between civilization and barbarism appears to be defined by the adherence or non-adherence to liberal democratic values; the result of employing democracy as the ultimate discriminant, as the rationale for inflicting violence, Ivie notes, is the reduction of it to “little more than an open-ended justification of coercion on a global scale, a warrant for forcing the world to become free on US terms” (2003, p. 62)

Yet, coherently with Said’s annotation, Orientalism does not manifest itself always in the same form, but is rather adaptive in nature - it is fit for a purpose. The result is a distinction between a “malevolent” and a “benevolent” Orientalism, which, furthermore, in contemporary narratives appear to coexist by “breaking in two” the Other - composed of an evil autocratic regime opposed to an innocent population that deserves to be rescued.

The result is the application of different sub-narratives to specific instances of othering: if the process of othering happens in the context of a portrayed act of (preemptive) self-defense, then the narrative of innocence and of the “reluctant warrior” is invoked, in opposition to an openly hostile, aggressive Other (Ivie, 1974; 1980); on the contrary, if it is the case of a humanitarian intervention, then the narrative of a backwards rather than evil Other is employed - an Other that is

backwards because of an autocracy (or a violent minority) imposing its barbaric will -, while the Self comes to be portrayed as a savior.

At the same time, there exist a form of American Exceptionalism which, especially in the neo-conservative meta-narrative, works in tandem with Orientalism in a process of othering Europe; Robert Kagan's highly influential article "Power And Weakness" - which begins with the ominous words "It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world" (2002) and continues along that line -, and its follow-up book, "Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order" (2003), are perhaps the most well known examples of this. The United States consider themselves the "only possible (Western) power to seek out and eliminate" (Nayak & Malone, 2009, p. 272) the threatening non-Western Other; this concept fits in the scenario of a progressive rejection of the global institutions of order (specifically, the United Nations), and the corresponding drift towards unilateralism (Nayak & Malone, 2009, p. 272) that we observed in the analysis of "call to arms" speeches - an unilateralism that is staunchly opposed in European circles (Nayak & Malone, 2009, p. 272).

This chapter is best concluded with a long quotation, a beautiful passage by a French diplomat from the first half of the XIX century, which perfectly encapsulates the nature of classic French Orientalism, and, just as comprehensively, seems to apply to the constructed Self of the United States of America, and to the actions by it derived:

“France can keep nothing to herself; science, the arts, liberty, glory weigh upon her and elate her. She runs, she flies to spread light and life to all people: she will even force them, arms in hand, to suffer the weight of the gifts that she makes to them. In the exhilaration of her genius, she must tell all that she knows, and there are no secrets that do not escape her. Thus all the shores that she visits keep the luminous trail of her passage, and long after she leaves a foreign land, with astonishment one sees growing there the fruits of which the beneficent seeds fell from her hand.” (Alletz, quoted in Hosford & Wojtkowski, 2010, p. 6)

IV. “Why”: The Dialectics of Intervention

The previous chapter sought to describe the apparent nature of American military intervention over the 1991-2003 timeframe, as discernible exclusively from presidential legitimizing discourse. The aim of this chapter, instead, is to suggest a possible interpretation of the inner mechanics of decision making in the realm of foreign policy, and an identification of the actual reasons for military interventions rather than the nominal ones - the “motives” rather than the “justifying reasons”, to put it like Grotius (1625).

First, a dialectical interpretation of the normative beliefs in favor and against (humanitarian) intervention will be presented, in the form of a triad composed by liberal idealist optimism, classical realist skepticism, and neoliberal pragmatic idealism; following this, a second triad will be covered, this time relative to the ontology of intervention, composed by the neoliberal, (neo)realist, and radical models.

IV.a Normative Beliefs About (Humanitarian) Intervention

At one end of the spectrum of the possible attitudes towards military humanitarian intervention we find liberal idealism, in a variety of iterations and comminglings; these blend together matters of ethics and, where this applies favorably, international law, yet tend to skate over issues related to rational behavior.

The arguments in favor of humanitarian intervention spark from the interaction of the most basic postulates of liberal theory: first, that every individual enjoys, among others, the unalienable rights to life, liberty, property, and security of person; second, that sovereign governments - following a Kantian conception - are in place primarily to guarantee these rights (Tesón, 2003, p. 93). From these two assumptions is drawn the conclusion that, if a government is to exercise violations of the rights of its own citizens, its legitimacy in terms of sovereignty immediately decays (Tesón, 2003, p. 93). The legal obligation to respect human rights is corresponded and supplemented by a moral obligation to offer assistance to those whose rights are violated; in turn, such obligation “analytically entails, under appropriate circumstances, the right to rescue such victims - the right of humanitarian intervention” (Tesón, 2003, p. 94). This means that humanitarian intervention is not necessarily directed in favor of a victimized population and against a tyrannical state which betrayed the social contract and thus lost its legitimacy; violations perpetrated by parts of a population, acting in a situation of anarchy - of “collapse of social order” (Tesón, 2003, p. 95) -, are also sufficient cause for a rectifying intervention (Tesón, 2003, p. 97).

What is particularly interesting, is that the liberal position offers a “unified justification of war” (Tesón, 2003, p. 99) - which is to say, there is no ontological difference between the kind of interventions just presented and what is commonly understood to be a war of self-defense, for both have as justifiable objective the defense of personal rights: of victimized populations in the first case, of the citizens of the attacked state in the second (Tesón, 2003, p. 99). Of course, a caveat is implied, and stems from the understanding of legitimate sovereignty previously mentioned: that a regime which is the target of a humanitarian intervention - thus one which

violated the personal rights of its own citizens - is obviously not allowed to appeal to the right of self-defense.

The antithetic position to that of liberal idealism is occupied by classical realism. Proponents of classical realism shun the prioritization of moral imperatives, arguing that rational political behavior is achieved uniquely in the pursuit of the national interest - which in turn is defined in terms of favorable power relations (expressed in terms of capacity to coerce) with the other members of the international system (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 14).

There are a few classical realist arguments against the liberal idealist stance: the primary objection is that, having genuine humanitarian intervention to be selfless in nature, it can not possibly serve the national interest as defined by realists; what is worse, it implies a depletion of the material means at disposal of the state, thus its enforcing, from a realist point of view, may result to be imprudent at best, and damaging at worst (Wheeler & Bellamy, 2008).

Secondarily, humanitarian intervention is considered to be a source of instability, and liable to abuse. The acceptance of the practice of humanitarian intervention entails the systematic violation of the principle of (Westphalian) sovereignty, as well as a viable bypass of international law; these, in turn, are likely to cause, in the long run, instability in the system of states at large (Tesón, 2003, p. 111).

While liberal idealists hold that it is possible to nurture the international system into an ordered space conducive to mutual (absolute) gains for all the actors, and that humanitarian intervention represents an instrument fit for the purpose, for classical realists the opposite is true: in an international system which is not simply anarchical, but, rather, ultimately tending to anarchy, humanitarian intervention

appears as a pipe dream at best, and as an additional variable of instability at worst. However, an humanitarian intervention, when enforced for reasons of national interest rather than selflessly - thus in a spurious form, as a pretext - is perfectly compatible with a classical realist behavior.

A tentative explanation for the complex phenomenon of humanitarian intervention according to formal logic is given by Western (2002), whom understands it as the result of a competition between foreign policy elites that subscribe to one or to the other of the two antithetic positions previously enunciated; intervention and non intervention, then, are phenomena expressing the preponderance of one of these normative beliefs over the other at a given time, in the specific context of a given administration, which operates in a given domestic scenario.

Western calls these two competing foreign policy elites “liberal humanitarianists” - which, of course, support military humanitarian intervention on moral grounds, according to the liberal idealist belief - and “selective engagers”, which, on the opposite, following a classic realist logic, argue in favor of interventions only if from these it is possible to obtain ulterior strategic gains, or if they are necessary in order to safeguard existing interests (2002, p. 117).

The success of the majoritarian elite of an administration in the imposition of its normative belief is strictly dependent on its monopoly of access to informations relative to the crisis at hand, which allows for the framing of said crisis in the media in terms functional to support the normative belief of choice, leading in turn to a non-mobilization of political opposition. Shifts in the balance “stem from the shift in information and propaganda advantages that [occurs] once competing elites and the

media [develop] and [dedicate] resources to the conflict areas to challenge the administration's framing of the crises" (Western, 2002, p. 139).

The implied reason for an administration adherence to its majoritarian normative belief only as long as the framing of a particular crisis is sustainable lies in the assumption that policymakers are ultimately more interested in remaining in power rather than to behave coherently with their beliefs, and in the complementary one that the democratic process is able to pose an efficient check to policies which go against the voters' best interest, via the threat of non-reelection - a process already taken into consideration in the first chapter of this work.

Taking the case of the intervention in Somalia as an example, Western shows how, however, the realist logic was followed even in the shunning of a formally realist behavior. The decision of the Bush administration - one dominated by selective engagers - to intervene in Somalia needs to be put into context, one that reveals a nature very different from that of the legitimizing discourse that we analyzed in the previous chapter.

Western argues that President Bush's decision to intervene in Somalia was made necessary from a realist point of view by the election of Bill Clinton as his successor; this in the sense that the decision may or may not have been made in any case because of the sheer shifts in information advantages and the consequential mounting of political pressure, but was precipitated by considerations tied to the upcoming power shift prospected - the replacement of a selective engager administration by a supposedly liberal humanitarian one (2002, p. 139-140). The realist logic behind the decision to provide relief in Somalia is that a selfless intervention there required lower efforts than an operation in the other major area of crisis existing at the time, Bosnia; the mounting political pressure required action to

be taken, but, on one hand (this is the aspect ignored by Western), George H. W. Bush could have simply refrained from it, given that the future of his administration was already written (in other words, political pressure could only sort relatively modest effects, given that the administration was not to face the risk of losing power for ignoring public opinion, as it had just lost the elections anyway).

Instead of this, the purely realist preference for a relatively lower prospected loss took precedence. Given that the political pressure for intervention would have been transferred onto the Clinton administration, according to Western President Bush played in anticipation and deployed troops in Somalia with the sole purpose of making unlikely a contemporary, decidedly more costly, intervention in Bosnia, otherwise expected of the successor liberal humanitarian regime.

However, while this model works for explaining the occurrence of non-intervention and delayed intervention by a selective engager administration - respectively in terms of a successfully framed crisis, and as a consequence of a purely realist logic -, as well as intervention when this entails the pursuit of gain or at least the defense of national interests, it fails to account for non-intervention by a liberal humanitarian administration.

If, as Western argues, the majoritarian elite enjoys “asymmetric advantages in access to information and [...] political mobilization resources” (2002, p. 117), which in turn lead to the ability of initially framing crises in adherence to its normative beliefs, and thus successfully orient the public opinion (2002, p. 117), then it is unclear for which reasons a purportedly liberal humanitarian administration would refrain from intervention (Rwanda being the most blatant example of such contradictory behavior).

What Western ignores in his model is the interference of specific real-life events, and their interpretation by the actors, with the normative beliefs upheld by the actors themselves; in other words, he does not account for the eventuality of a paradigm shift in which the poles of the model are replaced, or, for that matters, one in which the structure of the model itself changes.

One such paradigm shift can be identified in the aftermath of the Battle of Mogadishu. As explained in the previous chapter, the legitimizing discourse, following this event, experienced a qualitative change - from being expressed in self-sustained idealist terms, it began to show a partial grounding in a rationally defined national interest.

The combined influence of two apparently contradictory assumptions can contribute to explain this phenomenon.

On one hand, there appeared the conviction, strongly established in those that Western would refer to as “liberal humanitarianists” - as showed in the first chapter (notice that Kull and Ramsay’s work (2001) is based off polls conducted in 1996, thus in the midst of President Clinton’s tenure) -, that it is necessary to ground intervention in reasons of national interest in order to achieve continuing support from the population, a lesson learned in Somalia (“In the interview, the most common explanation given for why the public wanted to withdraw was that the public saw no link to the national interest and therefore could not accept casualties” (Kull & Ramsay, 2001, p. 210)).

On the other hand, realists hold that, in democracies, it is necessary to ground politically sound (which is to say, fundamentally based on national interest) military intervention in liberal rhetoric in order to achieve domestic support in the first place; this because the population tends to subscribe to the liberal idealist ethical norms

inscribed in - and at the same time dictated, but, as we saw, not limited by - international law (Mearsheimer, 2011, pp. 77-81).

Thus, while proponents of liberal idealism, following the events of Mogadishu, felt compelled to present their arguments for intervention as ultimately rational rather than simply idealistic, realists consider themselves to be in the opposite situation of having to mask purely rational behavior with idealist claims.

In addition to this, keeping in consideration that for liberal idealists there is no distinction in terms of rationale between a war of self-defense and one to uphold human rights (Tesón, 2003, p. 99), it can be said that the only difference lies in the self-evident nature of its rationality - its necessity - in the case of self-defense, compared to the need for making it explicit in the case of humanitarian intervention.

The apparent contradiction of these positions is resolved in a sort of middle-ground legitimizing discourse, a “pragmatic idealism”.

This process closely mimics the synthesis of liberal idealism and classical realism in the theory of international relations which produced neoliberalism; for the purpose of the argument, the distinction between liberal idealism and neoliberalism that needs to be taken into particular consideration lies in the primacy of idealist morals of the first, compared to that of self-interested rational behavior of the second.

In a dialectical understanding, what we see is a quantitative change in the respective weight of idealist and liberal principles (which are already both present in liberal idealism to begin with): through confrontation of liberal idealism (the thesis) with realism (its antithesis), this balance is shifted from a tendency towards idealism to a tendency towards liberalism - in that liberalism finds a common ground with realist approaches on the subject of rational self-interested actors.

This quantitative change leads, in turn, to a qualitative change, from an essentially idealist approach based on morals, liberal idealism, to an essentially liberal approach based on rational self-interest, neoliberalism.

Legitimizing discourse followed exactly the same path, moving from essentially idealist to essentially liberal, thus from being grounded in morals to being grounded in rational self-interest. We'll analyze how this shift modifies the understanding of (humanitarian) intervention in the following section; here, though, it is necessary to specify one last thing - the normative behavior that pragmatic idealism entails.

As mentioned, the assumption of rational self-interest assumes in this understanding a paramount role; behavior, thus, needs to be determined with a cost-benefit analysis. This norm is reflected on the decision to act or not act in defense of human rights depending on the prospected benefits of such action weighted against the costs necessary to complete it successfully; intervention, thus, is not always desirable, but, when it is, it shall be pursued. Ultimately, pragmatic idealism is a form of selective engagement that differs from the realist position primarily in its definition of benefit.

"From Iraq to Haiti, [...] we have stood up for peace and freedom because it's in our interest to do so and because it is the right thing to do.

Now, that doesn't mean we can solve every problem. My duty as President is to match the demands for American leadership to our strategic interest and to our ability to make a difference. America cannot and must not be the world's policeman. We cannot stop all war for all time, but we can stop some wars. We cannot save all women and all children, but we can save many of them. We can't do everything, but we must do what we can." (Clinton, 1995)

IV.b Ontology of (Humanitarian) Intervention

From these considerations has to follow a second analysis, one on the nature of intervention, humanitarian and not (if it makes any sense to make this distinction); which is to say, its finality.

This section aims to cover three interpretations of the ontology of intervention, the neoliberal, the realist (in its classical and neorealist forms), and the radical one, and to provide a tentative framework in which to inscribe them.

By situating itself in the neoliberal frame, legitimizing discourse came to propose, as we said, not anymore an enforcement of liberal values legitimized by idealist ethics, but rather an enforcement of liberal values legitimized by liberal (rational) considerations. The result was a discourse that, while not breaking entirely with the moral obligation to “rescue victims of tyranny or anarchy” (Tesón, 2003, p. 94), subdued this to the interest of the delivering actor; “the right to rescue such victims - the right of humanitarian intervention” (Tesón, 2003, p. 94) became paramount, while “the obligation to rescue” (Tesón, 2003, p. 94), rather than being subject to the caveat of being available “at a reasonable cost” (Tesón, 2003, p. 94) for the rescuer, became subject to that of implying an ulterior benefit for him.

Of course, this grounding in rational self-interest rather than morals does not imply the rejection of liberal values; on the contrary, according to neoliberalism, it promotes them. The promotion of liberal values serves the interest of the rescuer in that it equates to promoting order.

Order, as we saw in the previous chapter, occupies a cardinal position in legitimizing discourse, yet its definition is variable: up to the 1999 intervention

bombing of Yugoslavia “order” was embodied in the international institutions - and, more specifically, in the United Nations Security Council; after the reaction to the Kosovo crisis, however, we can observe the replacement of institutionalized order as the fundamental source of legitimacy with “freedom”. In a sense, institutionalized order came to represent a check (by virtue of the veto power held by other states - particularly the Russian Federation - in the U.N. Security Council) to the forcible promotion of liberal values in the international system operated by the United States of America.

The fundamental postulate common to the various strains of liberalism - and that assumes particular importance in neoliberalism - is the definition of the actor as rational and self-interested; however, unlike in the realist interpretation, the actors are believed to think in terms of absolute, rather than relative, gains. This difference leaves open the possibility not just of the existence of common interests between actors (harmony), but also of voluntary cooperation (Keohane, 1984, Ch. 4).

Proponents of neoliberalism do not reject the concept of anarchy; rather, they believe that, when it comes to the international system, cooperation is possible both if imposed and enforced by an hegemon, and as a rational choice of the actors (the states) (Keohane, 1984, Ch. 4). This prediction, though, is considered valid only in the case of interaction between state actors which understand and subscribe to a liberal logic, which is to say, between liberal democracies.

From this, it follows that military interventions finalized to restore human rights (and, by extension, the rule of liberal law) in other states provide ulterior benefits to the rescuer, namely a share of mutual benefits that follow the inclusion of the rescued state in the cooperative regime of states, as well as the stabilization of the

international system at large (by virtue of the democratic peace theory); when these benefits are prospected to be greater than the cost of intervention, action is taken.

This model is fit to explain the foreign policy of the United States in the period between the end of the Cold War and the intervention in Kosovo. The bombing of Yugoslavia without a mandate of the United Nation Security Council, though, represents a moment of rupture with the past, and the beginning of a period in which American foreign policy (as well as the legitimizing discourse employed domestically) is marked by crescent unilateralism - culminated with the presidency of George W. Bush; such a behavior can be described according to both a neoliberal and a neorealist understanding, utilizing the respective variations of hegemonic stability theory.

Just (2010) illustrates at length the correlation between the liberal institutionalist position incarnated by the Clinton administration and the neoconservative one which defined George W. Bush's. The ultimately defining trait in common between these two strains of neoliberalism is, in a few words, the "valorization of state power for putatively moral ends" (Brown, 2006, p. 690).

The commonly accepted definition of neoconservatism describes it as the combination of Wilsonian idealism and Kissingerian realpolitik (Just, 2010; Mearsheimer, 2005); in this sense, thus, it represents a sort of "pragmatic idealism on steroids", one that is aware of the enormous military capabilities of the United States of America and is not shy to put them to use. In a sense, it represents a "logical degeneration" of the neoliberal normative behavior: given qualitatively and quantitatively superior enough military capabilities (real or at least misperceived), the expected costs for intervention are dramatically lowered - in front of anticipated

benefits that, being appreciated in absolute terms, maintain a stable value independently from the initial conditions of the actor; the result of this scenario is a drastic tendency towards interventionism.

Far before the election of the Bush administration, Robert Kagan put forward the neoconservative understanding of hegemony.

His argument is that the United States' is a form of "benevolent hegemony" (Kagan, 1998, p. 26), different in nature from any hegemony which preceded it in that it ultimately provides profound benefits for the other members of the international system; this, however, is not out of selflessness, Kagan argues, but rather of an "enlightened self-interest that [...] comes dangerously close to resembling generosity" (1998, p. 28). Indeed, this self-interest is that which sparks from liberal theory, the conviction that one's "own well-being depends fundamentally on the well-being of others" (1998, p. 28) - where "well-being" includes the concepts of prosperity, freedom, and security (1998, p. 28). The concept of complex interdependence is borrowed from Keohane and Nye (1977), and supplemented by the understanding that it is possible for an hegemonic leader to create and maintain such a pattern of order (Keohane, 1984, p. 49).

Specifically, Kagan argues that, as the vast majority of the costs and burdens related to defending the international democratic regime from external threats lies on American shoulders, the United States have a sort of "right to unilateralism", especially in the face of the refusal (or impossibility) of other states to take up major responsibilities in the maintaining of order - while at the same time invoking the need for multilateral decision making: "What France, Russia, and some others really seek today is not genuine multipolarity but [...] the pretense of equal partnership in a multipolar world without the price of responsibility that equal partnership

requires.” (1998, p. 32); this argument will be echoed in his later seminal works “Power and Weakness” (2002) and “Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order” (2003), in which he argues that the discriminant between American unilateralism and European purported multilateralism lies in the power gap between the two.

The essence of Kagan’s argument in the context of our analysis, then, is that American military interventions - again, keeping in mind that there is no formal distinction between wars for self-defense and for humanitarian reasons (Tesón, 2003, p. 99) - have the function of safeguarding, maintaining the stability of, and promoting the international democratic regime, to the advantage of all the members of the peaceful community of states.

Neorealism, and in particular Mearsheimer’s offensive realism, instead, offers a different interpretation of American behavior - of the nature of its interventions. First, the definition of hegemony, for Mearsheimer, is very different from that of neoliberalists: a true hegemon needs to be able to exercise authority globally, with no challenge whatsoever from other members of the system; thus, there is a distinction between “global hegemons” and “regional hegemons” (2001, p. 47). Departing from the classical realist assumption that states have their interest in the accumulation of relative power, Mearsheimer argues that their rational objective needs to be the achievement of global hegemon status - which would “eliminate[e] any possibility of a challenge by another great power” (2001, p. 42); however, he also argues that it is “virtually impossible for any state to achieve global hegemony” (2001, p. 47), primarily for the difficulty of projecting power overseas, unless by achieving complete nuclear superiority (2001, p. 47).

From this consideration stems the conclusion that pushing for the achievement of global hegemony is a massively daunting task, arguably impossible to complete; for this reason, the best strategy for a state is to “achieve regional hegemony and block the rise of peer competitors in distant areas of the globe” (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 189) - which simply means acting as power brokers (“offshore balancers”) in order to maintain a balance of power in the other regions (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 190).

With this in mind, Mearsheimer (2005) argues that the recent American military interventions, particularly under the Bush administration, stemmed essentially from a miscalculation of America’s own military capabilities.

In Mearsheimer’s understanding, the neoconservative administration believed that it was possible to systematically enforce adherence to liberal principles abroad by exporting democracy with quick and efficient military operations; such a forcible, serial exporting of democracy would have, in turn, served the final objective of enhanced well-being, prosperity, freedom and security (2005).

Given that neoliberal theory accepts the existence of gains different from sheer power, such a policy represents the closest conceivable thing to a tentative to achieve global hegemony in offensive realist terms; yet, it is a misguided tentative, exactly for the miscalculation of the ability to conduct successful occupations leading to a blossoming of democracy, and the belief in a bandwagoning-oriented logic at the heart of the functioning of international politics which could be activated with a sort of reverse domino effect, obtained through the threat of military intervention (Mearsheimer, 2005). Because of the failure in executing this plan swiftly in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and the necessity to dedicate a great number of troops to nation-building efforts there, Mearsheimer argues that the intended threat represented by surgical American military operations decayed, thus removing the

possibility of enforcing bandwagoning logic - effectively hampering the entire policy (2005).

In short, while classical realists argue that any military intervention is ultimately underpinned by the desire for power in its classical, political definition (as defined in Morgenthau's "Politics Among Nations"), proponents of neorealism accept the possibility of a more varied definition of power; yet, ultimately they agree on the finality of states' power projection - namely, the increase of relative power.

Radicalism proposes an understanding alternative to both the neoliberal and (neo)realist models describing the nature of intervention. The strains of radicalism are various, yet, generally speaking, they fit in the range of reflectivist approaches, thus stand in opposition to the positivist assumptions which form the basis of classic theories of international relations. Here, specifically, I'll concentrate on works which form part of the neo-Marxist approach related to Immanuel Wallerstein's World-systems theory.

Neo-Marxism, and in particular Giovanni Arrighi's interpretation of the World-systems theory, argues that the logic of power followed by capitalist leaders is qualitatively different from the ones described by (neo)realists, albeit presenting an apparent similarity. Arrighi presents a distinction between "territorialist" and "capitalist" logics of power. In the first mode of rule, "control over territory and population is the objective, and control over mobile capital the means, of state- and war-making" (Arrighi, 1994, p. 34); on the opposite, in the capitalist logic, "control over mobile capital is the objective, and control over territory and population the means" (Arrighi, 1994, p. 34).

The capitalist logic of power defined by Arrighi shares with the classical realist one the means to achieve the objective, but clearly differs in the objective itself. This difference lies, for realists, in what Morgenthau called the “subversion [of the autonomy of the political sphere] by other modes of thought” (1978, p. 14); here, specifically, this means interpreting political behavior through an economic theory, implying that “all political phenomena are the reflection of economic conditions” (1948, p. 29). In a marxian understanding, on the opposite, the realist analysis falls short of understanding the actual motives of state behavior, the same critique that neorealist and liberal strains would move; yet, the critique goes much deeper.

The problem of realism, but also of neorealism and neoliberalism, lies in the definition of the actor (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 37). By concentrating on the state, they ignore domestic non-state processes, and consequentially fail to see their effects at a transnational level (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 20); this failure “in turn makes it impossible (or irrelevant) to conceive other global structures apart from the political because the only visible agents are other states” (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 20).

Rosenberg argues that the global political order depicted by realism (but the critique, as mentioned, can be extended at least partially to neoliberalism, for its understanding of the state as the most important actor) is distorted because it fails to recognize that “the same agent is simultaneously central to the constitution and management of international and domestic politics” (1994, p. 34); in other words, departing from the concept of nation state in order to produce an explanation of the nature of the international system implies understanding the nation state to be a necessity rather than a construction, a “determinate historical configuration of social relations” (1994, p. 37). Rather than being identified with the state and its policy,

then, agency is to be identified as “a dispersed property of human societies which state organizations will always attempt to mobilize, but which is never reducible to state policy” (Rosenberg, 1994, p. 37).

In his seminal work (1994), Arrighi traces the historical origins of the modern nation-state - identifying its prototype in the Venetian merchant capitalist oligarchy (1994, p. 37) -, and concludes that this is ultimately capitalist in nature; which is to say, its behavior (including armed intervention, the subject of our analysis) amounts to the expression of the capitalist elite’s interests.

Is it possible to identify a dialectic triad composed of these three models accounting for the nature of military intervention - and thus, by extension, the behavior of states? The short answer is no - if we intend to use the dialectical method in a strict Marxist sense, that is.

However, it is possible to identify a triadic structure inspired by dialectical reasoning, made of a contraposition (neoliberalism versus neorealism) resolved by a synthesis (neo-Marxism) that maintains elements of both thesis and antithesis, yet transcends (by virtue of denying the validity of their epistemological premises) and thus negates them.

If we accept the usefulness of a similar framework, we have, for the question of the ontology of intervention, what follows: as a thesis, neoliberalism (particularly in its neoconservative strain), which interprets recent American military intervention as aimed at enforcing liberal values for the ultimate advantage of all the members of the international system of states, the expression of a sort of benevolent hegemony - a scenario made possible by the assumption of a preference for absolute gains by all the liberal members of the system; as an antithesis, neorealism, which, assuming

actors interested exclusively in relative power gains, understands the same military interventions as expressions of the pursuit of an interested hegemony; and finally, a synthesis, neo-Marxism, which understands the state as an instrument of national capital's interest, and interprets military intervention as aimed at enforcing liberal values, which in turn create favorable conditions for the reproduction of national capital - thus an expression of the pursuit of an interested hegemony.

V. Conclusion

There is one, and that a very antient reason for making war, (says Sallust) and that is an insatiable desire of empire, and riches. In Tacitus; gold and wealth were ever the chief motives for war.

(Grotius, *De Jure Belli Ac Pacis*, 1625, Book II, Ch. XXII, Sec. XVII)

The scope of this work was to critically assess the phenomenon of American military intervention from the beginning of the post-Cold War era to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

After an introductory section in which I traced a brief outline of the evolution of Just War Theory and the basic framework of international law, I departed from the analysis of the justifying reasons given by the American government for the military intervention in Iraq of 2003. The question to be asked in this first part was how the intervention was framed and justified by the United States to its peers in the United Nations Security Council.

Finding that, in the legitimizing discourse employed, valid (or, at least, more reasonable and viable under international law than the argument of self-defense) justifications for intervention - specifically, humanitarian reasons - were, if not all together shunned, kept in the background and given little consideration, I concluded that it (the legitimizing discourse) must have been engineered to appeal primarily to a different audience rather than the international community; what appears clear from the following enquire, is that this favored audience is the domestic voting population.

In the second part, I proceeded to analyze a selection of presidential speeches ranging from 1991 to 2003 - George H. W. Bush's addresses on the 1991 invasion of Iraq on UNSC mandate and the 1992 humanitarian intervention in Somalia; Bill Clinton's addresses on the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia of 1995 and the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia of 1999; and George W. Bush's addresses on the "War on Terror" in the aftermath of 9/11, the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq - utilizing Graham, Keenan and Dowd's framework (2004); I highlighted the recurring motives in these "call to arms", paying particular attention to the evolution of the choice of external sources of legitimization invoked to justify armed intervention to the domestic voting population.

In the first section of the third part, I provided a dialectical evolutionary understanding for the normative beliefs which are supposed to generate a specific behavior in the actors (foreign policy elites) that subscribe to the theories from which such normative beliefs stem.

However, I add here at the moment of tracing the conclusions of this work, noting the fact that adherence to specific theoretical logics is fluid - a fact demonstrated by the variability of the external sources of legitimization invoked, I support the radical argument of the necessity of reversing the way we understand the relation between theory, normative belief, and behavior.

Rather than considering behavior as a variable defined by adherence to normative beliefs, which in turn are implicit in a given, stable understanding of reality (theory), it (behavior) shall be thought of as a constant, which requires the support of fluid but always favorable and widely accepted normative beliefs - artificial rationales aimed at achieving the support of the domestic voting population, a sort of sub-iteration of hegemony intended in a Gramscian sense -, from which, in turn, theory is generated.

The aim of the thesis, as mentioned in the introduction, was not to describe the complex phenomenon of military intervention departing from a given theoretical background; on the contrary, it was to gradually build up an understanding of the phenomenon through the observation of its characteristics, and ultimately find which, if any, theoretical perspective provides the most coherent and accurate model describing it. From my observations, I conclude in the final section of this work, reflectivist, and particularly neo-Marxist approaches, provide the best account of the phenomenon analyzed.

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