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THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN SHAPING CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Sadibakosev Khabibullo Shodiboy o'g'li
DSc., First Vice-Rector for Youth Affairs and Spiritual and
Educational Affairs at International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan
e -mail: h.sadibaqosev@iiau.uz

Abstract

The United States has played a pivotal role in shaping the current structure of international security, particularly since the beginning of the 21st century, leveraging its significant military and economic power. This article explores the key opportunities and challenges facing the U.S. as it seeks to safeguard its national interests, promote regional stability, and respond to emerging security threats. It analyzes how the U.S. asserts its global influence, engages in power projection, and cooperates multilaterally, while also addressing the necessity of adjusting to shifting geopolitical realities. Furthermore, the article examines ongoing debates surrounding American leadership, including critiques of unilateral actions, intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, and the complexities of aligning security objectives with broader global issues. Ultimately, this study offers a comprehensive perspective on how U.S. policies affect global order, influence regional dynamics, and shape the future of international security systems.

Keywords: United States, global security, opportunities, challenges, foreign policy, alliances, diplomacy, leadership, international order.

INTRODUCTION

Emerging as the sole superpower after the Cold War, the United States has used its extensive economic and military resources to steer the global security agenda.

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From post-1991 interventions to today's strategic recalibrations, Washington has consistently evolved its approach—shifting focus from containment to counterterrorism, and now to managing great-power rivalry—to safeguard its interests and uphold a rules-based international system.

MAIN PART

The period following World War II was a defining moment in world history, during which the United States emerged as one of two dominant powers alongside the Soviet Union[1]. The strategic landscape of international relations fundamentally changed, leading to the creation of a security architecture aimed at preventing the widespread destruction that occurred during the war. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman's "Truman Doctrine" articulated a policy aimed at containing the spread of communism, which was perceived as a threat to democracy and capitalism. This doctrine laid the foundation for U.S. involvement in various global conflicts under the banner of "containing" Soviet influence[2]. The policy included not only military measures but also economic initiatives such as the Marshall Plan, which aimed to rebuild war-torn Europe and prevent socio-economic conditions that could foster the development of communism[3]. The United States established NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 1949, a military alliance that expressed the collective security responsibility among Western states[4]. This marked a shift from isolationism to an active stance on global security issues and positioned the United States as a leader in creating a multilateral framework to counter threats.

During the Cold War, the United States' reliance on military power to ensure global security led to the emergence of the military-industrial complex - a network of interactions between the military, defense industry, and political decision-makers. This complex, as President Dwight Eisenhower warned in his farewell address, had a significant impact on U.S. security policy, spurring a

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steady expansion of defense spending and the development of increasingly sophisticated military technologies[5]. The military-industrial complex not only shaped the security strategy of the United States but also had far-reaching effects on its domestic policy and economy. The defense industry became a powerful lobbying force and often prioritized its own interests under the guise of national security. This dynamic helped perpetuate the Cold War mentality and maintain an extensive military apparatus even in the absence of a clear threat.

As noted by esteemed diplomat George Kennan, the containment policy became a fundamental principle of U.S. security strategy during the Cold War. The United States attempted to halt the spread of communism by providing economic and military aid to countries under Soviet influence, while simultaneously conducting proxy wars and covert operations to undermine communist regimes[6]. Throughout the Cold War, the United States carried out various direct and indirect military interventions in different regions, including Korea, Vietnam, and Latin America. The rationale behind such interventions was the belief that a strong military presence and strategic alliances were crucial in countering the spread of communism[7]. This approach often led to controversial decisions, such as the Vietnam War, which provoked public dissent and called for a reassessment of U.S. military involvement abroad.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a critical turning point in the United States' approach to global security. With the end of the bipolar rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, the United States found itself in a unipolar moment, enjoying unprecedented global dominance and the absence of a clear strategic rival[8]. After the Cold War, the United States sought to redefine its security priorities and adapt its strategies to the new global landscape. The Clinton administration's "engagement and enlargement" policy emphasized promoting democracy, free markets, and international institutions as means of

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[5] The Military-Industrial Complex Speech (1961) | https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/historic-document-library/detail/the-military-industrial-complex-speech-1961
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strengthening global stability and security[9]. This approach was based on the belief that the spread of liberal democratic values and economic interdependence would create a more peaceful and secure international environment. However, the United States' unipolar moment was short-lived, as new threats and challenges began to emerge on the global stage. The rise of non-state actors such as terrorist organizations and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction created new security threats that required a more adaptable approach[10].

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, demonstrated profound changes in U.S. security priorities and its approach to global security challenges. The September 11 attacks exposed the vulnerability of the U.S. homeland to asymmetric threats and led to a drastic change in the country's security strategy. Following the events of September 11, the Bush administration launched the "War on Terror" operation, a comprehensive campaign against international terrorism and states supporting it. This approach is characterized by a more resolute use of military force, as exemplified in Afghanistan and Iraq[11]. The "War on Terror" has had enormous consequences for the United States' global security position. It led to the deployment of hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops to the Middle East, the establishment of a vast network of military bases and intelligence operations worldwide, and the expansion of U.S. surveillance and counter-terrorism capabilities[12]. The "War on Terror" also significantly impacted U.S. relations with allies and the broader international community. The unilateral nature of some U.S. actions, such as the invasion of Iraq without United Nations support, strained U.S. diplomatic relations and undermined its moral standing on the global stage[13].

As the United States became entangled in prolonged conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, new geopolitical challenges emerged, particularly the rise of China and Russia's resurgence as a global power. This shift in the global balance of power

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[9] Foreign policy aspects and priorities of the strategy of "engagement and enlargement" of Clinton administration | American History and Politics http://www.americanstudies.history.knu.ua/en/foreign-policy-aspects-and-priorities-of-the-strategy-of-engagement-and-enlargement-of-clinton-administration/

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led to a gradual reorientation of U.S. security strategy, with increasing focus on great power competition. The Obama administration's "Pivot to Asia" and the Trump administration's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific[14]" strategies reflected the U.S.'s recognition of the need to counter China's growing influence and assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States also sought to address the threat posed by a resurgent Russia, especially in light of the annexation of Crimea and its involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. The shift towards great power competition was accompanied by a growing emphasis on the importance of technological superiority and innovation in the security sphere. To maintain its competitive edge, the United States has invested heavily in developing advanced military technologies such as hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, and cyber capabilities[15].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated the global security landscape, exposing new vulnerabilities and challenges that the United States had to confront. The pandemic has had far-reaching implications for U.S. security, ranging from supply chain disruptions and strained military readiness to social unrest and loss of public trust in government institutions. In response to the pandemic, the United States had to adapt its security strategies and priorities, allocate resources to address the health crisis, and deal with long-term consequences for global stability and security[16]. The pandemic emphasized the need for the United States to strengthen its resilience, improve its crisis management capabilities, and collaborate more effectively with international partners to counter transnational threats.

The United States is a formidable global military power with nearly 200,000 military personnel stationed in more than 150 countries around the world[17]. This includes major military bases, training facilities and military forces across

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Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The US also operates a network of surveillance and intelligence assets, including satellites and drones, that provide global situational awareness and power projection[18]. In addition to constant military mobilization, the United States has also shown its willingness to intervene militarily in various regions to protect its interests, protect its values, and shape regional security dynamics. Since the end of the Cold War, the US has engaged in a series of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency campaigns, including the Gulf War, the Kosovo War, the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War, and numerous counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency campaigns across the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. participated in military operations[19]. These military interventions are often justified on the grounds of responding to threats to US national security, promoting democratic values and human rights, and maintaining regional stability.

US military presence and intervention around the world has had a significant impact on regional stability and global security dynamics. While these efforts have sometimes succeeded in achieving short-term goals such as destroying hostile regimes or disrupting terrorist networks, they have created long-term instability, conflict, and humanitarian crises in various regions. US involvement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been particularly controversial. US support for authoritarian regimes, intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, and support for regional allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia have had a major impact on regional stability and global security[20]. Subsequent US counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq and other parts of the region have been criticized for civilian casualties and continued periods of violence and instability[21].

Also, US support for authoritarian regimes in the region, such as the Mubarak regime in Egypt and the Al-Saud monarchy in Saudi Arabia, is widely seen as undermining democratic aspirations and fueling discontent among the local population[22]. The constant support of the United States for Israel's occupation of

[18] Kaplan, F. (2016). Dark Territory: The Secret History of Cyber War. Simon & Schuster, p:352

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the Palestinian territories has also been the main source of tensions and conflicts in the region[23]. The wider impact of these US policies and interventions in the MENA region has led to the rise of sectarian divisions and extremist groups, the displacement of millions of civilians, and the weakening of state institutions and governance structures. This, in turn, has contributed to the rise of transnational threats such as terrorism, organized crime, and the destabilization of refugee and migrant flows.

US military intervention in the Asia-Pacific region had a significant impact on regional stability and global security dynamics. The United States' "Pivot to Asia" strategy, announced in 2011, involves balancing military, economic, and diplomatic resources in the region to counter China's growing influence and assertiveness[24]. This has been reflected in the strengthening of US alliances and partnerships with countries such as Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Australia, as well as the deployment of additional military assets and frequent military exercises and freedom of navigation in the region. The US has been actively involved in regional disputes in the South China Sea, often siding with its allies and partners against China's claims and actions. While U.S. involvement in the Asia-Pacific region is justified as a means of ensuring regional stability, upholding the rules-based international order, and deterring potential aggression, it has led to heightened tensions between the U.S. and China and military confrontation. perceived as contributing to risk[25]. For example, US support for Taiwan's de facto independence has been a major source of conflict with China, which views Taiwan as a province that should be reunited with the mainland.

US military intervention in Africa is also causing increasing concern and debate. Although the United States has traditionally maintained a relatively low-level military presence on the continent, providing assistance mainly in counter-terrorism operations and security, its involvement has expanded in recent years[26]. For example, the creation of US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007 led to

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increased US military activity, including the deployment of special operations forces, training and equipping of local security forces[27]. The United States has participated in various military interventions in Africa, such as the 2011 military intervention in Libya and the ongoing counterterrorism operations in the Sahel region. This US military activity in Africa has been criticized for exacerbating local conflicts, undermining state sovereignty and contributing to the militarization of the continent. Some argue that the US focus on counterterrorism and security assistance has sometimes come at the expense of addressing the root causes of instability, such as poverty, inequality and weak governance.

US military involvement in Africa has been seen as part of a broader geopolitical rivalry with other major powers, such as China and Russia, active on the continent. This has fueled concerns that Africa could become a new arena of great power competition with destabilizing consequences for regional security and development.

CONCLUSION

One of the main capabilities of the United States in the global security system is its technological and military superiority. The US military has advanced capabilities in the land, air, sea, and cyber domains. The development of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and unmanned systems, will increase the ability of the United States to project its power on a global scale and maintain a technological advantage over its rivals. These technological advances also allow the US to maintain its dominance in key strategic regions such as the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. The US benefits from an extensive network of alliances and partnerships, particularly with NATO allies Japan, South Korea, and Australia. These alliances provide a solid security framework and help the US maintain stability in various regions. In addition, multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and the IMF, which were largely shaped by the United States, continue to offer platforms for international cooperation. The United States can use these institutions to combat global threats such as terrorism, climate change, and cyber threats while promoting democracy

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and the rule of law. The United States is also an important economic power because it remains a major player in international trade and finance. Its leadership in organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank and the G7 allows the US to influence global economic policy and sanctions. The US dollar serves as the world's reserve currency and further strengthens its economic dominance. This economic tool gives the US the ability to impose sanctions on countries, counter illicit financial activities, and promote an international economic order based on international law. As cyber threats continue to grow, the United States has a unique opportunity to lead in cybersecurity and the regulation of emerging technologies. The United States has been at the forefront of setting global norms for cyberspace aimed at ensuring the stability and security of critical infrastructure. With a wealth of innovation in the private sector, including Silicon Valley, the US is well positioned to develop international standards and frameworks for artificial intelligence, quantum computing and biotechnology. The United States can use its enormous diplomatic influence to resolve conflicts, develop cooperation, and shape global governance. Soft power remains an important tool for US diplomacy. Through cultural diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and educational exchange programs, the United States can promote its values and strengthen its ties with other countries. Using its soft power, the US has the opportunity to develop better relations with its allies and developing powers. One of the main problems that the US faces in the global security system is the emergence of geopolitical competitors, in particular, China and Russia. China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative and its influence in international organizations affect the dominance of the United States to a certain extent. At the same time, Russia's assertive foreign policy in regions such as Ukraine and the Middle East has complicated US efforts to maintain global stability. These rising powers are reshaping the international order, making it multipolar and challenging US leadership in international security institutions.

Under the previous administration, US foreign policy took a more isolationist approach, leading to strained relations with traditional allies. Withdrawal from international agreements, such as the Paris climate agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, has led to a decline in trust in the United States. Rebuilding trust with NATO allies, Pacific partners and other global security stakeholders remains a challenge.

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Many allies now question the credibility of the United States as a security partner, and some are seeking to strengthen their defense capabilities independently of the United States. The rise of non-state actors such as terrorist organizations and transnational criminal networks poses a growing security challenge for the United States. Conventional military strategies are often ineffective against such actors, who may use unconventional means to undermine global security. In addition, the United States faces increasing challenges in combating the spread of violent extremism and radical ideologies that fuel acts of terrorism around the world. The United States faces significant cybersecurity threats from both state and non-state actors. Cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, data breaches, and disinformation campaigns have become common "weapons of war" that undermine national security and democratic institutions. Although the United States has the most powerful military power and significant economic and diplomatic influence, it must overcome growing geopolitical competition, cyber security threats, and domestic political polarization. By strengthening alliances, strengthening cybersecurity, advancing diplomacy, bridging internal divisions, and investing in innovation, the United States can continue to play a leading role in maintaining global security. Through these strategic measures, the United States can adapt to the developing international environment and maintain its leadership in the global security system.

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